

Legal Services for the Poor



The Ohio General Assembly mandated the creation of the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation in 1994 as a response to the serious deficiencies in meeting the civil legal needs of all Ohioans. Among the 35 Foundation board members are appointees from the Chief Justice, the Governor, the Attorney General, the State Treasurer, the State Public Defender, the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, and the Ohio Senate President. Other bar leaders and citizens concerned about equal justice serve as trustees and are elected by the OLAF board to three-year terms.

In partnership with the state and local bar associations, elected officials, and local legal service providers, the Foundation continues to **coordinate statewide resource development, support the delivery of legal services by local legal aid providers, and promote new and innovative pro bono opportunities.**

Ohio's legal aid fund supports the charitable public purpose of providing legal assistance without charge to indigent Ohioans through grants made to legal aid societies throughout the state. The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation administers the distribution of monies from the legal aid fund to eligible legal aid societies. Legal aid fund revenues include proceeds from interest generated on IOLTA and IOTA and the legal aid filing fee surcharge.

Ohio's legal aid societies collectively delivered critical legal services to over 150,000 low-income individuals and families throughout the state. These services include advice and extended representation in non-criminal matters such as consumer issues, including contract disputes and some bankruptcies; domestic violence protection, divorce and custody cases; housing matters, including landlord-tenant disputes and foreclosure proceedings; administrative matters, including temporary assistance to needy families, supplemental security income and unemployment compensation; health related issues, including Medicaid and Medicare; and, assistance with employment matters such as wrongful terminations and wage and hour violations.



Civil legal aid in Ohio makes a difference in the lives of individuals, helps people gain access to justice, and helps everyone obtain their rights.