



# ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACROSS TEXAS

## Legal Aid is a Lifeline When Texans Need It Most

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation works to ensure that every Texan—regardless of where they live or how much they earn—can access legal help when it matters most. As the state's largest funder of civil legal aid, the Foundation supports 34 nonprofit legal organizations across 126 offices that help Texans resolve critical, often life-changing, legal issues involving housing, family violence, veterans' benefits and financial stability.

More than five million Texans qualify for legal aid and the state ranks 44th in access to civil legal aid lawyers. The Texas Access to Justice Foundation works to close this gap by funding legal aid across the state, helping more than 100,000 families each year resolve issues that threaten their livelihoods, homes, health or safety. Civil legal aid keeps Texans working, housed and safe – strengthening our communities and supporting a robust economy.

With your help, we can sustain a legal aid system that protects Texans and builds a stronger future for our state.



## CHILDREN + FAMILIES

### ENSURING SAFE, STABLE ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, supportive and secure environment. Legal aid services funded by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation provide essential support to protect children and help families navigate complex matters from securing guardianship for grandparents raising grandchildren to protecting survivors of domestic violence. By ensuring families have access to civil legal help when they need it most, these services create the stability children need to thrive.



## HOUSING

### SUPPORTING SAFE AND SECURE HOUSING

Access to civil legal aid can sometimes mean the difference between a roof overhead and experiencing homelessness. With funding from the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, legal aid organizations across the state help prevent unlawful evictions, resolve unsafe living conditions and protect tenants' rights. These services are especially vital for families, seniors and veterans—those most at risk of losing their homes due to legal barriers. By expanding access to stable housing, the Foundation helps ensure Texans have a safe place to call home and communities remain strong.

## FINANCIAL

### SUPPORTING STABILITY AND FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Legal aid helps Texans protect their livelihoods and move toward economic security. With support from the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, legal aid organizations assist with employment disputes, unpaid wages and cases of fraud or exploitation. By removing legal barriers that threaten economic security, these services play a vital role in supporting stability and financial independence for Texans striving to build secure and self-sufficient futures.



## HEALTH, SAFETY + ACCESS

### PROVIDING ACCESS TO SAFETY, CARE AND STABILITY

Civil legal aid is often the missing link to securing health and safety for vulnerable Texans. Through funding from the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, legal aid organizations help Texans access life-saving healthcare, resolve issues with public benefits and navigate complex systems. These services are especially critical for seniors, people with disabilities and others who need legal support to achieve stability and care when it matters most.



## Legal Aid Mobilized for Flood-Affected Texans

As floodwaters swept away lives, homes, memories and security for many devastated by the tragic Central Texas floods in July, legal aid became a lifeline for Texans picking up the pieces, reclaiming their livelihoods and finding steady ground again. The Texas Access to Justice Foundation awarded \$1.8 million to Texas RioGrande Legal Aid to provide legal services to Texans impacted by the floods. The funding comes from the Texas Legislature and Stand with Santos, an initiative led by State Bar of Texas President Santos Vargas to raise support for legal aid disaster relief, as well as from the Fulbright & Jaworski Foundation. This support helps flood survivors access legal assistance for issues including insurance disputes, FEMA claims, housing instability and contractor fraud.

## New Opportunity, Old Requirement For Lawyers' Trust Accounts

The Interest on Lawyers' Trust Account (IOLTA) program, established by the Supreme Court of Texas, 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 support civil legal services throughout the state.

For various reasons, sometimes the client associated with an IOLTA or client trust account 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. 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. To learn more about reporting property to the Comptroller's Unclaimed Property Division visit, [www.claimittexas.gov](http://www.claimittexas.gov).

## Introducing the Texas Justice Dispatch

This year, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation introduced the Texas Justice Dispatch, a monthly LinkedIn newsletter designed to elevate voices, stories and solutions behind civil legal aid in Texas. Each edition features impact stories, grant updates, legislative highlights and insights from legal aid providers serving communities across the state. By sharing real-time impact and thought leadership, the Texas Justice Dispatch brings civil legal aid into focus, showcasing how access to justice strengthens families, supports economic stability and helps Texans overcome life's toughest challenges. Find us on LinkedIn.

## Securing Housing After a Hurricane

After Hurricane Beryl left her home damaged and unsafe, 65-year-old Diana turned to Lone Star Legal Aid (LSLA) for help. As a grantee of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, LSLA was able to assist Diana in navigating three successful FEMA appeals to secure essential home repairs and hazard mitigation assistance. As a widow living with limited mobility, Diana now has a safe and accessible home again—demonstrating the critical role legal aid plays in disaster recovery for vulnerable Texans.

## How can YOU help?

If you'd like to support TAJF's mission to expand access to civil legal aid across Texas, there are several ways to make a direct impact on the lives of those served by TAJF and its grantees:

- 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



Thank you to the Supreme Court of Texas for its steadfast leadership and to the Texas Legislature for its continued investment in civil legal aid. From disaster recovery to daily legal challenges, access to justice helps protect the safety, stability and dignity of Texans who cannot afford an attorney. Through the work of our legal aid partners, we're reaching more communities—from flood-affected counties to rural and urban regions—ensuring that critical legal services are available when and where they're needed most. From all of us at the Foundation, we appreciate your support and dedication to justice for every Texan.

—Hon. Deborah G. Hankinson, TAJF Board Chair



## ABOUT THE TEXAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDATION

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation, created by the Supreme Court of Texas in 1984, is the primary 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. For more information, please visit: [www.teajf.org](http://www.teajf.org).

### Board of Directors

Hon. Deborah G. Hankinson, Chair, Dallas  
 G. Joseph Barrientos, Vice Chair, Corpus Christi  
 Terry O. Tottenham, Secretary, Austin  
 Roland K. Johnson, Treasurer, Fort Worth  
 Dr. Ben Alexander, Lubbock  
 Jose A. Aranda Jr., Eagle Pass  
 Zina Bash, Austin  
 Perla Cavazos, Austin  
 Hon. Pete Gallego, Alpine  
 Denise Scofield, Houston  
 Kay Sim, Dallas  
 Lisa M. Tatum, San Antonio  
 Travis A. Torrence, Houston  
 Carlos M. Zaffirini, Jr., Austin

Justice Brett Busby  
 Supreme Court of Texas Liaison

Betty Balli Torres  
 Executive Director

Scan the QR code to donate online!



P.O. Box 12886  
 Austin, Texas 78711  
 512-320-0099 | [www.teajf.org](http://www.teajf.org)



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.teajf.org](http://www.teajf.org)