

Access to Legal Services Working Group

Fact Sheet

Mission

To analyze possible ways to increase access to justice for low-income Texans, including through qualified paraprofessionals and through non-attorney ownership of legal entities.

The Working Group

will analyze and advise on potential rule modifications to allow (1) qualified paraprofessionals to provide limited legal services directly to low-income Texans and (2) non-attorneys to have economic interests in entities that provide legal services to low-income Texans.

Ideas for consideration:

Permitting trained paraprofessionals, such as paralegals or community justice workers, to provide limited legal services to low-income clients in defined practice areas.

Allowing community partners and legal aid organizations to form nonprofit organizations to provide a continuum of legal and non-legal services to qualifying low-income Texans.

Allowing a legal services non-profit to partner with a technology or software company to allow them to provide services more efficiently to qualifying low-income Texans.

The Civil Justice Gap

The Legal Services Corporation reports that low-income Americans do not get any or enough legal help for 92% of their civil legal problems.

90%

of the civil legal needs of low-income Texans are unmet.

5.2 Million

Texans qualify for civil legal aid

1

legal aid lawyer for every

7,000

who qualify

46th

Overall Texas ranking for ensuring access to justice for all people.

Regulatory innovations may help address the justice gap.

In 2020, the Conference of Chief Justices **encouraged states to experiment with regulatory innovations** to spur new legal service delivery models that provide greater access while maintaining quality, achieving affordability, and protecting the public interests. The American Bar Association also encourages regulatory innovation.

The Process

The Working Group will:

Study similar efforts in other states, including Alaska, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and others.

Invite broad stakeholder input from the bench, the bar, community partners, and the public.

Make recommendations to the Texas Access to Justice Commission for consideration.



Thoughts or suggestions?

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