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Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants Performance Oversight Hearings Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Before the Council of the District of Columbia Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

Testimony of Kirra L. Jarratt The District of Columbia Bar Foundation February 10, 2023

Introduction

Chairwoman Pinto and Members of the Committee, my name is Kirra Jarratt. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the DC Bar Foundation (DCBF), the leading funder of civil legal aid in the District of Columbia. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The Foundation was founded in 1977. From the beginning, our mission has been to fund, support, and improve the legal representation of financially disenfranchised people and those living in vulnerable situations or otherwise underserved in the District of Columbia. And since 2007, we have been proud to partner with the District and further that mission through our administration of the Access to Justice Initiative, which includes the Access to Justice Program, the Civil Legal Counsel Projects Program, and the DC Loan Repayment Assistance Program (see Appendix I).

I am here today to discuss the initiatives DCBF has been able to implement and spearhead through our partnership, including designing a Coordinated Intake and Referral System to make it easier for District residents to find free legal help, partnering with other OVSJG stakeholders to focus on the wellbeing of District residents, and making significant investments in housing. All this work is made possible through OVSJG funding, and we appreciate the leadership of Director Bozarth and her team.

Civil legal aid issues in DC are widespread, and they drastically impact residents with low incomes. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the issues have become more prevalent, and the need for services has only increased. Due to the Council's historic investment of \$22.5 million in FY22 and \$32.7 million in FY23 for the Access to Justice Initiative, we have been able to address these issues and work on building systems to alleviate civil legal aid burdens. For FY23, the Council awarded funds to the following programs: Access to Justice received \$19.739 million, of which \$3 million targets eviction diversion

and \$1 million supports Coordinated Intake and Referral (CIR); the Civil Legal Counsel Projects Program (CLCPP) received \$11 million; and the Poverty Lawyer Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) received \$950,000.

Today, I want to talk about why investing in civil legal aid is vitally important and the impact the Foundation has through Access to Justice Initiative funding.

Benefits of Investing in Civil Legal Aid

Civil legal aid provides services and representation to families and individuals who are in the midst of a crisis. But the benefits of civil legal aid go beyond those immediate situations. Civil legal aid also has significant social and economic returns¹.

Jurisdictions across the country have done studies that show the value of investing in legal aid services and the impact of a dollar invested in civil legal aid, resulting in immediate and long-term financial benefits.² These benefits include savings in community support costs, reductions in community medical care expenses, housing and support costs for families experiencing homelessness, community law enforcement, court systems, and other government agency costs, and additional community and income and taxation revenues from benefits and programs. For example, when clients receive public benefits to which they are entitled (often from federal sources), they become taxpaying residents, and the community also benefits from their increased spending capacity.

While DC has not done a similar return-on-investment study, my testimony will highlight the returns we see from the Council's investment in the Access to Justice Initiative. Client stories help put into perspective the tremendous value of funding a robust civil legal aid network.

For example, during the FY22 funding period, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia's Economic Security Project represented residents with Social Security cases. The Project has recently had several victories in federal court, where judges found that the Social Security Administration had illegally denied clients benefits and remanded those cases for additional hearings. One case involved Mr. Doe, a 58-year-old with documented medical conditions and an intellectual disability. Unable to work, he should have easily qualified for Social Security Disability benefits; however, he was denied benefits almost a decade ago. Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia took the

¹ In Michigan, the 2022 Social Economic Impact and Social Return on Funding Investment¹ report highlights how every dollar invested in the state's civil legal aid services during 2019 and 2020 delivered \$6.69 in immediate and long-term consequential financial benefits. *2022 Social Economic Impact and Social Return on Funding Investment* https://www.courts.michigan.gov/4a9445/siteassets/court-administration/resources/mi_sroi_final-opt.pdf

² Other states, including Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana, have completed similar studies. The data from these studies show a return on investment of \$5 to \$9 for every dollar invested in civil legal aid.

case and advocated for Mr. Doe through three administrative law hearings, two appeals to the Social Security Appeals Council, and a successful appeal in federal court. After a final hearing, Mr. Doe was awarded his monthly benefit plus an additional amount for the back benefits.

Funding from OVSJG allows the Foundation to support initiatives like the Economic Security Project, and people like Mr. Doe can have fair and equitable representation when navigating traumatic legal issues.

These funding investments also contribute to the wellbeing of District residents. Wellbeing is the set of needs and experiences universally required in combination and balance to weather challenges and have health and hope. For example, when making decisions that will impact District residents, we intentionally include them in the discussion. We ask them what's important to them. We find out how and where they want to connect. Rather than engage with DC residents for feedback around solutions designed by others, we listen to residents to understand their issues and what wellbeing looks like to them.

When wellbeing needs are being met, individuals and families can confidently face challenges with renewed hope and dignity. In turn, our most vulnerable communities become stronger.

Access to Justice Initiative Highlights

The Foundation understands that we have a great responsibility to the residents of DC and to the Council that has entrusted us with historic ATJ funding.

I want to highlight how the Foundation has expanded investments in high-need areas. In particular, from FY22 to FY23, the Foundation was able to increase funding in almost every issue area, with substantial increases seen in housing (20%), family law (70%), and employment law (65%). Moreover, the Access to Justice Initiative helps residents in every ward in this City. In particular, residents in Wards 7 and 8 — the most financially disadvantaged wards in our City — are the most served with these funds.

Finally, in FY23, the Foundation increased grant awards by 28.1% over FY22. This increase is significant. In FY23, in addition to those key areas noted above, we were also able to fund programs related to education, health, disability, domestic violence, consumer law, civil issues in criminal matters, general services, and a community legal interpreter bank that enables low-income residents who are deaf or have limited English proficiency to access legal services.

I. Increased Funding for Housing

The DC Bar Foundation's largest funding area is housing, and with those funds, our grantees have been able to create new housing-related programs, keep tenants in their homes, provide direct representation to clients, and much more.

