

## **There's a tremendous need for legal aid services in Texas.**

- Currently in Texas, there are more than six million people who qualify for legal aid.<sup>1</sup>
- To qualify for legal aid, an individual must not earn more than \$13,963 per year. A family of four must not earn more than \$28,813 per year.<sup>2</sup>

## **Legal aid service organizations, with limited resources, help many poor Texans.**

- Legal aid organizations help more than 120,000 low-income Texas families each year with their civil legal needs.<sup>3</sup>
- The average starting salary for a public interest attorney is approximately \$46,000 per year. Most new law school graduates carry more than \$86,000 in student loan debt.<sup>3</sup>

## **Texas attorneys donate financial resources and provide pro bono and reduced rate services to address the need.**

- According to the State Bar of Texas Survey of 2009 Pro Bono Report, Texas attorneys' estimate providing the sum total of 2.24 million to 2.56 million hours of free or indirect legal services to the poor.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2011, Texas attorneys donated more than \$887,000 through the State Bar of Texas dues collection for the provision of civil legal aid for low-income Texans.<sup>4</sup>

## **Yet, many low-income and poor Texans still go without the civil legal help that they need.**

- There is approximately only one legal aid lawyer for every 11,152 Texans who qualify.<sup>3</sup>
- Due to a lack of resources, only about 20-25 percent of the civil legal needs of low-income and poor Texans are being met.<sup>5</sup>
- For every one person helped by legal aid, a qualifying individual is turned away.<sup>6</sup>

## **The crisis in funding legal aid in Texas continues.**

- A primary source of legal aid funding is Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA). This revenue declined dramatically when the Federal Reserve lowered its benchmark interest rate to an all-time low of zero to .25 percent in 2008. IOLTA revenues have plummeted from \$20 million in 2007 to a projected \$4.4 million in 2011 – a decline of more than 75 percent.

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<sup>3</sup> [Texas Access to Justice Foundation](#)

<sup>4</sup> [State Bar of Texas](#)

<sup>5</sup> American Bar Association

<sup>6</sup> Legal Services Corporation