

 Administer Justice

EXPLORE GOSPEL JUSTICE

The Ministry of Administer Justice



Mission

To empower vulnerable neighbors
with the help of a lawyer and the hope of God's love.

Administer Justice equips churches with a simple model for legal ministry – their mission is to empower vulnerable neighbors with the legal help and gospel hope.

Administer Justice actually dates back to 2000, when God called the founder, Bruce Strom, to close down his very successful law practice in the Chicagoland area (he was senior partner with multiple offices and had argued cases all the way to the US Supreme Court) and begin providing legal aid for clients who could not afford legal counsel through his home church. 23 years later, he's still every bit as passionate about legal ministry and they've been able to serve over 80,000 clients through Gospel Justice Centers.



Vision

1000 Gospel Justice Centers across America to transform lives in the name of Christ.

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Their vision is to establish 1000 Gospel Justice Centers (essentially legal clinics in churches) across America to transform lives in the name of Christ.



“**You** have the right to
a free attorney...”

People often mistakenly believe that everyone has the right to an attorney if they can't afford one— but that's only true if you're accused of a crime and given a public defender.



Criminal defendants who are
unable to afford a lawyer have
the right to free legal
representation, yet *those being
oppressed* DO NOT.

Friends, this is not right.

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If you're the victim of a greedy landlord, or shady employer, you're left to fend for yourself.

In the civil justice system, which includes things like family law, healthcare, housing and veterans, there are 150 million new cases every year. Most of these cases will never require representation in court, but they DO require information and guidance from a lawyer. While the law provides many legal protections for the vulnerable, most of these protections are hidden to anyone without legal training or skill.

As one example of that, when veterans were helped by a lawyer, their success in receiving benefits owed to them was 144% higher than when filing claims w/o help. So a small action from a lawyer can have a life-changing impact on a client.

How many people in the US cannot afford a lawyer?

01 | 10 million

02 | 25 million

03 | 50 million

04 | 100 million

But how many people cannot afford an attorney? According to the Legal Services Corporation which works with legal aids across the country,

How many people in the US cannot afford a lawyer?

01 | 10 million

02 | 25 million

03 | 50 million

04 | **100 million**

The answer is 100 million – 1 out of every 3 Americans. And out of those 100 million – how many had legal problems in the last year?

3 out of 4
Low-income households experience 1 or more legal problems in the last year.

37m
Americans are turned away from legal help each year

Source: 2022 Justice Gap Survey, Legal Services Corporation

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A lot. The research shows that about 75% of the households had at least one legal problem – and that an astounding 37 million were turned away from legal help. These are people who qualified for legal aid but who were turned away because there’s not enough places to get it. To put that in perspective, if you picture a stadium seating 60,000 filled to capacity with low-income people needing legal advice, there would be 6 legal aid attorneys available to meet the need. And if those 6 attorneys met with each person for just 30 minutes to give advice, it would take them 6 months working 24/7 with no bathroom breaks to see everyone. In other words, there’s a significant challenge!



Every **second**
in America
someone is **turned away**
from **legal help**.


Change their story!

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Source: *The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans, 2017*

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Every second, someone is turned away.

A photograph of a person with dark hair and glasses, seen from the side, looking out over a city at night. The city lights are blurred in the background, creating a bokeh effect. The person is wearing a dark jacket.

Low-income Americans do not get any or enough legal help for **92% of their substantial civil legal problems.**

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Source: 2022 Justice Gap Survey, Legal Services Corporation

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Low-income Americans do not get the help they need for 92% of their civil legal problems.

Not surprisingly, over half of them said these legal problems impacted their lives in negative ways: affecting their finances, mental health, physical health and safety, and relationships.

And let's talk on a global scale

Where does the US rank worldwide, out of 140 countries, in terms of providing affordable access to justice?

01 | 52nd

02 | 77th

03 | 115th

04 | 138th

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The World Justice Project ranks the countries of the world every year on many things, including affordable access to justice. In 2022, we ranked

Where does the US rank worldwide, out of 140 countries, in terms of providing affordable access to justice?

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03 | **115th**

04 | 138th

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115th. Not dead last, but dead last for first world countries. Behind China, Russia, and even Iran. And we've been going down steadily over the last few years. In fact, we've dropped 40 places since 2015.

So, It's clear there is a problem involving access to justice – why should the church get involved?



“

**The local church is
central to God’s
story of change.**

Brian Fikkert, Author of *When Helping Hurts*

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First because God commands it. Over and over, God calls his people to seek justice for the vulnerable. And he judges his people when they don’t. He judges them for idolatry, and he judges them for injustice (which includes failing to seek justice for those in need). So the church should be leading the way.