The Foundation's investment in housing has resulted in some key accomplishments, which include:

- Launching and staffing the Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network (LTLAN), a single intake line staffed by six Civil Legal Counsel Projects Program (CLCPP) providers to ensure that low-income DC litigants can connect with an attorney. Our most recent CLCPP report, which will be published later this month, found that:
 - Of the more than 180 District residents who used this intake line, we know that for the large majority (75%), the LTLAN was the only service they contacted. When a participant reached out to additional service providers, it was because they were uncertain about the process of finding legal help and wanted to call as many providers as possible.
 - Users were satisfied with the LTLAN and felt supported during the LTLAN intake interview. As a result, these individuals said they would contact the LTLAN again if they needed help and would recommend the service to others.

We know from these results that the LTLAN is meeting a community need and establishing itself as a trusted service.

- Providing legal services for District homeowners with low incomes facing foreclosure and helping tenants raise defenses, engage in fair negotiations, and reach outcomes that preserve their current housing or allow time to secure new housing.
- Prioritizing cases that address racial and other forms of discrimination and segregation and that limit housing choices.
- Providing direct representation to tenants experiencing housing conditions issues to bring homes into compliance with the housing code.

Because the District has targeted eviction diversion in the two most recent funding cycles, I want to take a moment to provide an update on those efforts. In the past two years, we have invested more than \$4.7 million in the Eviction Diversion Project, a collaborative effort by six CLCPP grantees to prevent evictions by reaching tenants at risk of displacement as early as possible and connecting them with the supportive services they need to stabilize their housing. Legal services providers partner with

community-based organizations to provide on-the-ground outreach and canvassing, expanding their reach and accessing tenants *before* a landlord files for eviction. Legal aid providers also connect tenants with the non-legal supports and services they need, such as rental and utility assistance, public benefits, child support, tax credits, mental health services, childcare, assistance with housing searches, housing inspections, and recertification of housing subsidies.

A new project for FY23, spearheaded by the Children's Law Center, will deliver legal services to address substandard housing conditions that harm the health of DC children and contribute to racial inequities, such as in pediatric asthma and other health concerns. With CLCPP funding, this grantee will establish a formal cross-referral partnership with the Landlord-Tenant Legal Assistance Network, strengthen its partnership with Mary's Center to serve Latinx and immigrant families facing health-harming housing conditions, and leverage pro bono support to co-counsel a case representing multiple tenant families in a property with multiple housing code violations to correct the violations in the whole building. Over 80% of clients for this project will receive services in Wards 7 and 8.

II. Continued Development of Foundation Programs

A considerable amount of the DC Bar Foundation's work also centers on systems change and creating opportunities for coordination and collaboration among our many stakeholders. When I testified before you last year, I spoke about some of these initiatives, and because they are so integral to our work, I want to use this time to highlight key developments in these areas.

- **Spearheading a user-centered Coordinated Intake and Referral System.** The DC Bar Foundation began working on a Coordinated Intake and Referral (CIR) system more than two years ago. This two-year period has allowed us to form intentional partnerships on this project, hear directly from the end user, and build the technology to drive this system. The goal of CIR is to make it easier for DC residents to access help from the more than 60 legal aid providers in our City through a single phone number or website. This system will not replace existing intake structures at legal services organizations but instead serve as a complement.

The system's benefit is that it will eliminate the need for clients to reach out to multiple providers before finding the help they need. The civil legal aid network in DC is vast and can be a complex system to navigate. To help put this into context, consider that jurisdictions with a similar number of residents as the District of Columbia, such as Alaska, Vermont, and Wyoming, each have anywhere from five to seven legal services organizations. In the District of Columbia, there are approximately 60 legal services organizations. With so many

providers, finding the right assistance is confusing, creating additional burdens and barriers for people already experiencing life-altering events.

The Foundation and our partners have made significant progress in the development of the CIR system in the following areas:

- **Compiled input and feedback on the design of CIR from DC residents.** In the first quarter of 2022, we convened 13 focus groups and heard from 72 community members. During these sessions, they shared the challenges they have experienced trying to access legal aid in the past, thoughts on what the CIR System should look like to make the intake process easier, and how important it is for their humanity and dignity to be recognized and respected.

This is a user-centered system, and we have made it a priority to include the voices of the people who might need to use the system in the future. As we continue the development of the system, their feedback has been a key factor in our decision-making.

- **Built a comprehensive and accurate database of all legal aid providers in the City.** This is a key milestone as it is the central piece of technology that will drive the CIR System. In the late summer of 2022, we began building the provider directory database. This process involved coordination and communication with the legal services providers in the District. We continue to make final updates to the database.
- **Conducted user testing with District residents for system feedback.** We are in the process of conducting user testing. This involves working with DC residents and intake workers and simulating the intake process. From this testing, users will provide feedback on how the system functions, what needs to change, and potential areas for improvement.
- **Performed ongoing evaluation to inform the design of the CIR System.** The Foundation released two key Coordinated Intake and Referral reports in August and September 2022. One report was a comprehensive overview of the feedback we received from DC residents. The other was a detailed overview of legal services and allied organizations' feedback. These reports serve as a reference guide as we continue building the system. These reports shape how we build the system and inform how and where we need to do marketing and advertising. We have provided links to the reports for your convenience [here](#) and [here](#).

In the year ahead, we will convene new focus groups with District residents for additional design input and feedback, have the first system testing, and pilot the system in December 2023.

- **Convening a Transformations Network.** The DC Legal Aid Transformations Network (DC LATN) continues to grow. Launched in June 2021, this network is focused on reimagining a more equitable civil justice system in DC. It brings together more than ten types of stakeholders, including many OVSJG grantees, to meet quarterly and strategize how to change our delivery models throughout the City. As the group expands, we continue to focus on our top priority, launching a Coordinated Intake and Referral System. In FY23, DC LATN will release results from the most recent mapping survey, identifying all of the stakeholders in the network, how they are connected, and what can be done to further build connections through our work.
- **Funding the Family Law Assistance Network.** As family law continues to grow, the Family Law Assistance Network (FLAN), a program through the DC Affordable Law Firm, continues to help DC residents with their family law issues. The FLAN is a network of lawyers providing rapid-response, limited-scope legal assistance to unrepresented DC family law litigants from lower-household incomes.

With funding from the DC Bar Foundation, in FY22, FLAN hired two new staff members. The full-time legal assistant and the part-time staff attorney assist with managing the steady flow of FLAN litigants directly served by the DC Affordable Law Firm. With the addition of these two staff members, FLAN has been able to solidify systems and procedures, streamline data collection, expand its outreach, and develop templates and resources to increase the efficiency of the services.

