

Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation

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Gov. Patrick Recommends Level Funding for Civil Legal Aid Line Item

BOSTON (January 26, 2011) – Gov. Patrick recommended level funding of \$9.5 million today for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation line item (MLAC, 0321-1600) in the FY12 budget. MLAC is the largest source of funding for civil legal aid in the Commonwealth.

“We are extremely pleased with the Governor’s decision to recommend level funding for the civil legal aid item,” says Lonnie Powers, MLAC’s executive director. “He has demonstrated consistent support for the cause of equal access to justice for all Massachusetts residents.”

Level funding for MLAC is more critical than ever this year, as legal aid programs are struggling to meet demand due to a 66 percent decrease in revenue from the Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program, MLAC’s other funding source, since FY08.

“The Governor’s recommendation makes a powerful statement to the legislature that civil legal aid is an important investment for the Commonwealth, especially during difficult economic times,” says Bob Sable, executive director of Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS). Due to the prolonged legal aid funding crisis, GBLS has lost 20 staff members over the past three years, at a time when demand for services has been greater than ever.

ABOUT MLAC

The Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) was established by the state legislature in 1983 to ensure that low-income people with critical, non-criminal legal problems would have access to legal information, advice and representation. It is the largest funding source for civil legal aid programs in Massachusetts. For more information, visit <http://www.mlac.org>.

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