



TEXAS | ACCESS to JUSTICE
FOUNDATION

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR LEGAL AID

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation works to ensure that ALL Texans have equitable access to justice. Since its inception in 1984, TAJF has granted more than \$1 billion to Texas nonprofit organizations to provide free legal services to disadvantaged Texans. While the COVID-19 pandemic was declared over in 2023, Texas continues to feel residual impacts that trickle down to many across the state, including poverty, unemployment, landlord-tenant problems, consumer credit issues and more.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation's reach spans
ALL 254 COUNTIES, FUNDING 35 GRANTEEES

Every Texan Deserves Fair Access to Our Justice System

Civil legal aid assures fairness for all in the court system, regardless of income. Less than 8% of the civil legal needs are being met for low-income individuals across the U.S. In Texas, approximately 5.2 million people qualify for legal aid, the second-highest number in the nation.

With legal aid, Texans receive free access to legal assistance, helping protect their livelihoods, their health and their families, and is a vital component of a fair and equitable legal system.

Please support justice for all Texans through an adequately funded legal aid system in Texas.



ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR...ALL TEXANS



for... Women and Families

More than half of legal aid clients are women, and family law issues account for a large number of cases handled by legal aid offices and attorneys. Unemployment, the threat of eviction or utility shutoff, and the potential of increased medical needs put additional strain on a family's resources in Texas. Through family resource helplines, attorneys help parents understand their rights and responsibilities and can address each caller's unique situation.

for... Veterans

Texas has the highest population of veterans in the U.S., and of the more than 1.5 million veterans calling Texas home, nearly 7% live in poverty. Veterans are 50% more likely to become homeless than other Americans due to poverty, lack of support networks and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing. Legal issues must be handled to help Texas veterans with a seamless return to civilian life after active duty.

for... Survivors of Domestic Abuse or Sexual Assault

More than 26,000 victims of domestic violence receive legal help and protection from Texas Access to Justice Foundation-funded grantees annually. Legal aid helps survivors of sexual assault achieve safety, security and stability as they rebuild their lives after trauma. The aftermath of domestic violence leads to a host of legal issues—safety and financial concerns at home, child custody issues, and access to health insurance, among others.

for... Elderly and Persons with Disabilities

Many Texans with disabilities already worry about expensive medical bills, exacerbated by COVID-19 and current economic hardships. Legal assistance for issues such as special education, accessibility, and housing is needed. Funding from TAJF helps elderly Texans and those with disabilities whose economic security or health care is in jeopardy.

for... Children's Health and Security

After the tragic school shooting at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, legal aid responded to the emergency legal needs of those impacted. The 88th Legislature funded a new request of the Supreme Court of Texas for \$3.7 million to provide basic civil legal services to eligible children and young people in the child welfare systems. Legal Aid for Children's Health & Security will provide grantees with funding to provide services for child welfare, foster youth, education and access to benefits in specific areas of Texas that are most vulnerable.



for... Communities and Homeowners

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation received additional funding from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to continue the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. These crucial funds allow eligible Texans who are at risk of losing their homes and previously unable to pay their rent access to a full range of free civil legal services. Since then, TAJF grantees have served Texans in over 183 counties.

New Initiatives Change How We Impact Texans

Texas Legal Services Center's Virtual Court Kiosk Project

In April 2023, the Texas Legal Services Center—a nonprofit organization funded by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation—launched the Virtual Court Access Project, a statewide pilot project aiming to improve low-income Texans' ability to receive and access free legal services through deploying accessible, physical virtual court kiosks to communities.



The project deployed 25 virtual court kiosks across Texas inside community centers, shelters, clinics, libraries and other high-traffic locations, where individuals can access life-changing community resources like connecting with courts and receiving legal aid services.

TexasLawHelp.org Expands Digital Resources and Accessibility

Building on its widespread reputation as a reliable, easy-to-understand legal resource, TexasLawHelp.org expanded its resources this year to be available in Spanish and Vietnamese at no cost to visitors. Approximately five million people per year utilize the website's resources, which is designed to assist Texans who cannot afford traditional legal representation.



Prime Partner Banks Are Vital in Legal Aid Effort

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation IOLTA Prime Partner program is an ongoing initiative allowing thousands of Texans to receive legal assistance. Prime Partner banks and credit unions voluntarily pay higher interest rates for Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA), a method of raising money for civil legal aid and supporting improvements to the justice system.

In the past year, the Foundation welcomed Capitol Credit Union, Cendera Bank, First Lockhart National Bank, and Wells Fargo to the program.

Texans, We Hear You

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I would not have been able to do anything without legal aid because I didn't know what I could get. I had no idea I could do anything with the county. I had no idea that the state of Texas is so good to veterans.

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In memory of Seaman First Class Chester Robey, Houston, Lone Star Legal Aid.



How can YOU help?

If you'd like to support the Foundation's mission to ensure all Texans in need of civil legal aid get the support they deserve, here are several ways you can positively impact the lives TAJF and our grantees serve:

Donate to TAJF for essential legal services for Texans at www.tajf.org/donate

Name the Foundation as a beneficiary recipient in your next class-action case

Sponsor an Equal Justice Works Fellowship

Volunteer at your local legal aid program

Donate excess officeholder funds to the TAJF Legacy Fund

Bank at a Texas IOLTA Prime Partner to help increase IOLTA funding

Purchase an "And Justice for All" license plate to demonstrate your support



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Thank you to the Supreme Court of Texas for its continued support of civil legal aid, the Texas Legislature for funding basic civil legal services, and to legal aid and volunteer groups across Texas for working tirelessly to provide access to justice for all. I am honored to have been reappointed to serve as board chair of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation and remain committed to leading the Foundation's work supporting the provision of critical legal services to those in need. Due to a lack of resources, there is always more to be done to ensure that the civil legal needs of those who qualify for services are met. From all of us at the Foundation, we appreciate your support.

—Hon. Deborah G. Hankinson, TAJF Board Chair

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About the Texas Access to Justice Foundation

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation (www.tajf.org), created by the Supreme Court of Texas in 1984, is the leading state-based funding source for the provision of civil legal aid in Texas. The organization is committed to the vision that all Texans will have equal access to justice, regardless of their income.

With the Foundation's funding, legal aid organizations provide free legal assistance in civil matters to more than 100,000 disadvantaged Texas families each year. These services include helping victims of domestic violence secure their safety and leave their abusers, protecting families from foreclosure and homelessness, securing benefits for our veterans, and protecting workers from abusive employers.

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