Second because people cannot truly flourish apart from the church. In God’s kingdom, the local church is grand central station – it’s where everything happens. What better place for people to be as they walk through hard times. And Administer Justice hears it over and over from clients that the compassionate care and hope they received from the volunteers (through words of encouragement and prayer), are as important as the legal advice. That’s beautiful.

And finally, because churches are everywhere – they’re in every city and community. Administer Justice wants Gospel Justice Centers to be as common as a Walgreens or CVS – easily accessible for neighbors.

What percentage of churches in America are providing legal services to their community?

01 | 5%

02 | 3%

03 | 1%

04 | 0.1%

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So, centers are needed and the church is the ideal place to host them – guess how many churches are actually providing legal services in their community?

What percentage of churches in America are providing legal services to their community?

01 | 5%

02 | 3%

03 | 1%

04 | **0.1%**

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Of the 384,000 churches in America, less than .1% are providing access to justice with legal ministry. The church has led the way in education and healthcare, but we haven't in the justice system.

Our church has the opportunity to get involved and show the world that Christians care about seeking justice for the vulnerable.

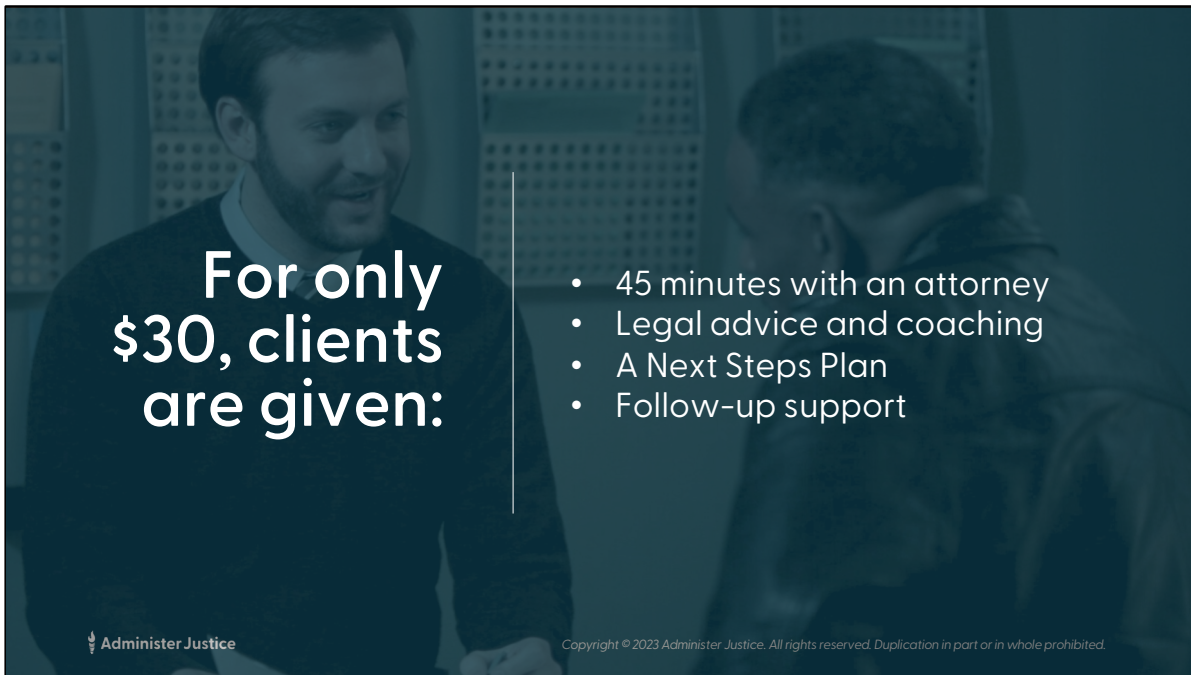
So, how does the model work?

Churches open their doors for 4 hours usually on a Sat morning once a month. The center is run by a team of volunteers and led by a Justice Champion (the point person for the team – usually someone who is not a

lawyer but has a heart for the vulnerable and is a good leader). Here's why one Justice Champion got involved and what her experience was:



Video from Andi
<https://youtu.be/Clwvf8A6qc0>



**For only
\$30, clients
are given:**

- 45 minutes with an attorney
- Legal advice and coaching
- A Next Steps Plan
- Follow-up support

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When clients come to a center, they'll be warmly welcomed and made to feel at home. They'll pay a \$30 copay to book the appointment online or by phone to invite them into the process – we want to do justice with them, not for them. When they book the appointment, they'll share the information related to their legal situation and it gets entered into the database so the attorney has the info they need when they meet with them. Each appointment with the attorney includes a review of their situation, advice on the different options available to them, and then a Next Steps plan for what they can do to address the situation. It's not representation in court – it's clarity, direction, and coaching on next steps – all done with care and compassion.



