

Support & Co-sponsor Amdt. 1095: \$24 million for Civil Legal Aid

Massachusetts
Legal
Assistance
Corporation
Line item 0321-1600

The House Ways and Means Committee recommended \$22.5 million for civil legal aid through the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) in its FY20 budget.

Rep. Ruth Balser has filed **amendment #1095** to increase civil legal aid funding by an additional \$1.5 million, for a total of **\$24 million**.

Please support and co-sponsor this amendment so more low-income residents of the Commonwealth can receive assistance with serious civil legal problems.

Low-income Individuals and Families Depend on Legal Aid

- MLAC funds civil legal aid organizations that provide free legal assistance to thousands of Massachusetts residents living in poverty. People with an income at or below 125% of the federal poverty level - \$32,188 per year for a family of four - are eligible for legal aid.
- **Lack of funding forces legal aid organizations to turn away a majority of the eligible residents who seek help.**
- Without civil legal aid, people facing serious civil legal issues related to housing, health care, immigration, domestic violence, public benefits, employment, and other important issues must navigate a complex court system alone.
- Civil legal aid helps the Commonwealth respond to current community needs - such as the Merrimack Valley gas explosions, the opioid crisis, and significant changes in federal immigration policy - and ensure equal access to justice for all.

Legal aid produced an
economic benefit of

\$60.5 million

for the Commonwealth and its
residents in FY18, including
\$6.4 million in federal revenue.

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