

# LEVERAGING RESOURCES

## ACCESSING JUSTICE in D.C.



### Restore \$31.7M in Funding for Access to Justice

The proposed FY25 budget reduces the Access to Justice Initiative by 67% to \$10.457 million. Robust public funding allows legal services organizations to leverage every public dollar of funding into additional pro bono services, private financial support, and community knowledge-building. These cuts put the safety, health, housing, and economic stability of the District's most vulnerable populations at risk. We urge the D.C. Council to restore FY24 funding of \$31.7M to ensure these services continue.

*How the Access to Justice Initiative Leverages Other Resources*

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#### Supporting Pro Bono Service

Legal service providers magnify the impact of every public dollar through the recruitment, training, and support of private lawyers and law firms in the District. For FY23, Initiative funding supported:

- **926 cases placed with pro bono attorneys**  
**449 cases co-counseled with pro bono attorneys**

Grantees report the equivalency of at least **\$50.5 million in donated legal services**. These pro bono services are only made possible when there is a stably-funded legal services network to identify cases, develop resources, and provide ongoing training and mentorship.

#### Educating and Empowering Residents

For FY23, Initiative funding supported:

- **1,134 “Know Your Rights” Trainings** delivered to renters, caregivers, caseworkers, recently arrived migrants, youth, law enforcement, reentering citizens, and other District residents
- **12,105 community attendees** to eviction prevention “Know Your Rights” trainings
- District residents got information at community events and partners, including food distributions, public libraries, schools, and medical providers
- One grantee alone held 78 community events, **reaching over 15,000 District community members** in 2023

#### Additional Private Financial Support

- Private support has been **greatly incentivized** by the District's leadership in establishing and funding the Access to Justice Initiative, signaling its vital importance to the community. The District's legal services providers work aggressively to raise money from many other sources.
- The Commission recognizes law firms that provide a qualifying level of financial support to local legal services providers through its [Raising the Bar in D.C. campaign](#). Between 2011 and 2022, participating law firms donated over **\$56 million**. While this number does not capture all law firm giving, or individual giving, private giving simply cannot make up the proposed funding cut.

Without the District's leadership in appropriating these public funds and the stable legal services infrastructure they assure, these important private resources might go untapped, and thousands more clients denied access to legal help.

To learn more visit us at [dcaccesstojustice.org](https://dcaccesstojustice.org) or go to [dcbfoundation.org](https://dcbfoundation.org)