The Hope of God's Love in Action

How the Client Advocate Accomplishes the Mission

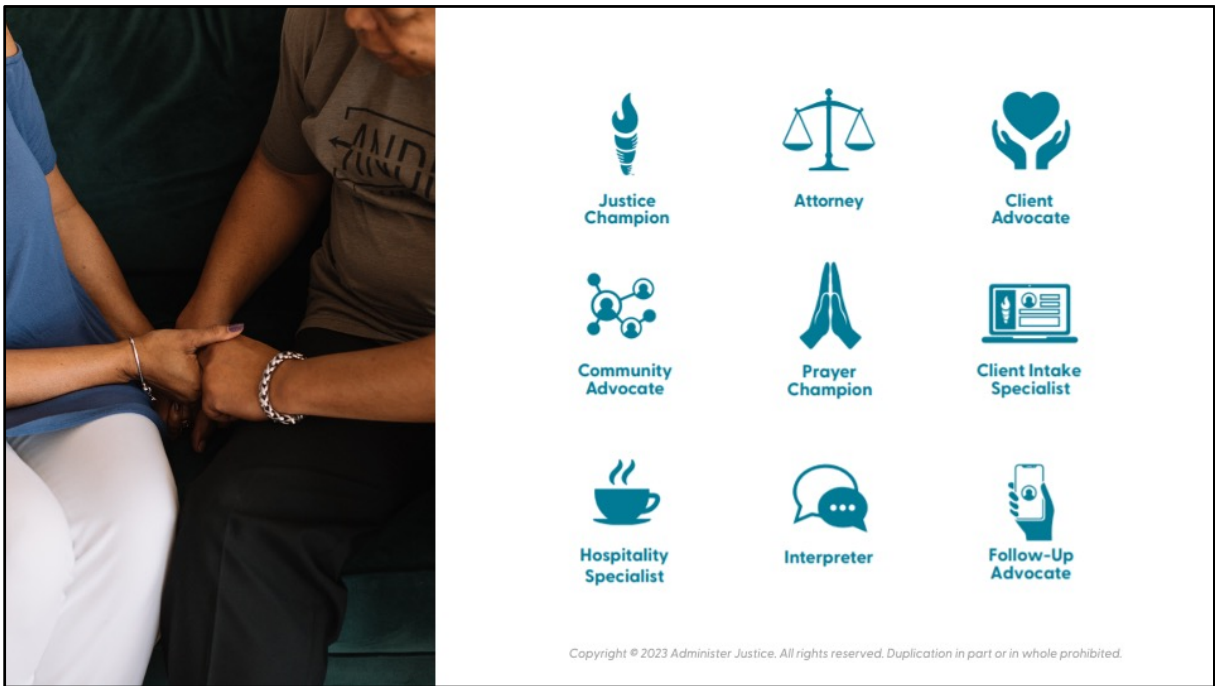
- Listens carefully to ensure client understands next steps
- Explores needs beyond legal concerns (social, spiritual)
- Serves as a resource coach
- Warmly offers prayer

After meeting with the attorney, the client will meet with a Client Advocate who will explore what else is going on in their life, refer them to other resources in the community, and offer to pray for them. They along with the rest of the team will welcome the client, listen without judgment and provide compassionate care.



Here's what volunteers love about serving at a Gospel Justice Center.

