

# Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation

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**MLAC Lauds Gov. Patrick's Increased Funding for Civil Legal Aid**

BOSTON (January 25, 2012) – Gov. Patrick recommended increased funding of \$12 million today for civil legal assistance to low-income residents of Massachusetts. The funds will go to the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation line item (MLAC, 0321-1600) in the FY13 budget. MLAC is the largest source of funding for civil legal aid in the Commonwealth.

“Governor Patrick has made a strong statement that civil legal aid is a sound investment for the Commonwealth, especially during such challenging economic times,” said Lonnie Powers, MLAC’s executive director. “We are very grateful for his ongoing support and leadership.”

Increased funding is critical to prevent further cuts to legal assistance for low-income families who are facing eviction and foreclosure, need help with child custody and support, have been denied health care coverage and unemployment benefits, and are victims of domestic violence and elder abuse. Legal aid programs have been struggling to meet increased demand due to a 78 percent decrease in revenue since FY08 from the Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program, the other major funding source for civil legal aid. MLAC has cut grants to the 16 legal aid programs it funds by 56 percent since FY08.

MLAC recently released a report that showed that in FY11, new revenue for legal aid clients and cost savings to the Commonwealth won by MLAC-funded legal aid programs totaled an estimated \$53.2 million, of which \$27.7 million was in the form of new federal revenue.

A supplemental FY12 appropriation of \$1 million for the civil legal aid line item is pending in the legislature.

**ABOUT MLAC**

The Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) was established by the state legislature in 1983 to ensure that low-income people with critical, non-criminal legal problems would have access to legal information, advice and representation. It is the largest funding source for civil legal aid programs in Massachusetts. For more information, visit <http://www.mlac.org>.

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