



## FUNDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR 40 YEARS

In 1984, the Supreme Court of Texas created the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation to administer funding for civil legal aid for poor Texans. The Foundation is committed to the vision that all Texans will have equal access to justice regardless of their income.

Since its inception 40 years ago, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation has granted more than \$1.76 billion to nonprofit organizations in Texas to provide free legal services to disadvantaged Texans and is the leading funding source for civil legal aid in Texas. Civil legal aid provides access to legal help for people to protect their livelihoods, their health and their families and is a vital component of a fair and equitable legal system.

The 35 legal aid programs funded by Texas Access to Justice Foundation reach all parts of state; helping disadvantaged Texas with critical civil legal issues impacting their very existence. Those include: families fleeing domestic abuse; elderly wrongly denied life-sustaining prescriptions; veterans denied disability and other benefits; and families evicted from their homes. Additionally, in 2024 our grantees assisted Texans recovering from fires in the Panhandle and the impact of Tropical Storm Beryl on our coast. A new grant program has been created for basic civil legal services to eligible children and young people in the child welfare systems and those experiencing mental and physical health challenges in schools and communities.

With Texas Access to Justice Foundation funding, legal aid organizations provide assistance in civil matters to more than 100,000 low-income Texas families each year. Legal aid continues to struggle to meet the demand for services in our large, diverse state. Approximately five million Texans qualify for legal aid, and Texas has the second-highest number of poor people in the nation.

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation is committed to supporting the critical legal aid work in our state and finding additional ways to support these efforts to ensure justice for all.

“

**JUSTICE FOR ONLY  
THOSE WHO CAN  
AFFORD IT IS  
NEITHER JUSTICE  
FOR ALL, NOR  
JUSTICE AT ALL. ”**



*Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht,  
Supreme Court of Texas*

# PROVIDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL TEXANS

Grants provided by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF) fund legal service programs that serve Texans who cannot afford private counsel and are in desperate need of legal help. Legal aid grantees of TAJF reach every population group and geographic region of Texas.

GRANT FUNDING FOR TEXANS

## 123 GRANTS TO 35 NONPROFITS FROM 125 OFFICES

TAJF administers 123 grants to 35 nonprofit organizations that provide legal aid services from 125 offices throughout Texas.

## 117,370 CASES CLOSED 304,874 TEXANS HELPED

TAJF grantees closed 117,370 cases in 2023 benefiting the lives of approximately 304,874 Texans.

**27,200**

victims of domestic violence

**10,281**

crime victims with civil legal needs

**12,363**

persons experiencing homelessness

**3,115**

adults and children affected by opioid-use

**6,988**

veterans

**22,351**

tenants needing emergency rental assistance

**26,700**

people with disabilities

**3,600**

parents via parenting helplines



LEGAL AID ATTORNEY SUPPORT

## 10 EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS FELLOWS

Supports 10 Equal Justice Works Fellows in post-graduate fellowships.

## 6 LAW SCHOOL CLINICAL PROGRAMS

Funds 6 law school clinical programs and law students were actively involved in closing 3,309 cases.

## STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

Assists an average of 50 lawyers through a Student Loan Repayment Assistance Program.



LEGAL AID STRUGGLES TO MEET NEEDS

## 92% OF LEGAL PROBLEMS

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

## 5 MILLION TEXANS QUALIFY

Approximately 5 million people qualify for legal aid in Texas at 125% of the federal poverty guidelines

## INCOME QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for legal aid, a person must not earn more than \$18,825 per year. A family of four must not earn more than \$39,000 per year

## TEXAS RANKS 44TH

Texas ranks 44th in access to civil legal aid lawyers





## NEW OPPORTUNITY, OLD REQUIREMENT FOR LAWYERS' TRUST ACCOUNTS

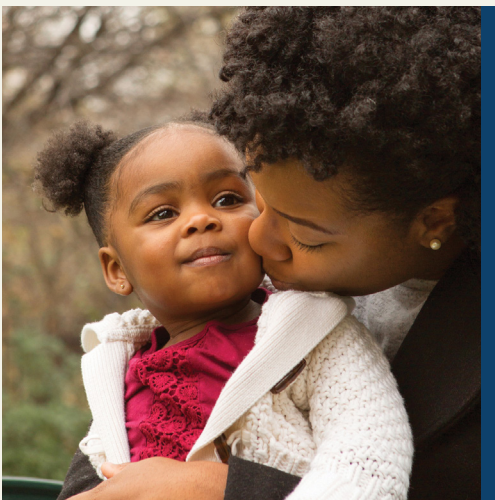


The Interest on Lawyers' Trust Account (IOLTA) program, established by the Supreme Court of Texas in 1984, is a significant source of funding civil legal aid in Texas administered by the Texas Access

to Justice Foundation. Lawyers who handle client funds must participate in the IOLTA program by creating a separate trust account for funds held for a short period of time. The pooled interest from these funds helps support civil legal services throughout the state.

For various reasons, sometimes the client associated with an IOLTA cannot be located. After exhausting efforts, attorneys are required by law to submit unclaimed or abandoned funds to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts through the unclaimed property process. Recent legislation provides that unclaimed IOLTA funds that have been delivered to the Texas Comptroller will be deposited in the basic civil legal services account for use by programs approved by the Supreme Court of Texas.

If a client is located after submission of funds to the Comptroller, they will be returned to the client. To learn more about reporting property to the Texas Comptroller's Unclaimed Property Division visit, [www.claimittexas.gov](http://www.claimittexas.gov). Rule 1.14 of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct sets forth a lawyer's obligations regarding funds and other property belonging to clients and the Texas Property Code governs handling of abandoned property.



## MOONSHOT FOR THE FUTURE OF LEGAL AID



The Texas Access to Justice Foundation Board of Directors created an ambitious "moonshot" grant program to spur creative solutions for statewide legal aid problems.

The funded three-year projects offer both traditional and highly innovative service models and propose to create new networks of partnerships to reach currently unserved populations and areas of need across the state.

Grant awards focused on applications that remedy intractable problems, expand services well beyond current levels, and that have a plan for sustainability with one-time funding. The "moonshot" projects involve nine grantee organizations and include: a community justice worker program, statewide legal aid expunction project, a Texas bullying resource center, debtors' rights initiative and an economic justice program. These projects demonstrate a giant leap and potentially transformative investment in access to justice in Texas.



## CATHERINE'S STORY

Catherine is a veteran. At the age of 18, she was sexually assaulted by her Navy recruiter. When her trauma from the incident became apparent at work, she was abruptly discharged.

The military officially labeled her 'other than honorable.' This label has practical consequences – it closes the door to many job opportunities and precludes the possibility of ever receiving Veterans' benefits – but the personal consequence are even more devastating and life changing.

Catherine turned to legal aid for help and the veteran team at Texas Legal Services Center was able to secure a favorable Character of Service determination for her. Decades after the assault took place – she finally received a letter stating, 'Your United States Navy service is found to be honorable for VA purposes.'

She now has access to benefits she earned. And validation.

Clients like Catherine overcome unimaginable situations. They persevere and come out on the other side, often wanting to help fellow Texans who have been in their shoes.



## How YOU can help increase access to justice

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 [tajf.org/donate](http://tajf.org/donate)
- Name the Foundation as a cy pres 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

**I want to help disadvantaged Texans have access to justice!**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

My gift is in honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** Texas Access to Justice Foundation - Donations  
 P.O. Box 12886, Austin, TX 78711-2886  
 Or donate online at: [www.tajf.org](http://www.tajf.org)

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