- **Investing in racial equity.** In 2022, the Foundation continued its racial equity training for the fourth year, hosting a six-part Racial Equity 101 training in March 2022 for 19 grantee organizations. We also launched a Racial Equity 2.0 training series, with twenty-six people from fourteen organizations participating in the five-part training, which took place in March and April. This work will continue and expand in 2023.

III. Robust Evaluation of OVSJG-Supported Programs

Since its inception, the Foundation has evaluated the strength of the Civil Legal Counsel Projects Program (CLCPP) per our statutory requirements. Our most recent report, which will be out later this month, highlights key accomplishments over the last five years. These accomplishments emphasize the importance of the District's investment in this eviction defense program, which increased by 23% in FY23.

- **Closed Cases.** From August 2019 through September 2022, the CLCPP network partners have collectively closed 6,777 eviction and voucher termination cases, providing legal assistance to 5,661 DC residents with low incomes.
- **Demographics.** Of the 5,661 tenants served by the CLCPP since August 2019, 66% were women, 81% identified as Black or African American, and 22% were 60 years old or older. (For context, 2021 American Community Survey data indicate that 52% of DC's population is female, 47% is Black or African American, and 18% are over the age of 60.)
- **Expanded Service Model.** More than two years ago, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I shared with you the news about the launch of a telephone-based coordinated intake and referral process that offers a single phone line and an online intake platform for low-income District residents facing eviction. This is the Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network (LTLAN) discussed above. This year, I am excited to share the findings from an online customer feedback survey for tenants who used the LTLAN, administered between July 2021 and December 2022. It is an incredible success; all made possible with funding from OVSJG.
 - Over 80% of participants reported feeling satisfied with the LTLAN, with close to 90% indicating that they would use the LTLAN again in the future and tell others in their community about the service.
 - Nearly two-thirds of participants with prior experience finding an attorney reported that they found accessing legal services easier when they used the LTLAN compared to how they looked for legal help in the past.
 - Customers view the LTLAN as an access point to a variety of legal services, not just representation. Specifically, close to 60% of participants contacted the LTLAN because they faced an active eviction case, and over 40% reached out because they were looking for answers to questions such as whether they could be evicted or what to do when they had a problem with their landlord.
- **Community Partnerships.** In 2022, the CLCPP partners adjusted their service structure and leveraged their partnerships to react to the end of the moratorium on executing existing writs of restitution. In July 2021, writs put on hold in March 2020 could proceed (i.e., landlords could initiate a lockout that had been pending since the start of the pandemic), and tenants in these cases faced an imminent threat of being unhoused unless they could repay the back rent.

The CLCPP organizations coordinated with DC Superior Court to identify tenants facing an active writ and collaborated with community organizations to employ a

proactive outreach strategy, which featured canvassers knocking on tenants' doors to connect them with an attorney. The CLCPP attorneys provided legal services to these tenants and helped them navigate the emergency rental assistance program (ERAP and STAY DC) so they could pay past-due rent and prevent the pending lockout. As a result of these efforts, over 70% of the tenants who connected with the CLCPP under these circumstances were able to remain housed.

The outcomes and lessons learned from these partnerships are particularly salient for informing future collaborations between civil legal services providers and community-based organizations—all made possible by the changes in the CLCPP statute enacted last summer and with OVSJG funding.

The Impact of What We Do

Throughout this testimony, I highlighted what the DC Bar Foundation has been able to do with the Council's funding and support from OVSJG. As the Foundation's CEO, I am fortunate to hear about and witness the impact these legal aid organizations can make in our residents' lives. During FY22, our grantee organizations were able to help thousands of District residents with critical civil legal aid needs that they most likely would have otherwise faced alone and without the advice of counsel. Before I close, I want to share the story of Linda Santiago.

Linda Santiago is a 59-year-old DC resident and Black veteran of the US Armed Forces who was sued in two different debt-collection lawsuits. Unable to maintain a job due to her bipolar disorder, she was hospitalized ten times in two years. Her car was repossessed, making it hard to attend her twice-weekly psychiatric appointments, and though she applied for Social Security benefits, she was not yet approved. She considered ending her life, but she went to court instead, where she met the Tzedek DC team. Tzedek DC was able to get both lawsuits against her dismissed so she could focus on her health. When Ms. Santiago was approved for Social Security Disability benefits, Tzedek DC helped her obtain bankruptcy protections for a clean financial slate and a new shot at a healthy life.

This work is made possible through funding from OVSJG. And the funding in this current fiscal year will allow us to deepen and expand those efforts. Ms. Santiago's story is just one of many that show the power of our collective efforts and what these funds have been able to do for District residents.

Looking Ahead

OVSJG funding has allowed the Foundation to have an incredibly productive and impactful year. We have made considerable gains on one of our biggest projects to date — the Coordinated Intake and Referral System. We have been able to increase our

network-building efforts, expand our funding in critical services areas, and invest in evaluation. And listening to the community and centering their voices has been—and will remain—a priority. None of this work is possible without the funding provided by the DC Council.

The DC Bar Foundation will continue to be an efficient and diligent steward of the funds we are awarded through OVSJG. In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on racial equity, coordinated intake and referral, network building and community, and prioritizing wellbeing for all DC residents. At the end of the day, we hope that all DC residents in every ward have a just and fair legal experience and that they have access to the resources and services they need.

Thank you for your continued support of the DC Bar Foundation and our ongoing work in civil legal aid.

Appendix I – What is the Access to Justice Initiative?

The Access to Justice Initiative includes the Access to Justice Program (ATJ), the Civil Legal Counsel Projects Program (CLCPP), and the DC Loan Repayment Assistance Program (DC LRAP).

Access to Justice Program (ATJ) Highlights

In 2007, the DC Bar Foundation (DCBF) began awarding grants under the Access to Justice Program (ATJ) when the DC Council designated DCBF as the administrator. ATJ supports legal assistance in three areas: (a) underserved areas, (b) housing-related matters, and (c) a shared legal services interpreter bank. Since 2007, the Foundation has administered \$95.9 million in ATJ funding to provide critical legal assistance to underserved DC residents with low incomes. The Foundation disbursed \$16,750,068 in Access to Justice grants to 33 legal aid organizations in FY23.

