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## You Get What You Measure:

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Constructing effective “Score Cards” for  
Legal Aid Advocates and Offices

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You get what you measure.

- Management experts preach this simple but powerful truism:

You get what you measure.

*“Tell me how you will measure me and  
I will tell you how I will behave.”*

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The metrics your organization focuses on send the strong message that those measures are what are important.

- If you measure the number of widgets produced, you will get more widgets produced.
- If you measure the time it takes to produce a widget, you get widgets produced more quickly.
- If you measure how many widgets pass a crash test, you will get more widgets that pass a crash test.

Be careful what you measure...

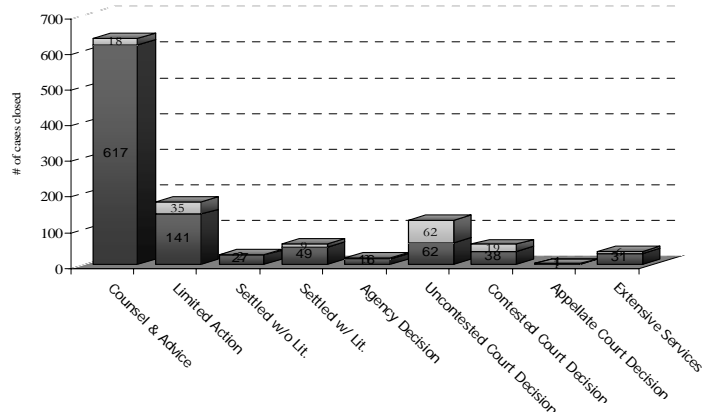
- Employees place importance on the things you measure: they take their cues from what you are measuring.
- You have to be mindful that you are measuring the things that are paramount to your organization. Otherwise, you may unwittingly reinforce the wrong things in your organization.

## What are we measuring, and for whom?

- LSC has us measuring cases closed, by level of service, type of legal problem, and demographics.
- LSC also has us measuring time...(or at least *recording* time).
- More recently, LSC has asked that we measure and report other “matters”.
- Over the last 10-15 years, other funders have prodded us into measuring various outcomes, instead of just outputs.
- Likewise, many legal aid programs conduct client satisfaction surveys of various types.

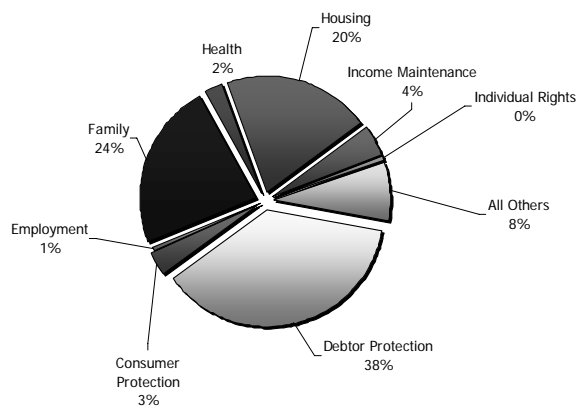
## LSC CSR Data

**Cases Closed by Level of Service**



## LSC Types of Legal Problems

Cases Closed by Substantive Legal Category



An important corollary to this management rule: you get what you measure, *assuming you share those metrics with your employees.*

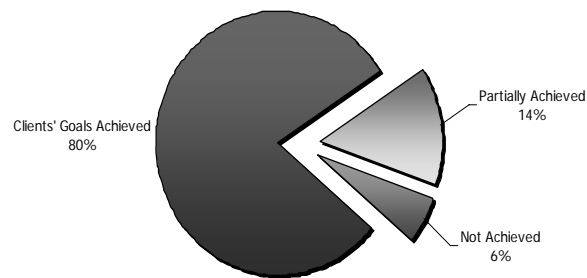
- While we are measuring outputs, outcomes and client data for our funders, are we sharing ANY of that data with our staff in a meaningful way?
- If we're sharing metrics, are they the right metrics? Are we sending the message we intend?

All our program cares about is numbers:  
how many cases can I close.

If all we compile and share with our offices and advocates are the LSC CSR data, it really does suggest to staff that it's all about the numbers of cases closed, and nothing else really is important.

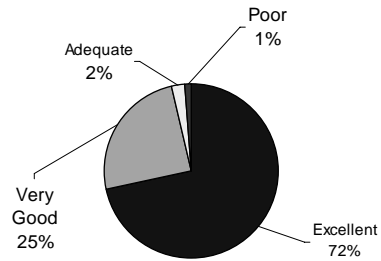
## Outcome Measurements

### Success Rates in Extended Representation



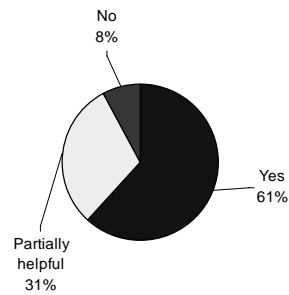
## Client Satisfaction Surveys

How would rate the quality of legal assistance Blue Ridge Legal Services provided you?



## Client Survey: Effectiveness of Advice

Was the legal advice you received helpful in successfully resolving your legal problem?



## More Outcomes: Key Substantive and Financial Outcomes

Benefit Achieved	Number of Cases	Amount of Lump Sum Recovery	Amount of Monthly Recovery	Amount Avoided	Amount Avoided Monthly	Number of People Helped
Obtained federal bankruptcy protection	22	\$1,034.00	\$0.00	\$901,145.93	\$0.00	69
Stopped/reduced debt collection	32	\$16,023.65	\$48.00	\$43,338.40	\$197.00	53
Averted repossession	5	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$976.00	\$0.00	4
Avoided/reduced/ended deficiency judgment	3	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$19,803.32	\$0.00	12
Avoided/ended garnishment/levy	28	\$24,981.07	\$0.00	\$13,325.36	\$0.00	76
Overcame unfair/illegal sales contracts	3	\$16,248.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	8
Enforced sales contracts/warranties	3	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	4
Obtained insurance benefits (not health/disability)	1	\$0.00	\$439.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	1
Overcame fraudulent sales practices	1	\$3,633.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	1

Compiling all our pre-existing measurements to generate more effective score cards for each office, each advocate, each unit.

### Summary

Over the year, the Harrisonburg office closed 1137 cases with 1267 outcomes, recovering \$141,808 in lump sum benefits and \$9,031 in monthly benefits for clients, while avoiding \$1,132,726 in liabilities for these clients, benefiting 5270 people.

The office achieved our clients' goals in 80% of the cases in which we undertook representation, while partially achieving them in another 14%.

97% of the office's clients rated our services as "very good" or "excellent."

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What are we doing with these score cards?

Primarily, a tool for self-analysis and self-improvement.

We are also using them as one element of the performance evaluation.

It will be fascinating to see how the metrics in these reports change over time. Will they have the positive impact we intend?

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What other metrics should we consider?

- What types of other metrics are you tracking in your program?
  - Do you have mechanisms for sharing that effectively with staff?
  - Do you have other suggestions for additional metrics to include that would contribute to a stronger, more comprehensive office or advocate score card?
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