



Creating a New Vision for
Legal & Social Justice

CHECK OUT ECI'S LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS!



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PRESERVATION PROJECT



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ECI - RECENT PRESS RELEASES

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The Earl Carl Institute for Legal & Social Policy Immigration Clinic at Texas Southern University Receives \$1 Million Grant from Houston Endowment



Texas Access to Justice Foundation Awards 2-year \$373,643 Grant to the Earl Carl Institute for Property Preservation & Housing Stability Civil Legal Services to Low Income Communities



The Earl Carl Institute for Legal & Social Policy, Inc. receives \$280,000 Grant from The George Foundation to Provide Pro Bono Civil Legal Services in Fort Bend County



FOX 26 BROADCAST - featuring ECI Executive Director Sarah Guidry, discussing Harris County jail deaths during ECI's *Custody to Casket* event

PROTECT IT. IMPROVE IT. PASS IT ON!



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy Immigration Clinic at Texas Southern University Receives \$1 Million Grant from Houston Endowment

Houston, TX (Thursday, September 7, 2023) - The Texas Southern University Foundation recently announced it was awarded more than \$1 million by Houston Endowment to support the establishment and operations of The Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law's Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy, Inc. (ECI) Immigration Clinic. The clinic will focus on the expansion of assistance for applying for U.S. citizenship and navigating the naturalization process. This valuable grant will provide legal representation to individuals in local communities who need assistance in completing his or her Naturalization ("N-400") Application throughout the year. ECI will use the grant funds to hire staff and provide legal resources to assist ECI's Immigration Clinic clients in successfully pursuing their own pathway to U.S. citizenship.

"The Earl Carl Institute is grateful to Houston Endowment for this generous grant in supporting our immigration program," said Sarah Guidry, Earl Carl Institute Executive Director. "This grant will allow the Institute to continue its work towards empowering marginalized and low to moderate income individuals by addressing systemic social issues through legal representation, research, education, and advocacy."

The ECI Immigration Clinic's primary goal for this program is to provide law students with a quality experiential legal education and to provide high-quality legal services to indigent refugees and immigrants who are seeking to adjust status to become U.S. citizens via naturalization, with oversight Professor Vy T. Nguyen who oversees the Thurgood Marshall School of Law LL.M in Immigration Law Program and the Immigration Legal Clinic will provide oversight of this program. ECI is excited to have the expertise of Attorney Nguyen. The clinic will function through the services legal staff of four under this new pro bono program.

"This grant from Houston Endowment will allow ECI to expand its work of providing pro bono legal representation to traditionally disenfranchised or underserved communities in the Greater Houston area." said Guidry. The Immigration Clinic will supplement ECI's current free legal clinicals which include a Property Preservation Project, Record Clearing Project, Juvenile Justice Project, and the University's Innocence Project. These additional clinics will, in some cases, provide non-immigration services to Immigration Clinic clients consistent with the Institute's initiatives around providing holistic client-center representation to all clients.

Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy's Immigration Clinic is located at 3102 Cleburne Street, Houston, Texas 77004. This fall, the ECI's Immigration Clinic will also have a satellite office near the U.S. Immigration Courthouse located at 16800 Greenspoint Parkway Drive, Suite 100, Houston, Texas 77060.

Founded in 1992, The Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy at Thurgood Law, on the campus of Texas Southern University, has become a top-tier legal services provider and think-tank focusing on research, writing and outreach. The mission of the Institute is to empower underserved and disenfranchised communities by addressing systemic social issues through legal representation, research, education, and advocacy. For more information visit www.earlcarlinstitute.org.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas Access to Justice Foundation Awards Grant to the Earl Carl Institute for Property Preservation & Housing Stability Civil Legal Services to Low Income Communities

Houston, TX (Wednesday, September 20, 2023) - Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF) has awarded the Earl Carl Institute for Legal & Social Policy (“ECI”), at Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law, a 2-year \$373,643 grant to fund pro bono legal services for low-income residents in Harris County and its contiguous counties. These services will be performed under the Opal Mitchell Lee Property Preservation and Housing Stability Project. The Property Preservation Program works to help individuals either obtain or maintain their property and grow generational wealth.

ECI started the Opal Lee Property Preservation Project in the Fall of 2007, through an initial \$50,000 grant from TAJF secured by Thurgood Law Professor Marcia Johnson. The project’s focus was to help economically disadvantaged communities retain and grow wealth through prevention of land loss as a result of failure to plan estates, foreclosures, clouds on title to property/land, and general inheritance issues. The support from TAJF has increased over the years allowing ECI to expand the work of this project. This included adding other housing stability matters, including expansion of eviction defense representation during the pandemic, through special grants from TAJF of over \$665,000 over a period of approximately three years.

With separate funding in 2022 and 2023, ECI added the services of a licensed social worker, a holistic representation component, to address a broad array of biopsychosocial issues ancillary to the reason their clients need legal representation, and where legal representation alone cannot cure the underlying issue that might result in future legal issues. Currently, ECI is also working on adding a financial literacy component to its holistic approach to serving clients through collaboration with other nonprofit organizations.

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation is the leading funder of legal aid in Texas. The organization is committed to the vision that all Texans will have equal access to justice, regardless of their income. For more than 39 years, Texas Access to Justice Foundation has supported nonprofit organizations that provide civil legal services to low-income Texans.

With this generous funding, the Institute employs two attorneys with expertise in property transactional actions as well as related litigation. Attorney Kelley Austin, who supervises the program focuses her work on foreclosure defense and actions related to clearing title to property. Attorney Lisa Nelsen, specializes in probate actions to help clear title to heirship property to ensure housing stability for her clients, as well as estate planning to ensure generational wealth. Her presentations for the City of Houston’s Department of Neighborhoods’ “A Month of Service” program, resulted in the Mayor’s Community Engagement Award to the “TSU Earl Carl Institute for outstanding dedication and service to the residents of Houston” in May 2023.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Earl Carl Institute for Legal & Social Policy, Inc. Receives \$280,000 Grant from The George Foundation to Provide Pro Bono Civil Legal Services in Fort Bend County

Houston, TX (Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023) - The George Foundation recently awarded the Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy, Inc. (ECI) \$280,000 to expand its pro bono civil legal services without charge to low-to-moderate income residents of Fort Bend County, Texas from 2023 - 2025. The Earl Carl Institute is part of Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University.

ECI will use the funds to hire an attorney and a paralegal dedicated to serving Fort Bend. The legal services to be provided will include assisting clients in cases involving housing and real property matters; juveniles involved in multiple systems (juvenile justice, foster care, mental health and school discipline); individuals who need their records cleared; persons who have been wrongfully convicted; residents seeking immigration assistance; and some limited family law actions.

“This grant from the George Foundation will allow ECI to continue providing crucial free legal assistance to Fort Bend’s underserved communities,” said Sarah Guidry, Executive Director of The Earl Carl Institute.

The George Foundation was established in 1945 “for the use and benefit of the people of Fort Bend County.” The George Foundation’s Board of Trustees has had the privilege to award nearly \$270 million in grants to Fort Bend County nonprofit organizations and scholarship recipients. The mission of the Foundation is to partner with the community to leverage the Foundation’s resources to positively impact Fort Bend County and its residents.

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