Civil Legal Counsel Projects Program (CLCPP) Highlights

The Council of the District of Columbia established the Civil Legal Counsel Projects Program (CLCPP) through the Expanding Access to Justice Amendment Act of 2017, which designates the DC Bar Foundation as the administrator. CLCPP supports DC legal aid organizations providing representation in eviction defense proceedings for District residents with low incomes. The Foundation launched CLCPP with initial funding to four organizations in January 2018; two more organizations joined in July 2018, and another in January 2023. The DC Bar Foundation has administered \$37.1 million in CLCPP funding since the program's inception. The Foundation disbursed \$8,688,455 in CLCPP grants to seven organizations in FY23.

DC Loan Repayment Assistance Program (DC LRAP) Highlights

DCBF administers the DC Loan Repayment Assistance Program (DC LRAP), which provides each attorney who receives an LRAP award with a one-year, interest-free, forgivable loan of up to \$12,000. Established by the Council in 2007, DC LRAP supports legal aid attorneys working at nonprofit legal services providers, making less than \$90,000, and living in DC. LRAP helps legal aid organizations attract and keep skilled DC lawyers, making it possible to provide access to justice for more District residents living in vulnerable situations. Since 2007, the Foundation has forgiven more than \$3 million in loans for more than 300 legal aid attorneys. LRAP applicants typically have salaries that range from \$45,000 to \$89,000, with an average debt of \$200,000.

Appendix II – DC Bar Foundation Grants and Grantees

Grants Awarded

FY22	\$19,853,979
FY23	\$25,438,523 (28.1% increase over FY22)

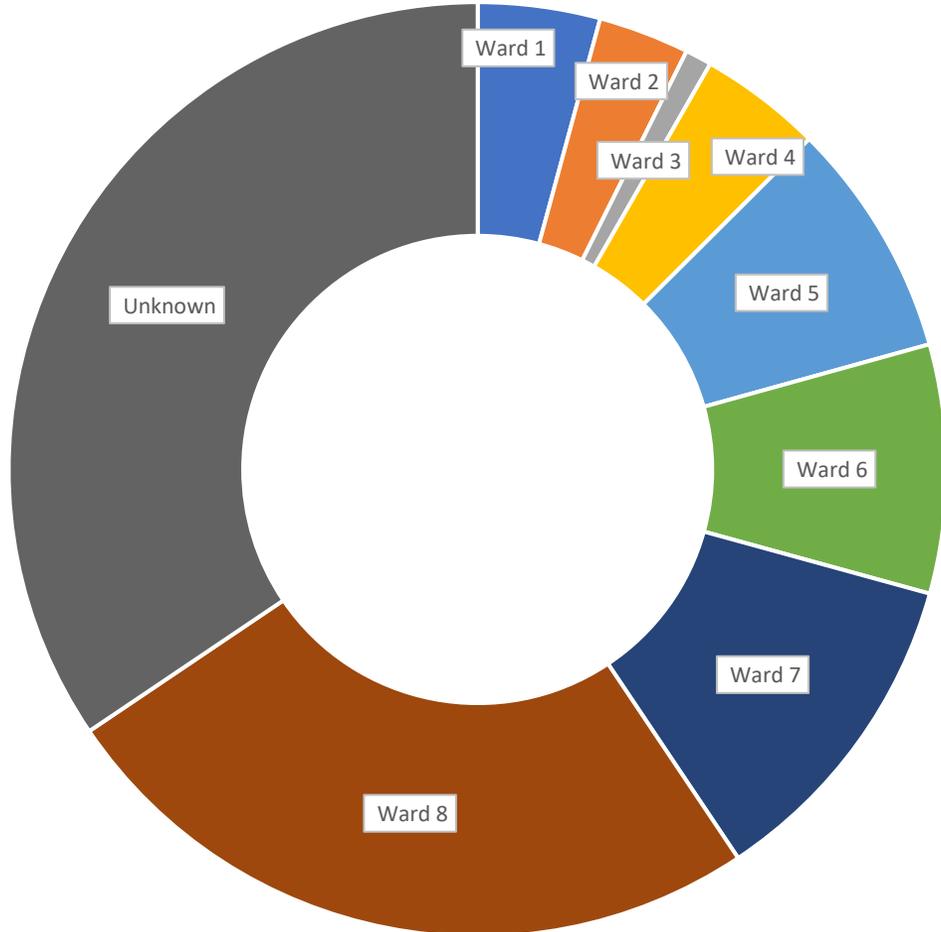
FY23 Grantees

- [Advocates for Justice in Education](#)
- [African Communities Together](#)
- [Amara Legal Center](#)
- [Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center](#)
- [Ayuda](#)
- [Bread for the City](#)
- [Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition](#)
- [Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington](#)
- [Central American Resource Center](#)
- [Children's Law Center](#)
- [Christian Legal Aid of the District of Columbia](#)
- [Community Family Life Services](#)
- [DC Affordable Law Firm](#)
- [DC Bar Pro Bono Center](#)
- [DC Kincare Alliance](#)
- [DC Volunteer Lawyers Project](#)
- [First Shift Justice Project](#)
- [Georgetown University – Health Justice Alliance](#)
- [Howard University – Fair Housing Clinic](#)
- [KIND Inc.](#)
- [Legal Counsel for the Elderly](#)
- [Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia](#)
- [Mother's Outreach Network](#)
- [Neighborhood Legal Services Program of the District of Columbia](#)
- [Network for Victim Recovery of DC](#)
- [Open City Advocates](#)
- [Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities](#)
- [Rising for Justice](#)
- [School Justice Project](#)
- [The Safe Sisters Circle](#)
- [Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International](#)
- [Tzedek DC](#)
- [University Legal Services](#)
- [Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs](#)
- [Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless](#)
- [Whitman-Walker Health](#)

