

KLS provides help in Salina, as well as in ten other cities and their counties

KEY POINTS

- Most people in Saline County civil court cases lack legal representation.
- Kansas Legal Services is a non-profit law firm that provides legal aid to low-income Kansans.
- A shortage of lawyers in rural areas contributes to the lack of legal representation.
- The organization offers help with issues like evictions, family law, and debt collection.

[Charles Rankin](#) [Salina Journal](#) March 20, 2026

The vast majority of people heading to court for civil matters in Saline County don't have legal representation, but a longstanding organization is trying to alleviate that.

[Kansas Legal Services](#), which has maintained an office in Salina for more than 40 years, is a statewide nonprofit law firm that prides itself on helping low-income Kansans with legal and mediation services.

According to the [Legal Services Corporation](#), low-income Americans in 2022 didn't receive any or enough legal help 92% of civil legal problems.

In the 29th District Court, which encompasses Saline and Ottawa counties, that number is higher.

Part of the problem is that there are not as many lawyers practicing in rural communities as before.

The Kansas Supreme Court created the [Rural Justice Initiative Committee](#) to explore ways to improve access to legal services in rural parts of the state.

[The committee released a report in December 2024](#) showing that the 28th District has one lawyer for every 577 residents, comparable to other rural districts across the state. By comparison, Sedgwick County has one for every 436 and Johnson County one for every 178.

Matthew Keenan, executive director of KLS, said this is a problem for everyone and one that people might not realize based on what is seen in media.

"The notion of Perry Mason, Della Street and Hamilton Burger facing off in court is Hollywood fiction," he said. "A traditional hallmark of civil litigation has always been the presence of competent attorneys zealously representing both sides. Today, however, national statistics show that in more than three out of four civil cases at least one side is unrepresented."

KLS offering pro bono advocacy for those in need

To help with this under-representation, KLS does work across the state as a nonprofit law firm.

According to Keenan, in 2025, more than 23,500 Kansans in all 105 counties used serviced provided by KLS, including those with low income, veterans, homeowners and renters, families with children, farmers, people with disabilities and the elderly.

KLS has been a big help to one demographic in particular, women, who comprise 70% of its clients and whom Keenan said often are struggling to keep their children safe and families together.

At the Salina alone, the firm helped more than 100 residents with a variety of legal issues, which Keenan said has been able to help some of the most vulnerable in society.

"Without guardrails keeping debt collectors and overzealous landlords in check, the societal safety nets begin to fail," he said. "Kansas Legal Services serves as one of

those guardrails. Our staff helps ensure the law is followed, the process remains fair, and courts have the information they need to reach just outcomes.

Help from KLS available in Salina

For those needing help in and around Salina, KLS has a few options including with an office at 300 S. Ninth St. Suite 105 that can be reached at 785-825-8147, with Candace Bridges being the managing attorney at the office.

Additionally, KLS staffs a self-help center from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., with one hour break at noon, on the second Friday of every month on the third floor of the City County building, 300 W. Ash St., Room 310

Anyone needing help for matters including family law, protection orders, evictions and landlord-tenant issues, small claims, name changes, expungements and consumer and credit issues, are encouraged to make an appointment with KLS.

KLS does not handle criminal matters.

Walk-ins during the self-help staffing sessions are only as time allows and on a first come, first serve basis. The center is also open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on all Mondays to Fridays, even when it is not staffed, with resources including paper court forms, computers and printers and access to the Westlaw database and legal books.

Besides the Salina area, KLS has offices in Dodge City, Emporia, Hays, Hutchinson, Kansas City, Manhattan, Pittsburg, Seneca, Topeka, and Wichita.

For more information, including applying for legal assistance, and online resources such as free legal forms, visit the KLS website at www.kansaslegalservices.org.



Matthew Keenan, executive director of Kansas Legal Services, stands in front of the nonprofit law firm's Salina office. The firm helped a total of more than 23,500 clients in all 105 Kansas counties in 2025. *Provided By Kansas Legal Services*

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