

September 3, 2014

**Statement from Richard L. Tate, Chair,
Texas Access to Justice Foundation
*on Declines in Funding for Texas Legal Aid***

AUSTIN, Texas – The following statement was issued today by Richard L. Tate, chair of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation board of directors:

“As has been widely reported, Bank of America has reached a settlement with the U.S. Justice Department that will include at least \$30 million to the Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts program, known as IOLTA. These funds are used to help fund legal aid programs; Texas programs are expected to receive approximately \$2 million from the settlement.

“We are, of course, very pleased to receive this much-needed influx of funding. Texas has experienced dramatic losses in funding over the past several years due to the economic downturn and resulting historically low interest rates.

“Since 2007, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, which is the primary state-based funder of legal aid in Texas, has experienced a loss of \$99.3 million due to declines in funding from the state’s IOLTA programs. IOLTA funding has plummeted from \$20 million in 2007 to a projected \$4.2 million in 2014—a decline of approximately 75 percent, leaving IOLTA revenue at historic lows.

“We will continue to do all in our power to replace these lost funds so that all Texans have equitable access to our state’s court system. Legal aid organizations help more than 104,000 Texas families each year, but due to a lack of resources, only about 20 percent of the civil legal needs of eligible Texans are being met.”

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The [Texas Access to Justice Foundation](#), created by the Supreme Court of Texas in 1984, is the largest 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. The Foundation administers a variety of funding sources, which are earmarked to assist nonprofit organizations in providing legal aid to more than 100,000 Texas families each year.