RESIDENTS SERVED BY WARD

Access to Justice Program

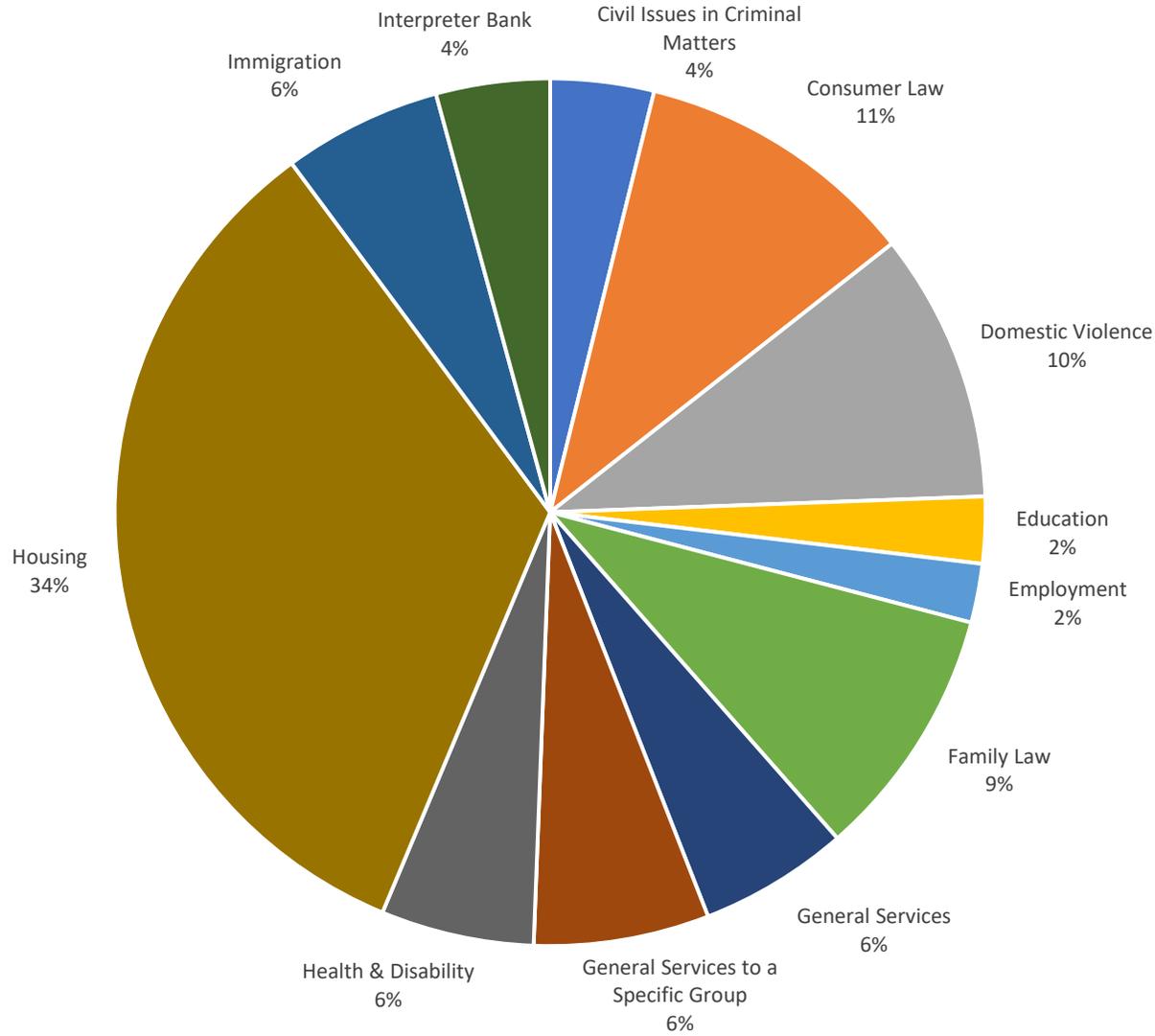
FY2018



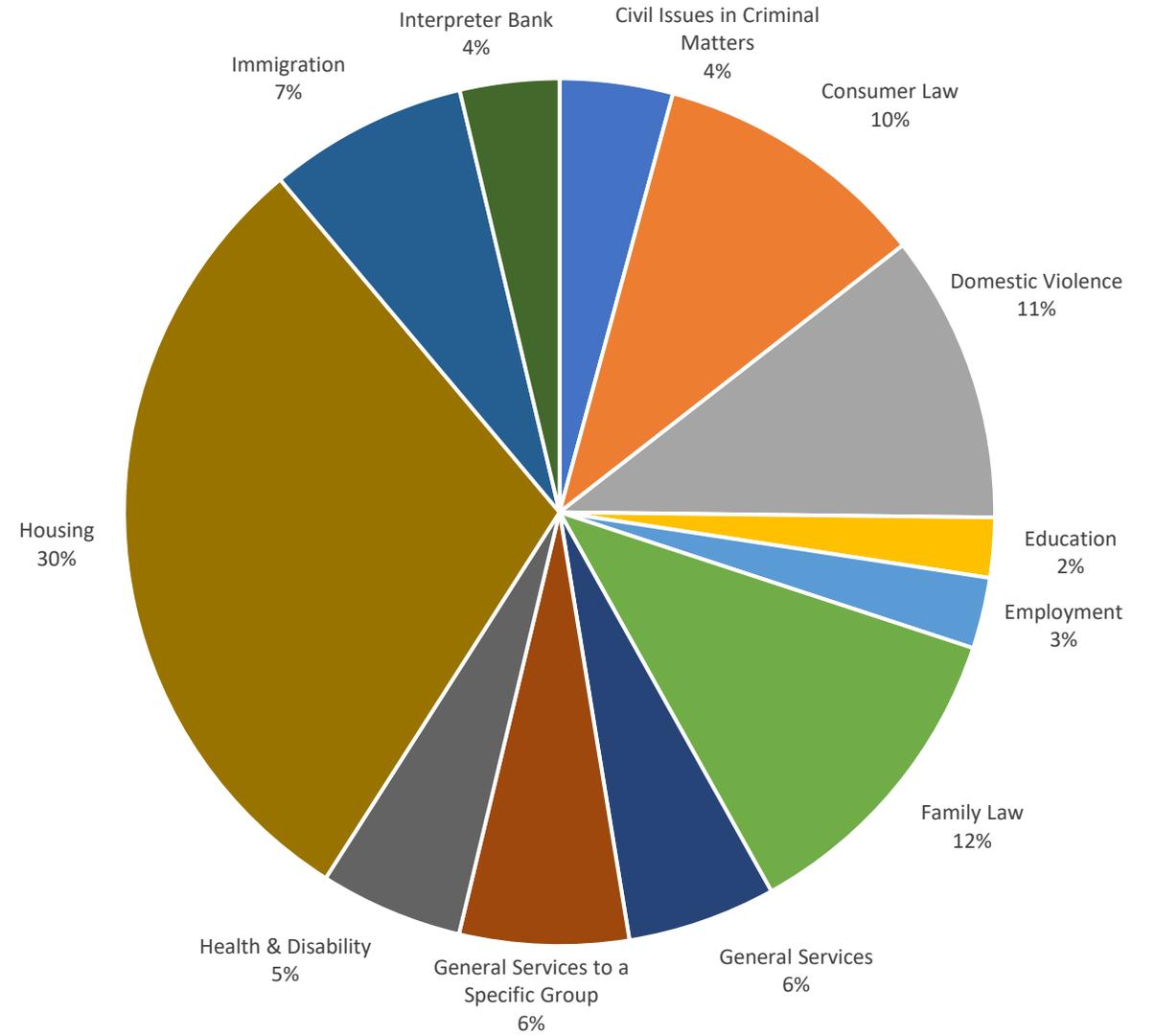
FY2022



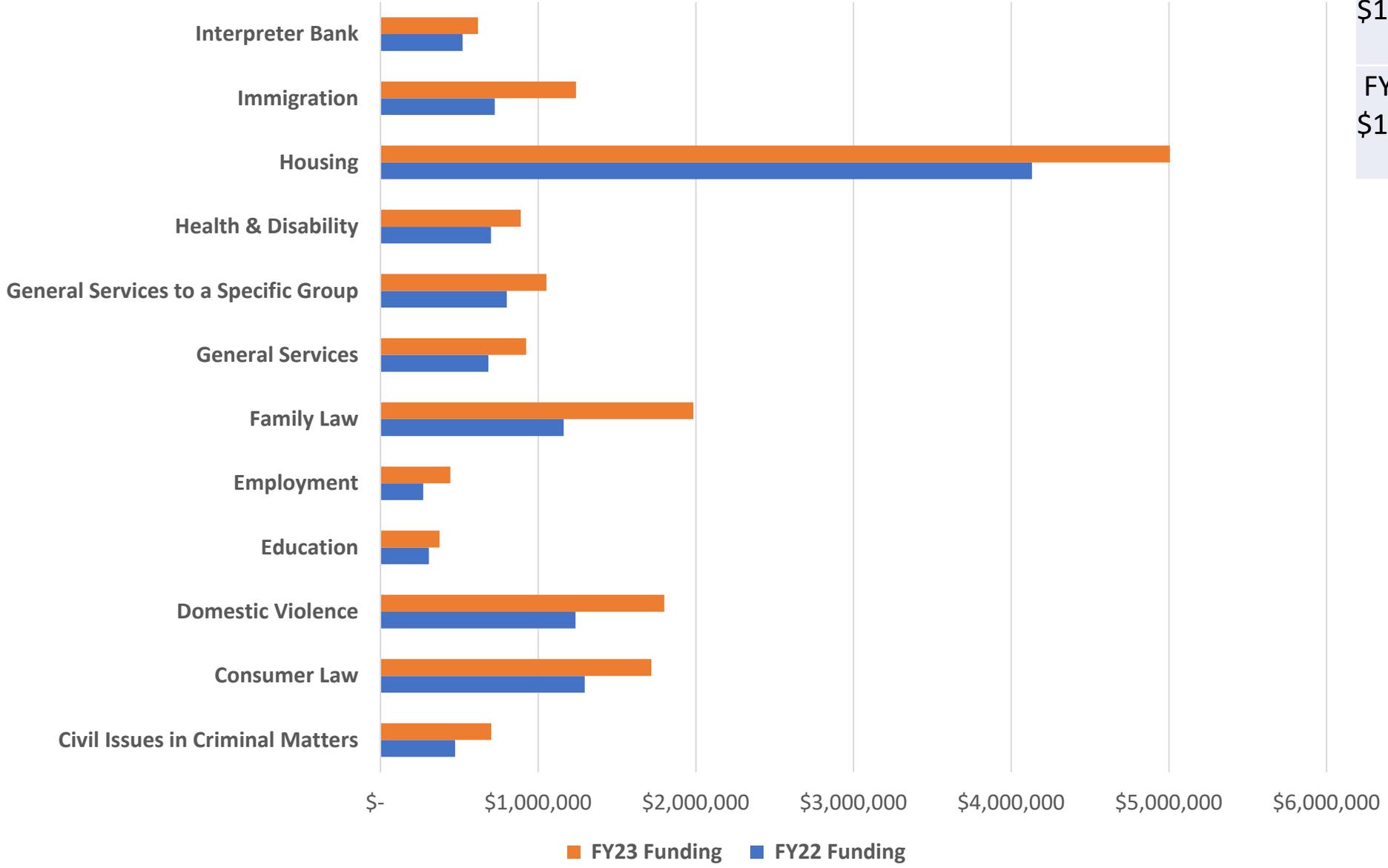
