

Civil Legal Aid: A Lifeline for People in Crisis



MLAC requests \$27 million for civil legal aid in FY17

FY 16 Appropriation: \$17 million | Line Item 0321-1600

MLAC's appropriation funds general support to civil legal aid programs as well as grants dedicated to advice and representation for domestic violence victims and individuals eligible for federal disability benefits and Medicare.

- ▶ Civil legal aid sustains low-income individuals and families who are in crisis and face legal challenges, preventing further instability in their lives.
- ▶ Civil legal aid helps Massachusetts' most vulnerable residents avoid homelessness and protects the welfare of children. It provides support to elders and assists individuals who need access to health care for life-saving treatment. It helps survivors of domestic violence find safety and stability.
- ▶ Civil legal aid is our most powerful tool for creating a fair and efficient justice system.

Overwhelming Need

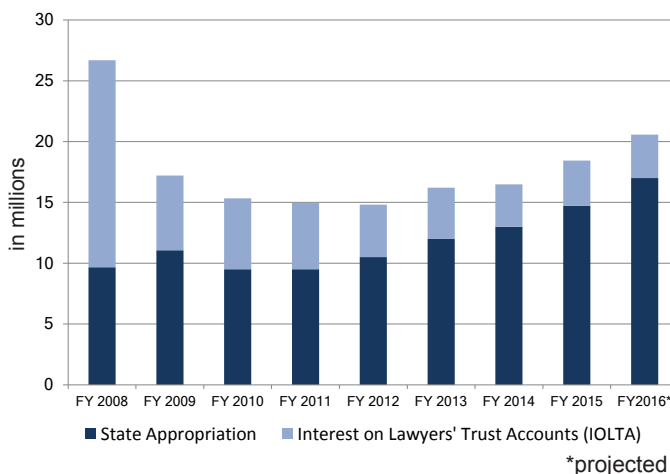


**Almost
1 MILLION**

people in Massachusetts live below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$30,313 a year for a family of four), making them eligible for civil legal aid.

Decreased Funding

Total MLAC Funding



For every dollar spent on civil legal aid, \$2-\$5 is returned to the state and its residents.

Additional Funding Needed to Support Our Neighbors and Communities

Across Massachusetts, **legal aid organizations are forced to turn away 64 percent of eligible applicants** because they lack the resources to take every case. These individuals are children, senior citizens, and men and women who live and work in our communities.

This much-needed investment in MLAC will expand capacity at civil legal aid programs across the Commonwealth and address the often catastrophic effects that lack of access to legal representation can have on child welfare, health, employment, and family safety and stability.

"I owe legal aid everything."

- Daniele
Medical interpreter and single mother who was able to receive life-saving chemotherapy thanks to civil legal aid

The Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation was established by the state legislature in 1983 to ensure that low-income people with critical, noncriminal legal problems would have access to legal information, advice and representation.

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