Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) opened its first office in 1967 in White Plains, NY. Over time, LSHV has expanded to 10 offices, four of which are in Westchester County.

The mission of LSHV is to provide high quality counsel in civil matters for low-income individuals and families and other vulnerable persons who do not have access to legal representation to maintain their basic needs, and to pursue equity through dismantling systemic oppression.

In 2021, LSHV became home to Westchester County’s first multidisciplinary Family Defense Unit which helps parents navigate the challenges of the Child Welfare system. All families deserve to live together in safety regardless of circumstance.

Using a nationally recognized model that combines attorneys, social workers and parent advocates, the Family Defense Unit fights to prevent painful family separations and works to reunite parents and children who have been separated through the court process.

In Westchester County, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is $1,943. In order to afford this, without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household must earn $37.37 hourly. The average renter’s wage in Westchester County is $19.45. At this rate a renter must work 2.7 full time jobs to afford a two-bedroom apartment.

LSHV works to ensure fairness in the justice system for those who can’t afford an attorney when maintaining the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and safety, are at risk.

- Individuals living in poverty: 83,603
- Children living in poverty: 22,051
- Seniors living in poverty: 12,928

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(Tabor.ny.gov; Mid-Hudson Valley Community Profiles; National Low Income Housing Coalition, “Out of Reach 2021”; New York State Community Action Association, 2021 Poverty Report.)