

Civil Legal Aid in Employment



Line Item 0321-1600

Civil legal aid helps people with low incomes solve employment-related problems that pose threats to their safety, their rights, or their economic stability.

Common work-related issues legal aid attorneys solve include:

- Wage theft
- Unsafe working conditions
- Unfair labor practices
- Employment discrimination
- Tax issues related to earned income
- Unemployment Insurance

People and families with incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$39,000 per year for a family of four; \$18,825 for an individual) qualify for civil legal aid.

Legal Aid: A Sound Investment

Nearly **\$100 million** in estimated benefits were provided by legal aid to the Commonwealth and its residents last year, including **\$83,877,858** in estimated benefits won for clients and **\$16,099,740** in reimbursements and savings obtained for the Commonwealth.

1,797 employment-related cases were closed in FY22, including cases involving:

970 Unemployment Insurance

444 Taxes (including Earned Income Tax Credit)

113 Wage claims and Fair Labor Standards Act Issues

125 Employee Rights

92 Employment Discrimination

13 Earned Income Tax Credit

40 Other



Last year, “**Ted**” (name changed for privacy) was shocked when, just days after he received an offer letter for a new job, the offer was rescinded. The employer did not want to accommodate Ted’s service dog in the workplace, despite the dog’s intensive training. Ted is a veteran who suffered traumatic brain injuries and has post-traumatic stress disorder. His service dog helps him cope with his conditions. Recognizing that this was an instance of employment discrimination, Ted contacted a legal aid organization.

Through negotiations, Ted’s legal aid attorney secured a favorable settlement that provided Ted with several months of lost wages and compensation for his distress. His employer’s Human Resources department was also compelled to undergo anti-discrimination training.