



The Arc Minnesota  
2446 University Ave West, Suite 110  
St. Paul, MN 55114

March 9, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of The Arc Minnesota, I am writing in support of increasing funding for the state's Civil Legal Services. The Arc Minnesota promotes and protects individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities statewide. A significant number of them need access to civil legal services so their needs can be effectively met. The invaluable work done by Civil Legal Services allows Minnesotans statewide to protect their most basic civil and human rights, families, homes, and health. It is critically important to fund Civil Legal Services fully to overcome barriers to equal justice for all in our state. The Arc Minnesota views the state's civil legal service providers as partners in the pursuit of equal justice for the individuals we serve.

The current level of legislative funding appropriated to Civil Legal Services is \$14.72 million annually. Even though Civil Legal Services leverages this critical investment with other funds from a variety of other sources, there is not enough investment to meet the statewide demand for civil legal aid.

Due to lack of sufficient resources, Civil Legal Services is forced to turn away over half of eligible clients who seek legal help to protect their most basic human needs. Additionally, Civil Legal Services faces an existential crisis in the compensation deficit it experiences compared to other public interest and public service legal employers.

Civil Legal Services attorneys start with salaries of around \$50,000, over \$15,000 lower than Public Defenders, who are likewise underpaid. This session, Civil Legal Services seeks increased funding of \$2,208,000 in Fiscal Year 2022 and \$3,478,000 in Fiscal Year 2023. These funding increases are necessary for Civil Legal Services to take beginning steps to address its compensation deficit crisis. Without full funding for the requested increase, Civil Legal Services will not be able to sustain its current level of legal representation services, and more Minnesotans will be deprived of a chance at justice in their legal cases.

Thank you for your consideration of our strong support for full funding of the Civil Legal Services budget request. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions about the critical value of Civil Legal Services in ensuring that justice is a reality for Minnesotans statewide.

Warm Regards,

Andrea L. Zuber  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Arc Minnesota