FY22 Funding by Issue Area



FY23 Funding by Issue Area



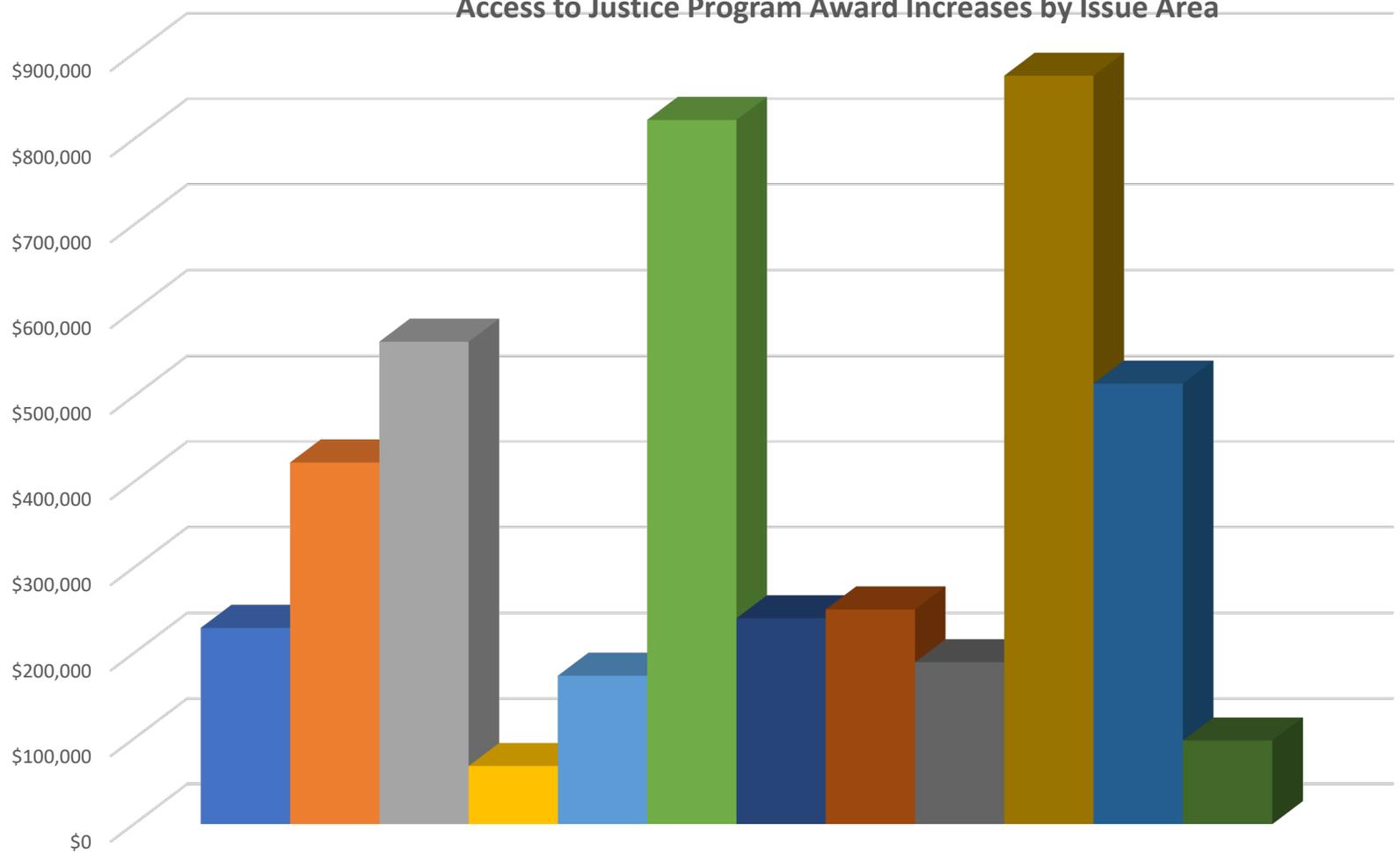
EXPANDED INVESTMENTS FY22 to FY23
Access to Justice Program Awarded Funding



FY22 Awarded:
\$12,303,681

FY23 Awarded:
\$16,750,068

Growth in Investments from FY22 to FY23
Access to Justice Program Award Increases by Issue Area



