



What is the Alliance for Equal Justice?

A statewide network of organizations providing legal aid to those with nowhere else to turn

Alliance tagline:

Providing legal aid for those in need

Alliance motto:

It's not justice *if it's not equal*

The Problem: Justice is out of reach for most low-income Washingtonians.

- Equal justice is a fundamental principle of democracy. Our laws guarantee basic rights and protections for all of us—not just those who can afford a lawyer.
- But every year three out of four low-income households face an urgent civil legal problem, and more than 80% of them must face those problems without any legal help or representation.
- The court's ability to properly decide serious cases is undermined when people are forced to try representing themselves without legal expertise or familiarity with court procedures.
- Funding for legal aid is inadequate. Overextended legal aid programs are inundated with requests for assistance but are unable to meet the demand. Nationally, programs turn away half the people who ask for help due to lack of resources.
- Without meaningful access to the justice system, democracy is undermined and civil legal problems negatively impact elemental aspects of people's lives, such as housing, safety, and economic security.
- One unresolved legal issue – consumer abuse, domestic violence, wrongful eviction – creates a downward spiral of costly social problems that can ruin lives and impact the whole community.

The Solution: Equal access to justice with civil legal aid.

- Civil legal aid is free legal help – including advice, representation and other assistance – for low-income individuals, families, and communities facing urgent non-criminal legal problems.
- Civil legal aid can mean the difference between shelter and homelessness, safety and abuse, food on the table and hunger, economic stability and bankruptcy, productive work and unemployment.
- Access to a legal aid attorney can help families in crisis preserve their homes, shield themselves from domestic violence, thwart fraudulent or predatory practices, and maintain employment, healthcare and livelihood.

Funding Legal Aid is a Smart Investment:

- Legal aid protects and stabilizes families struggling to survive economic crisis and poverty.
- Every eviction or foreclosure avoided, every family protected, eases the strain on public resources while increasing long term benefits to families and children.
- Legal aid saves tax dollars and reduces the demand on law enforcement and court services by reducing homelessness, unemployment and domestic violence.

You Can Make a Difference:

- **DONATE!** Support 26 legal aid programs at once through the Campaign for Equal Justice – www.c4ej.org.
- **VOLUNTEER!** Take a case pro bono. Contact your local bar association.
- **ADVOCATE!** Urge your elected officials to support funding for legal aid. Visit www.ejc.org for more information.