

If you care about....

Education · Mental Health · Homelessness · Vulnerable Seniors · Domestic Violence

INVEST IN *JUSTICE FOR ALL*

During the 2017 session, you recognized the critical role of civil legal aid in improving the well-being of your constituents. In response to the high and growing unmet civil legal needs of low-income Washingtonians, the Legislature increased civil legal aid funding by \$4.8M in the 2017-2019 budget “to partially implement the civil legal aid reinvestment plan.” The Reinvestment Plan is a rational approach to addressing our state’s urgent civil justice crisis.

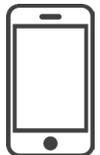
Families are in crisis today. Now is the time to continue your commitment to civil legal aid with a supplemental budget increase of \$2,800,000.

This additional funding for the Reinvestment Plan will be another important step in solving the civil justice crisis in Washington, by:



Significantly increasing the number of low-income families who are able to enforce and protect their legal rights. Access to civil legal aid is the difference between being housed and homeless, being safe or in danger, and being employed or jobless.

Automating plain language family law forms - providing families with a tool to assemble family law legal documents on their own, like TurboTax® for law forms. This will empower families to secure relief in a more timely fashion and will save valuable time and resources for the judicial system.



Every day, civil legal aid creates immediate and long-lasting impacts that positively affect the lives of low-income individuals, families, and entire communities.

Independent, academic study shows...

Civil legal issues are widespread. 71% of low-income residents have at least one critical civil legal problem per year.

The majority face their problems alone. Only 24% of those that have a civil legal problem are able to get the help they need to solve it.

The need is growing. The average number of problems has tripled from 3.3 per low-income household per year in 2003 to 9.3 in 2014.



CIVIL LEGAL AID: A SMART INVESTMENT

Spokane, WA

Paul* – a veteran with mental disabilities – and his disabled wife were referred to the Northwest Justice Project (NJP) by a banker who was alarmed by the circumstances surrounding their request for a home equity loan. A door-to-door salesman tricked the couple to sign four separate contracts to side their home. The company opened two credit cards in Paul's name, made unauthorized charges of nearly \$20,000, and convinced Paul to open a home equity line of credit. Thanks to NJP, the siding company was forced to pay Paul's outstanding balance on both credit cards and pay more than \$15,000 in damages. The siding was also completed. NJP saved this couple's home and protected them against predatory practices.



*Name change for anonymity

✓ Investing in legal aid keeps families safe, housed and healthy.

Every day, state-funded legal aid programs, like the Northwest Justice Project, help low-income people protect their livelihoods, property, health, and families.

✓ Investing in legal aid ensures fairness and justice in our society.

If our justice system does not work for all of us, then it really isn't a justice system. Legal aid ensures that the laws we pass are fairly enforced.

✓ Investing in legal aid today will save money tomorrow.

Studies from across the country show that \$1 invested in civil legal aid provides returns from \$3 to \$11.

Investing in legal aid has earned bipartisan support across the legislature, and editorial praise from The Seattle Times, The Spokesman-Review, The News Tribune, former AG Rob McKenna, Lewis County community and business leaders, County Prosecutors, and a long list of business leaders led by Microsoft's Brad Smith.

Wenatchee, WA

Margaret's* landlord was not fulfilling the lease obligations. He had not provided proper water connections and sewer disposal to Margaret's trailer, so she withheld rent. Her landlord then bullied her and threatened eviction. As a survivor of domestic violence, this was incredibly triggering for Margaret.

Fortunately, a volunteer attorney from Chelan-Douglas County Volunteer Attorney Services assisted Margaret. She was not evicted, was relieved of paying rent, and was given two weeks to move out of the trailer park. Because of civil legal aid, Margaret and her son avoided homelessness and are now in a safe, habitable home.

*Name change for anonymity

