

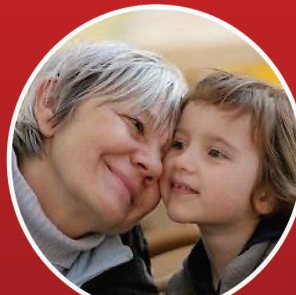
# Access to Justice in Texas



Spouses and children of domestic violence



Injured veterans



Vulnerable seniors

## Helping the most vulnerable Texans helps all Texans

Legal aid programs funded by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation **closed more than 101,000 cases and assisted more than 225,000 Texans** in 2011 in matters dealing with family law, consumer issues, housing rights, and veterans benefits.

A single person working full-time at minimum wage in Texas does not qualify for legal aid. To qualify for legal aid, a person must not earn more than **\$14,363 per year**. A family of four must not earn more than **\$29,438 per year**.

Texas lawyers provide approximately **2.5 million hours — or \$500 million — in free or indirect legal services to the poor annually**. Attorneys have contributed **millions of dollars in private donations**.

Through a tremendous show of bipartisan support, the **82nd Texas Legislature appropriated \$17.5 million** for civil legal aid for the biennium. This funding helped bridge the gap in Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) revenue and preserved funding with minimal reductions in client services. We will need the Texas Legislature's help again in 2013.

***“A society that denies access to the courts for the least among us denigrates the law for us all.”***

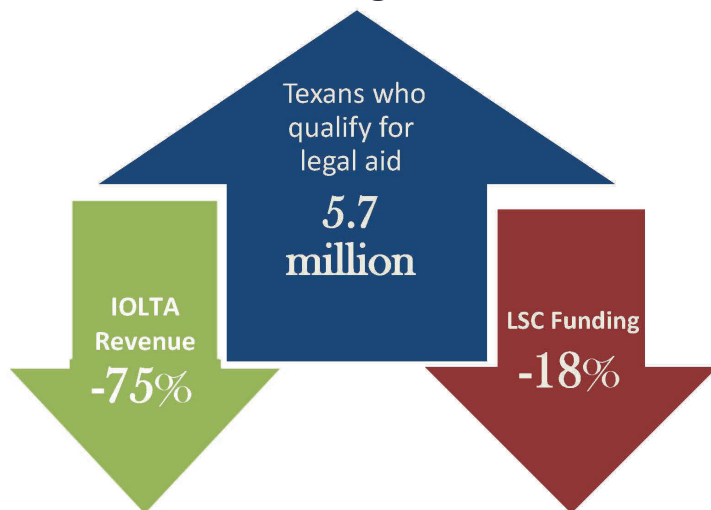
— Excerpt from a letter from Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson and Justice Nathan L. Hecht

INCREASING  
ACCESS TO  
JUSTICE  
FOR ALL  
TEXANS

Texas Access to  
Justice Commission

Texas Access to  
Justice Foundation

## Legal Needs Increase, Funding Declines



More than **5.7 million Texans** currently qualify for legal aid. Legal aid organizations **help more than 100,000 low-income Texas families** each year. However, due to a lack of resources **only about 20 to 25 % of the civil legal needs** of disadvantaged Texans are being met.

A primary source of funding for legal aid — Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts (IOLTA) — has declined dramatically during this period of historically low interest rates. IOLTA revenue has plummeted from \$20 million in 2007 to a projected \$4.4 million in 2012 – **a decline of more than 75 percent.**

Additionally, the three largest legal aid providers in Texas, funded by **the Legal Services Corporation (LSC)**, **lost an annualized \$6.1 million** beginning in 2012. The

federally funded LSC provides more than a third of Texas’ funding for legal aid to assist families in neighborhood-based clinics and rural communities.

The Texas Access to Justice Commission and Texas Access to Justice Foundation work closely with the Supreme Court of Texas, State Bar of Texas, Texas Legislature, Texas Office of the Attorney General, and other **access to justice partners** to support legal aid providers as they help struggling Texas families in need of legal assistance.



Without additional resources, civil legal aid for thousands of Texans will be drastically reduced.



[www.TexasATJ.org](http://www.TexasATJ.org)

P.O. Box 12487

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800-204-2222, ext. 1855

Created by the Supreme Court of Texas in 2001 to coordinate legal aid services for poor Texans, the Commission is charged with increasing resources for legal aid and developing policy initiatives to increase access to the legal system for Texas’ most vulnerable residents.

**TEXAS | ACCESS to JUSTICE  
FOUNDATION**

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

P.O. Box 12886

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Created by the Supreme Court of Texas in 1984, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation is the largest state-based funder of civil legal aid in Texas. The Foundation is committed to the vision that all Texans have access to the justice system, regardless of their income. Since its inception, the Foundation has granted more than \$350 million to Texas legal aid organizations.