

# Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation

<http://www.mlac.org>

FY10 Fact Sheet  
Line item 0321-1600

	FY09	FY10 Governor	FY10 House	FY10 Senate	FY10 Request
General Support	\$6,246,857	\$5,715,874	\$11,070,424	\$8,000,000	\$6,246,857
Battered Women's Legal Asst.	\$2,834,024	\$2,834,024	— *	— *	\$2,834,024
Disability Benefits	\$1,370,801	\$1,254,283	— *	— *	\$1,370,801
Medicare Advocacy	\$618,742	\$566,149	— *	— *	\$618,742
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,070,424</b>	<b>\$10,370,330</b>	<b>\$11,070,424</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>	<b>\$11,070,424</b>

\*MLAC remains committed to providing funding consistent with previous years for its special projects.

**MLAC has reduced general support grants to civil legal aid programs by 46% in FY09. If the Senate recommendation is adopted, the total cut in grants from FY08 to FY10 will be 74%.**

- The Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) has two sources of income: the state budget and the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program. The financial crisis has had a devastating effect on IOLTA revenue; projected income from this source for FY09 is 63% lower than FY08. Any cut to MLAC's appropriation in the state budget would add to this dramatic decline.
- Even in strong economic times, civil legal aid programs turn away almost half of eligible low-income and elderly individuals seeking assistance with civil legal problems threatening their safety, employment, health or home. Today, calls to some legal aid programs are up 30 percent while these same programs are being forced to layoff attorneys and paralegals, institute furloughs and leave vacant positions unfilled.
- Every year, legal aid's efforts account for millions of dollars in federal revenue, reimbursements and cost-savings for the Commonwealth – an estimated \$48 million was generated in FY08. Without consistent support from the state in FY10, this critical income will be lost.

**Any reduction in state funding would further devastate the delivery of civil legal aid to the Commonwealth's most vulnerable residents. MLAC requests level funding in order to prevent an even greater increase in the number of families and individuals turned away from legal aid during this time of great need.**

**About MLAC:** Recognizing justice as a fundamental value to the Commonwealth, the legislature established MLAC in 1983 to provide support and leadership for civil legal aid. MLAC makes grants to local and statewide legal aid programs with funding from the state budget and the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts program. Client issues include housing, domestic violence, child custody and support, health care, disability benefits, elder abuse, and other non-criminal problems. Client eligibility for legal aid is set at 125 percent of the federal poverty level, or \$530 per week for a family of four.

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