

2021 IOLTA Grants

The Rhode Island Bar Foundation 2021 Interest on Lawyers' Trust Account (IOLTA) grants totaling \$ 393,109.

This year's recipients are:

Rhode Island Legal Services

RILS is Rhode Island's major civil legal aid provider, providing aid to low-income individuals and families, the elderly, victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking and those affected by the foreclosure crisis in Rhode Island. For the past 51 years, RILS has provided civil legal aid to well over 150,000 individuals and families. IOLTA Grant Funds are primarily used for the Volunteer Lawyer Program primarily to help support the Family Law and Housing Units. Cases handled include divorce, custody, domestic violence, visitation, private and subsidized eviction and landlord/tenant issues.

Dorceas International Institute of Rhode Island

Funds are used to continue the Citizenship & Immigration Services' Immigration Law-Project. Since 1987, this project has provided free and low-cost, comprehensive immigration legal services, and education, advocacy and outreach on immigration laws and issues to thousands of immigrants and refugees in the state, as well the community.

Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Funds are used to continue the Superior Court component of their Domestic Violence Victim Advocacy Program in order to help victims seek civil and criminal relief from domestic violence.

Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless

To continue to fund the Homeless Legal Clinic, to enable homeless Rhode Islanders access to pro bono legal services through attorneys who volunteer at shelters and drop-in sites.

Rhode Island Bar Association Legal Information and Referral Service for the Elderly

The primary objective of the Elderly Program is to make legal services readily available to senior citizens ages 60 and over. Attorney members pursue the rights of elderly citizens by providing representation in the areas of guardianship, health and income maintenance, consumer finance, civil, criminal, real estate, family law, and foreclosure prevention. In 2020, approximately 850 seniors were referred to attorneys for free consultations as well as reduced fee and pro bono assistance. Due to the pandemic and continuing health restrictions many senior centers/organizations closed. With these closings, providing legal assistance through Health Care Power of Attorney Clinics, as well as traditional legal clinics and Ask A Lawyer Programs was curtailed. Normally 400-600 seniors receive legal assistance annually at these community outreach forums. Also, more than 50 clients are provided with home, hospital, and nursing home visits by member attorneys. Emergency matters continue to be referred and coordinated through the requesting health facility/organizations following all protocols.

Rhode Island Bar Association Pro Bono Project

The Pro Bono Project responds to civil law cases including: family law/domestic violence, guardianship, bankruptcy, collections, wills, tort defense, landlord/tenant, foreclosure, etc., as well as conflict cases referred from RI Legal Services. The primary objective is to provide critically needed legal assistance to poverty level clients through the Volunteer Lawyer Program. Last year, approximately 630 cases were processed. The placement of eligible clients with critical legal matters is prioritized. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we anticipate an even greater volume of requests for volunteer attorneys in the areas of landlord/tenant issues and foreclosure once the moratorium is lifted.

Day One

To help support the advocacy services program providing support and legal advocacy for victims of sexual assault, providing victims with information and legal advocacy as their case proceeds through the criminal justice system.

Center for Mediation & Collaboration Rhode Island

The Center for Mediation & Collaboration RI (CMCRI) was founded in 1996. CMCRI provides mediation and dispute resolution services to community residents and organizations regardless of their ability to pay. CMCRI staff and volunteers intervene in disputes, both in the community and Small Claims Courts, assisting with family and parent-teen conflicts, court-involved juveniles, neighbor-to-neighbor, organizational and workplace disputes, landlord-tenant, human rights cases, and small claims matters.

Rhode Island Center for Justice

The Center for Justice is an independent non-profit public interest law center created in cooperation with Roger Williams University (RWU) School of Law. Their mission is to ensure justice for vulnerable individuals, families, and communities through the provision of free legal services and advocacy. IOLTA funding is for the support its Lifeline Project in the provision of direct free legal assistance to low-income utility consumer households both in administrative proceedings before the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPU), and in Administrative Procedure Act (APA) appeals at the Superior Court. The Lifeline Project is dedicated to providing free legal advocacy and representation to medically vulnerable, low-income households who have experience or are at risk of termination of electric and gas utility service.

Rhode Island Legal Education Foundation

To help support the administration of the 2021 Rhode Island Mock Trial Tournament.