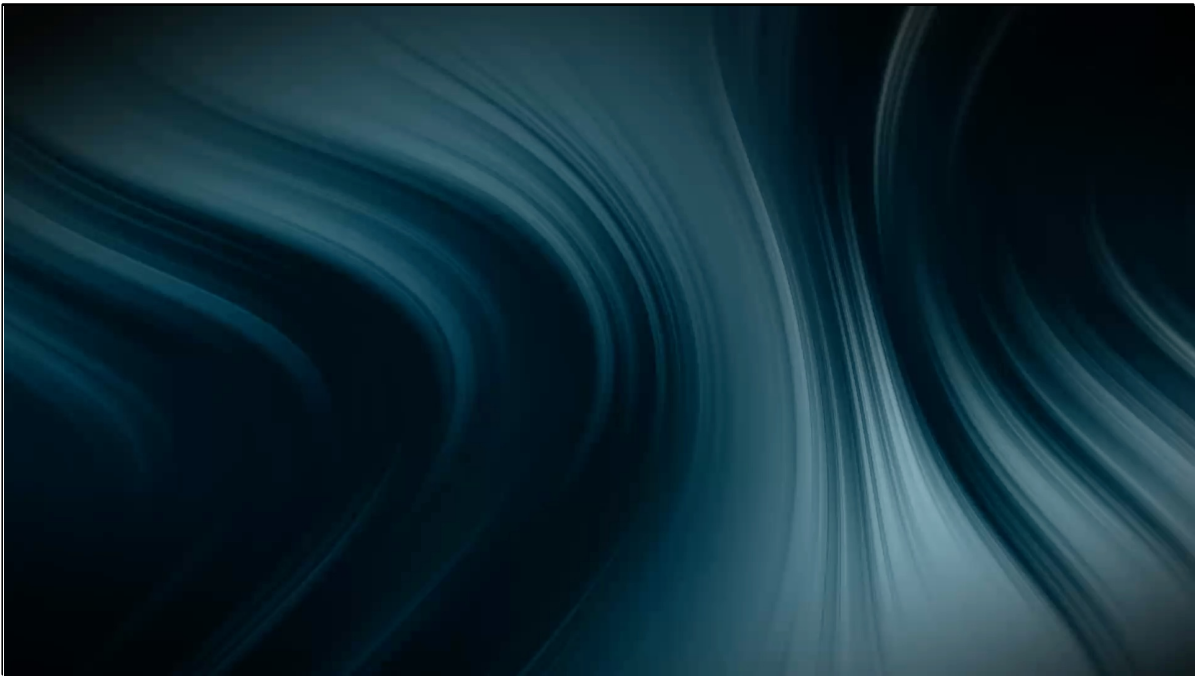
<https://youtu.be/hZKgXd69248>



Here’s are the 9 roles on a team – all of these are explained on the What makes a Gospel Justice Center? one-pager and training for each role is provided through the online AJ Academy.

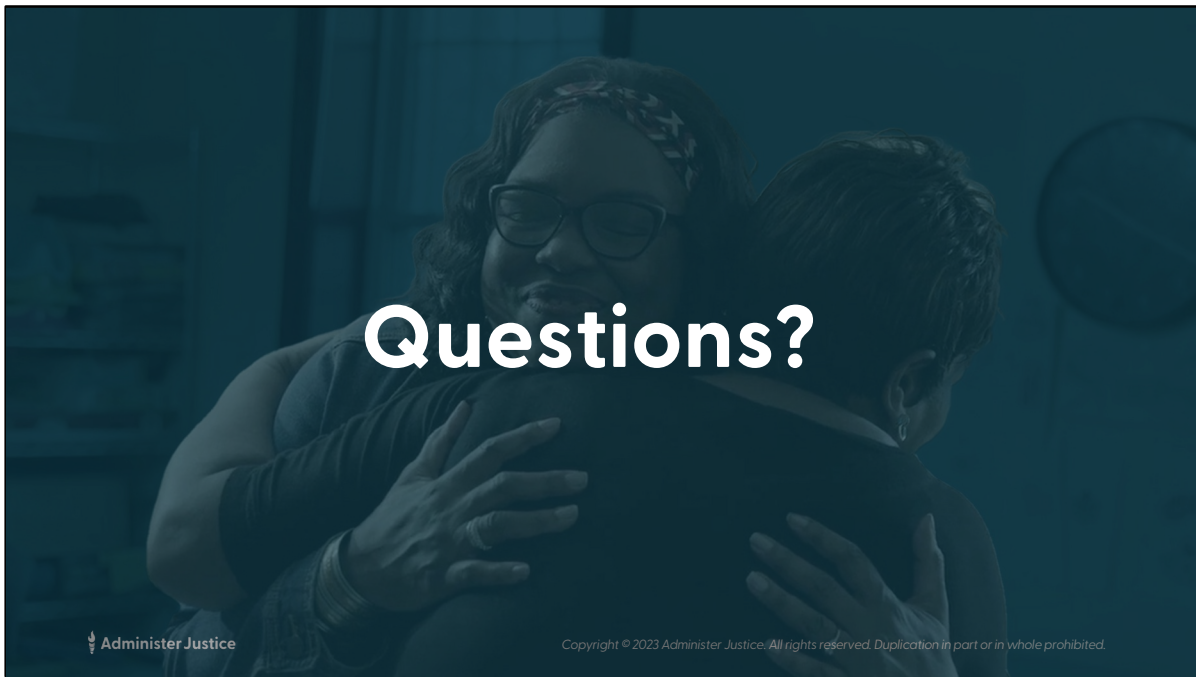
If you take the next step to volunteer, you’ll later attend the online training for your role – all courses are provided on-demand, so you can start and stop at any time. They range from 30 minutes to closer to 2 hours (for the attorney role).

So, that’s how the model works – here’s what one client had to say about her experience after coming to a center.



Stephanie's video

<https://youtu.be/qKZKqgVLe6M>



If you are interested in volunteering. . .

What questions do you have?