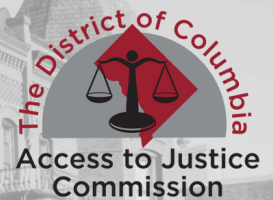


# IMPACT ON ECONOMIC SECURITY

## ACCESSING JUSTICE in D.C.



### The Access to Justice Initiative Promotes Economic Security

The proposed FY25 budget reduces the Access to Justice Initiative by 67% to \$10.457 million. This will have catastrophic consequences for economic security and opportunity for almost 40,000 District residents who receive life-changing civil legal services through the program each year. We urge the D.C. Council to restore FY24 funding of \$31.7M to ensure these services continue.

#### *Highlights of Initiative work in promoting economic security include:*

##### **Protecting residents from fraud and illegal debt collection**

- Fighting predatory lending and debt collection schemes, including fraud perpetrated against people with disabilities and undocumented immigrants
- Averting negative court judgments and adverse credit reporting that would limit future housing and employment opportunities
- The DC Debt Collection Hotline has served thousands of residents, and the number is provided by the D.C. Superior Court to all litigants facing debt collection lawsuits.
- One grantee program alone kept \$1.4 million in the pockets of 767 families facing debt and consumer cases last year.

##### **Protecting wages and jobs**

- Ensuring District residents know their rights and receive the wages and benefits they have earned and fighting to recover stolen wages
- Fighting employment-related discrimination and harassment so that residents can stay employed
- Providing specialized services for working mothers, immigrants, trafficking survivors, returning citizens, and other vulnerable populations at higher risk of unemployment and economic exploitation

##### **Maintaining stable income and benefits:**

- Helping District residents navigate vital public benefits matters (unemployment insurance, paid family leave, TANF, SNAP, rental subsidies, shelter services, and health benefits) - often without litigation
- Representing people with disabilities and domestic violence survivors to protect their benefits from being mismanaged or stolen

##### **Preserving intergenerational transfer of homes and assets**

- Heirs property and other probate-related work to help families transfer assets, especially homes - allowing families to stay in multigenerational in the District, and promoting Black homeownership.
- Assisting District low- and moderate-income residents and seniors with financial and future planning

##### **Reducing healthcare costs**

- Addressing health-harming problems through legal solutions - one grantee addressing housing code violations found community savings of over \$14 million in Medicaid costs avoided over three years by keeping children out of hospitals and emergency rooms.

**To learn more:** visit us at

<https://dcaccesstojustice.org/access-public-funding/> or go to <https://www.dcbfoundation.org/>