FY22 Awarded:
\$12,303,681

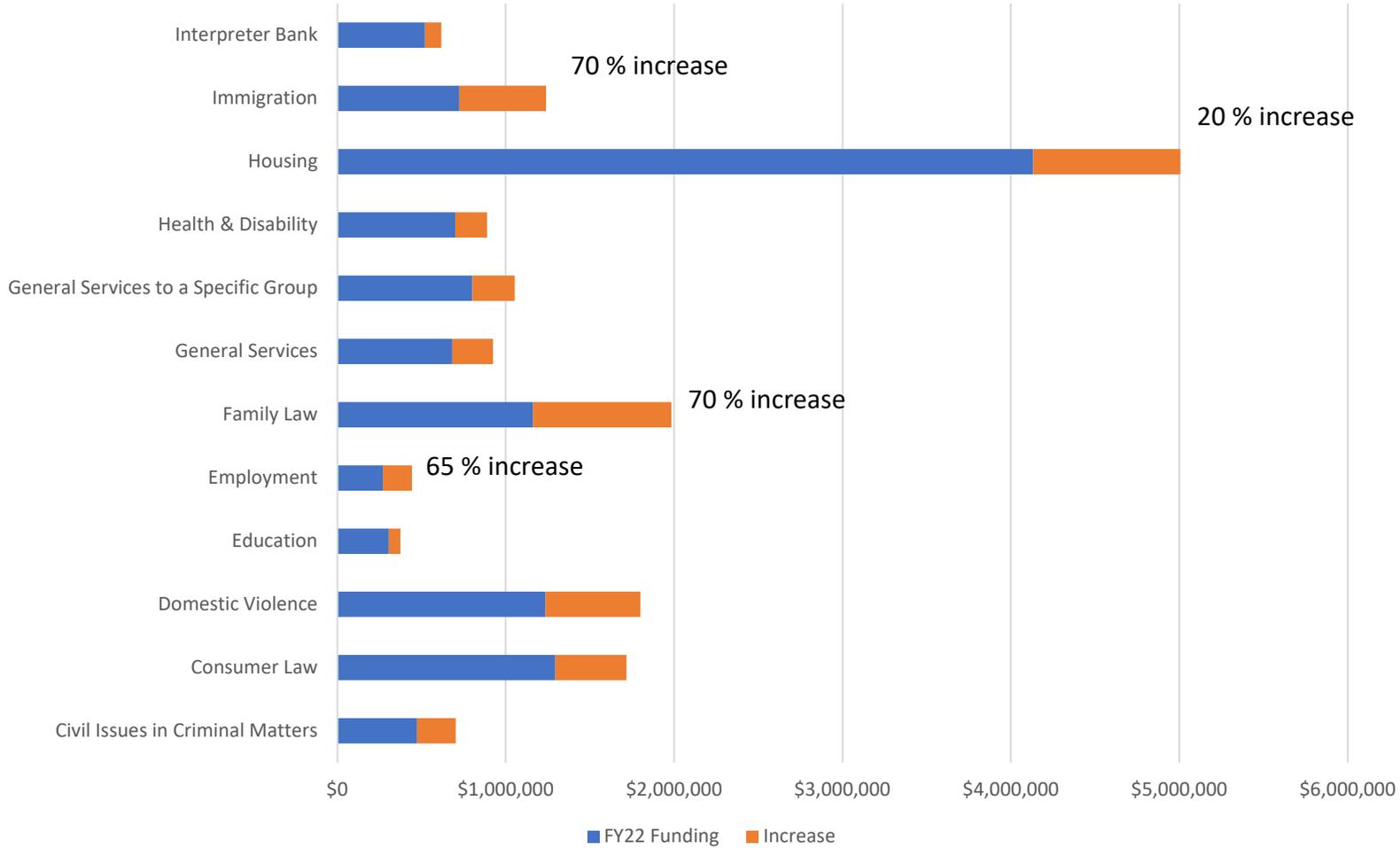
FY23 Awarded:
\$16,750,068

- Civil Issues in Criminal Matters
- Consumer Law
- Domestic Violence
- Education
- Employment
- Family Law
- General Services
- General Services to a Specific Group
- Health & Disability
- Housing
- Immigration
- Interpreter Bank

Increase in Investments from FY22 to FY23 Access to Justice Program Awarded Funds

FY22 Awarded:
\$12,303,681

FY23 Awarded:
\$16,750,068



ATJ FY22 and FY23 Awarded Funding by Issue Area

Issue Area	FY22 Funding	FY23 Funding	Increase
Civil Issues in Criminal Matters	\$ 473,044	\$ 702,530	\$ 229,486
Consumer Law	\$ 1,294,980	\$ 1,717,467	\$ 422,487
Domestic Violence	\$ 1,236,101	\$ 1,799,572	\$ 563,471
Education	\$ 305,748	\$ 373,675	\$ 67,927
Employment	\$ 270,000	\$ 443,500	\$ 173,500
Family Law	\$ 1,161,591	\$ 1,983,855	\$ 822,264
General Services	\$ 683,516	\$ 924,213	\$ 240,697
General Services to a Specific Group	\$ 801,422	\$ 1,052,497	\$ 251,075
Health & Disability	\$ 700,000	\$ 889,216	\$ 189,216
Housing	\$ 4,132,242	\$ 5,006,132	\$ 873,890
Immigration	\$ 724,814	\$ 1,239,422	\$ 514,608
Interpreter Bank	\$ 520,223	\$ 617,989	\$ 97,766
Grand Total	\$ 12,303,681	\$ 16,750,068	\$ 4,446,387

ACCESS TO JUSTICE RESIDENTS SERVED BY WARD

Grant Cycle	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8	Unknown	Total
FY2017	1,363	871	186	1,351	3,438	2,016	5,641	8,910	6,333	30,109
FY2018	1,506	1,123	327	1,515	2,928	3,077	4,059	8,911	12,329	35,775
FY2019	1,074	1,171	305	1,448	3,091	2,275	3,892	7,630	10,473	31,359
FY2020	1,711	601	376	1,916	1,345	978	2,057	3,398	4,980	17,362
FY2021	2,316	1,079	836	2,534	2,094	2,649	7,172	5,401	3,314	27,395
FY2022	3,719	1,703	647	3,311	3,449	2,936	5,321	6,496	3,338	30,920

Stories of Impact

The DC Bar Foundation is proud to support many different types of legal services organizations in the District of Columbia. This compilation of stories are from some of our grantee organizations that have been able to deliver critical services and offer support to many District residents facing a life-altering event. This collection highlights the impact of the work they do every day.

**These stories represent work from FY22 and FY23. These articles were previously shared on DCBF's communications platforms, including the newsletter, website, and social media.*

FY23 (October 1, 2022 – Present)

- **Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs: Securing Employment Justice** (January 26, 2023)

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs is one of those organizations. They work to create legal, economic, and social equity through litigation, client and public education, and public policy advocacy. [Read More](#)

- **LRAP: Enabling the Delivery of Legal Aid** (November 22, 2022)

Children's Law Center (CLC), with a focus on improving the health, family stability, and education outcomes for DC children and families, is a current eligible Loan Repayment Assistance Program employer and has participated in LRAP since the beginning. [Read More](#)

FY22 (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022)

- **The Importance of Supporting Transgender Communities** (June 23, 2022)

Whitman-Walker Health's legal team helps with health insurance appeals, work disputes, discrimination, Social Security disability applications and appeals, public benefits appeals (Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP/Food Stamps), immigration matters, powers of attorney and wills, elder issues, medical privacy, and identity documents for trans and gender-expansive clients, among other problems. [Read More](#)

- **Sealing Records Means a Second Chance (April 27, 2022)**

Since its founding, Rising for Justice has protected the rights of more than 250,000 District residents and has trained almost 4,000 social justice advocates.

[Read More](#)

- **Helping Workers Assert Their Rights (March 21, 2022)**

First Shift Justice Project's mission is to help working parents in low-wage jobs assert their workplace rights to prevent job loss. First Shift Justice Project better serves caregiving workers by using a preventive, client-centered approach to reach families, educate them about their rights, and enable them to exercise their rights without shame. [Read More](#)

- **Empowering Individuals With Disabilities (Feb. 28, 2022)**

The Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities is an independent, nonprofit advocacy organization focused on improving the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families in the District. Part of their work includes the Jenny Hatch Justice Project (JHJP), which gives people with disabilities the tools they need to protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities to make their own choices and determine their direction in life. [Read More](#)

- **Supporting Those Who Step Up (January 26, 2022)**

DC KinCare Alliance is a one-stop legal aid shop for non-parent caregivers who raise children in the District. When family members take in their relative's children, they can face significant challenges accessing public benefits, obtaining necessary forms of identification (such as Social Security cards and birth certificates), and acquiring financial assistance. DC KinCare Alliance specializes in helping to provide legal aid for families facing these obstacles. [Read More](#)

- **Protecting Your Right to Your Identity (December 22, 2021)**

In 2021, the Foundation awarded Whitman-Walker Health an Access to Justice grant to provide legal services for discrimination claims and access to benefits for transgender individuals. [Read More](#)

- **Keeping Families Together (November 22, 2021)**

African Communities Together (ACT) is an organization of African immigrants fighting for civil rights, opportunity, and a better life for families here in the U.S. and worldwide. [Read More](#)