

Equal justice under law is not merely a caption on the façade of the Supreme Court building; it is perhaps the most inspiring ideal of our society. It is one of the ends for which our entire legal system exists... it is fundamental that justice should be the same, in substance and availability, without regard to economic status.”

Lewis Powell, Jr., U.S. Supreme Court Justice

What is the Campaign for Justice?

Every day, low-income Californians are denied access to the basic rights to which they are entitled under law, simply because they cannot afford a lawyer. Equal justice doesn't just make some of the difference for these people in need - it makes all of the difference: the difference between staying in a home or living on the street; between a safe family or a life of fear and violence; between getting paid earned wages or having nothing to eat. Access to legal assistance often means access to healthcare, safety, food and shelter. The Campaign for Justice is raising funds to ensure that all Californians share the benefits of access to justice under law.

The Campaign consists of four key components: educating key policymakers about the importance of legal assistance, encouraging banks to maximize interest and waive fees on IOLTA accounts, increasing individual contributions to the Justice Gap Fund and legal assistance organizations, and encouraging pro bono services that leverage legal aid resources. By expanding awareness of the importance of legal assistance, the Campaign seeks to increase local and statewide legal aid resources, so Californians are not denied justice simply because they cannot afford a lawyer.

Why a Campaign for Justice?

Currently, the State Bar of California administers three main sources of funding for the benefit of legal aid in California: Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA); Equal Access Funds through the Court budget; and voluntary contributions to the Justice Gap Fund. Unfortunately, due to the downturn in the economy, the need for legal services is rising and revenue continues to decline – one source of funding, IOLTA revenue, has dropped from \$22 million in 2008, to less than \$8 million each subsequent year.

In September 2010, the State Bar and the Legal Aid Association of California gathered legal aid organizations for a statewide meeting to address the funding crisis. At that meeting, the legal aid organizations committed to raise \$10 million in new funds for California legal services, adopting a “campaign” model that has been successful in other states. Thus, California's Campaign for Justice was born.

Who Benefits from the Campaign for Justice?

The Campaign for Justice supports 95 nonprofit organizations throughout California that provide legal help to hundreds of thousands of individuals every year. Some programs provide services directly, and other programs coordinate legal services through attorney and law student pro bono. From the smallest legal aid program that serves frail seniors in Lake County to the largest legal aid program that provides statewide protection and advocacy to people with disabilities throughout California; from the legal aid organizations that fight to rehabilitate inner city slums in Los Angeles, to the program that secures guardianships for grandparent caretakers in Bakersfield and surrounding rural areas – each of these legal assistance organizations has a mission to provide legal aid to people who otherwise could not afford access to justice.

How Can You Help?

- 1) Join the Campaign for Justice to declare your support.
- 2) Donate to the Justice Gap Fund.
- 3) Support your local legal aid organization.

To declare your support for the Campaign for Justice, donate to the Justice Gap Fund, or learn more about your local legal aid organization, go to www.CAforJustice.org.

Contact us:

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