

Civil Legal Aid in The Opioid Crisis

Massachusetts
Legal
Assistance
Corporation
Line item 0321-1600

The COVID-19 crisis has increased feelings of isolation, vulnerability, and stress, making people with substance abuse disorders more vulnerable and increasing their need for civil legal assistance with health care and family law issues.

Legal aid lawyers help people affected by the opioid crisis by:

- Resolving **family law** issues, including child abuse and neglect, child support, custody, and guardianship
- Ensuring people can receive **health care** services and access to treatment
- Helping families remain in stable **housing**
- Protecting **older adults** from financial risk posed by relatives living with addiction



“Legal aid gave my son a second chance at life.”

- Lisa, whose son received help from Greater Boston Legal Services to obtain insurance benefits to secure treatment.

Low-income people at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$33,125 per year for a family of four) qualify for civil legal aid.

A Racial Justice Issue

According to the Department of Public Health, the overdose death rate for all Massachusetts residents remained nearly static from 2018 to 2019, but rose among Black residents.

The rate across those two years decreased for white men and women, Asian Pacific Islander men, and Hispanic women, while it increased for Hispanic men and Black men and women.

Legal aid helps promote stability, recovery, and independence for people struggling with addiction and their families.

**Last year
legal aid provided
\$115 million
in economic benefits to
the Commonwealth and its
residents**

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