Who We Are and What We Do

Each year, Philadelphia’s legal aid programs help thousands of people who struggle with critical problems in such areas as housing, employment, access to benefits and family stability. Legal aid agencies also attack community-wide problems such as homelessness, inadequate access to health care and barriers faced by people returning from incarceration. Philadelphia has more than 30 legal aid programs, which collaborate through the Delivery of Legal Services Committee (DLSC) of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

Our Impact

Besides addressing individual needs, legal aid strengthens our economy and our city.

Research shows that every dollar invested in legal aid in Pennsylvania yields, on average, an $11 benefit. There are a number of reasons for this. When legal aid helps people retain employment or obtain needed benefits, the result is increased economic activity and greater self-sufficiency. Similar returns occur when a family avoids homelessness, a child receives essential medical care or a parent escapes domestic violence. Larger, more systemic efforts can produce an even bigger return: for example, by partnering with courts and housing agencies to create the award-winning Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program, legal aid has helped thousands of Philadelphians keep their homes.

Legal Aid Saves Money for Pennsylvania

✓ $23 million in domestic violence costs in 2011 by helping 6,658 families obtain a protection from abuse order
✓ $25 million in emergency shelter costs in 2011 by helping 4,147 low-income households avoid eviction or foreclosure

The Bottom Line

Legal aid provides an important return on investment for taxpayers, businesses and communities. A strong legal aid system saves money, helps individuals with critical human needs, restores communities and boosts the economy. Indeed, legal aid is one of the most effective tools we have for fighting poverty and inequality.
Help Us Meet a Growing Need

Legal aid providers can meet only about 20% of the civil legal services needs of low-income Philadelphians – and that number is shrinking due to funding cuts. As a result, veterans go without benefits, children are denied health care, families are unfairly evicted, jobs are wrongfully terminated – and more. In response, state and local government expenditures must increase to combat homelessness, domestic violence and other problems that could have been prevented if legal aid had been available. Increased funding and support for legal aid can help eliminate these problems and help build a more prosperous and equitable city.

DLSC Nonprofit Members Include:
- ACLU-PA
- AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania
- Christian Legal Clinics of Philadelphia
- Community Legal Services
- Consumer Bankruptcy Assistance Project
- Disabilities Rights Pennsylvania
- Education Law Center
- Face to Face Legal Center
- Friends of Farmworkers
- Good Shepherd Mediation Program
- HIAS Pennsylvania
- Homeless Advocacy Project
- Juvenile Law Center
- Legal Clinic for the Disabled
- Mazzoni Center Legal Services
- Military Assistance Project
- Nationalities Service Center
- Pennsylvania Health Law Project
- Pennsylvania Innocence Project
- Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project
- Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts
- Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity
- Philadelphia Legal Assistance
- Philadelphia Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts
- Philadelphia VIP
- Public Interest Law Center
- Regional Housing Legal Services
- SeniorLAW Center
- Support Center for Child Advocates
- Women Against Abuse
- Women’s Law Project
- Youth Sentencing and Reentry Project

For more information, visit philadelphiabar.org/page/PIDirectory

Thank you to Deanna Crusco, Pepper Hamilton LLP, and the Philadelphia Bar Foundation for helping to create this document.