

## Mark Freedman

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**From:** Ben Weber [benweber@mlscnet.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 16, 2011 1:29 AM  
**To:** Mark Freedman  
**Subject:** Poverty Data and LSC Funding Distribution

Hello Mark,

I am presently acting director at Micronesian Legal Services Corporation in Saipan, Recipient # 952000. Our Executive Director Ben Tured is ill and in Manila for treatment, hence my designation as acting director.

In going through our director's emails, I notice the request for comments regarding poverty data. As you may know, our service area is made up of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Palau (these are former Trust Territories), and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI), which as the name indicates is a U.S. commonwealth.

Unfortunately poverty is the norm in our service area. The most recent figure that we have is that in 2000, 72.5% of the then-total population of 245,812 were at or below the poverty level, and given the economic downturn of recent years, that figure has almost certainly increased. Thus MLSC endorses LSC's proposal that the Bureau of the Census make a poverty determination and that funding be allocated based on that determination. However, any poverty determination in our service area would also need to include information for the RMI, the FSM, and Palau, and the CNMI. My question, is it anticipated that a poverty determination consistent with the LSC recommendation would be made for these areas?

I thank you for any information that you can provide in this respect.

Sincerely,

Ben Weber  
Deputy Director/Acting Executive Director  
Micronesian Legal Services Corporation