



The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation: Ensuring Fairness for All in the Justice System

IEJF is an integral part of fulfilling our state's fundamental promise of equal access to justice for all Illinoisans

- Fairness in the justice system should not depend on how much money a person has.
- IEJF provides access to legal help for people to protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families. The people who depend on IEJF-funded legal aid organizations include women and children victimized by domestic violence; veterans struggling after returning from combat; disabled and elderly persons who have been financially exploited and abused; and many other vulnerable Americans.
- Legal aid is consistently one of the top referrals for General Assembly members serving constituent needs.

With a record number of Illinoisans in need, maintaining IEJF funding is especially critical right now

- A record high one third of Illinoisans are low-income or living in poverty, making them eligible for legal aid, yet IEJF funding has not been included in ongoing budget negotiations.
- As a result, more than half of people in need of legal aid are turned away due to lack of resources.
- The legal community is doing its part, providing more than two million hours of pro bono service and donating more than \$15 million each year to support pro bono and legal aid organizations in Illinois alone.

IEJF funding is a solid investment in Illinois' families and communities that saves taxpayer money and needs to be increased, not cut further

- Access to needed legal help can mean the difference between shelter and homelessness; medical assistance and unnecessary physical suffering; food on the table and hunger; economic stability and bankruptcy; or productive work and unemployment.
- IEJF is a solid economic investment as well, saving money on other expensive government services and helping streamline the court system and cut down on court costs. A recent study found that legal aid in Illinois produces an almost 2:1 return on investment in economic benefits.