

Subject: Tennessee Bar Foundation Awards \$1.1 Million to Encourage Innovation in Civil Legal Aid
Date: Thursday, May 30, 2019 at 11:56:56 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Barri Bernstein
To: tbatoday
Attachments: image001.png



For more information:
Barri Bernstein
Executive Director
Tennessee Bar Foundation
bb@tnbarfoundation.org

615/24

2-1531

May 30, 2019

\$1.1 Million Awarded to Encourage Innovation in Civil Legal Aid

Nashville, TN -- The Tennessee Bar Foundation has awarded **\$1,122,735**, from the **Tennessee Legal Initiatives Fund – or “TLIF.”** The funds came from a consumer relief settlement between the Department of Justice and Bank of America Corporation. Under the settlement, funds were donated nationwide to organizations that administer each state’s IOLTA (Interest On Lawyers’ Trust Accounts) program. The amount was based on federal poverty census data.

Tennessee received **\$8,500,000**. Guidance for its use was just a few words in the settlement, “...for the sole purpose of providing funds to legal aid organizations in the state of Tennessee to be used for foreclosure prevention legal assistance and community redevelopment legal assistance... .” No further direction was given.

A broad-based committee was named by the Foundation’s Board of Trustees to make recommendations. It was determined that the money would be used to extend the capacity of organizations to break the cycle of poverty and the barriers to justice by using civil legal aid and education to increase productivity and success for vulnerable populations. According to N. Houston Parks, of Columbia, Chair of the Tennessee Bar Foundation Board of Trustees, “The work would be centered on innovation, coupled with durable and life-changing initiatives, to redevelop communities. This is a tremendous opportunity for the Foundation to make a lasting difference for the populations the grantees serve.”

TLIF monies will be granted in two phases. The Discovery Phase began in July 2018. Thirty-three applications were received from Tennessee organizations. **The grantee organizations, just selected in May 2019, are listed below.**

After recipients have completed approximately one year of activity, TLIF’s second phase, “Implementation,” will evaluate the results. It is hoped that these pilot projects will show that system-level change may come through scale or replication. Armed with the outcomes of these projects, plans for the distribution of the remaining \$7,500,000 will be made at that time.

TLIF Grant Awards

Organization (or Lead Organization)	Project Name	Award	Project Description
Choosing Justice Initiative	All Around Justice	\$100,000	Implement wraparound program to pay court-appointed, criminal defense lawyers to handle client civil legal needs.
Community Legal Center	Remote Immigrant Initiative	\$62,000	Use technology and collaborative services to coordinate representation at Memphis Immigration Court for clients from Middle/East Tennessee.
Dismas House, Inc.	Pro Se Legal Workshop for Reentry Clients	\$100,000	Train reentry clients to overcome obstacles, pro se or with counsel, to obtain a driver's license and other necessities for life post-incarceration.
Legal Aid of East Tennessee	Mental Health Law Partnership	\$91,991	Establish partnership to provide on-site legal help to clients of Helen Ross McNabb Center who suffer from mental illness, addiction or social challenge.
Memphis Bar Foundation	One Stop Legal Help Portal	\$70,000	Create online portal for appropriate referral of potential clients to Community Legal Center or Memphis Area Legal

			Services.
Nashville Conflict Resolution Center	Mediation Access Tennessee	\$99,728	Provide access to mediation through conferencing technology that links rural and underserved populations with community mediation centers.
Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services	Increased Access to Workers' Compensation Resources	\$100,000	Implement data-driven resources for injured workers, including online assistance for preparation of pro se worker compensation claims.
Tennessee Justice Center, Inc.	General Sessions GPS	\$100,000	Develop educational resources and train volunteers to assist General Sessions Court litigants who cannot afford an attorney.
Tennessee Justice Center, Inc.	Independence	\$100,000	Reform systemic policies and procedures surrounding long term services and supports portion of the TennCare program, known as CHOICES.
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors	Families Together	\$99,016	Provide classroom education and pro bono legal services for immigrant families.
The Justice Initiative	Holistic Legal Incubator Program	\$100,000	Train new lawyers and social workers, interested in an interdisciplinary approach to law practice, through a wraparound program.
University of Tennessee College of Law - Legal Clinic	ExpungeTN	\$100,000	Assist rural East Tennesseans, with prior criminal justice interaction, to get various types of relief without an attorney.

###

The Tennessee Bar Foundation is an organization of attorneys from across the state, active since 1982. The Foundation has a three-fold purpose:

1. to honor attorneys who have distinguished themselves in the profession by electing them to membership as "Fellows,"
2. to use the contributions of these Fellows to support selected, law-related public interest projects, and
3. to administer Tennessee's IOLTA (Interest On Lawyers' Trust Accounts) program.