



February 6, 2026

Sign On Letter to Governor Hochul

RE: Request for Full Spending Authority for the Interest on Lawyer Account (IOLA) Fund in the 30-Day Budget Amendments

Dear Governor Hochul,

We, the **132** undersigned organizations and individuals, write to ask you to include full spending authority for the Interest on Lawyer Account (IOLA) Fund in your forthcoming 30-day amendments to the SFY 2027 Executive Budget. This action is essential to maintaining stability in New York’s civil legal services delivery system and ensuring that low-income New Yorkers continue to receive the assistance they need during a period of unprecedented demand.

Civil legal services providers are essential partners in advancing many of the priorities outlined in your Executive Budget—including protecting immigrant communities, supporting New Yorkers facing economic hardship, and safeguarding housing stability, family security, and access to vital benefits. Unlike in criminal cases, New Yorkers confronting life altering civil matters are not guaranteed an attorney. A strong, predictable, and accessible civil legal services network is therefore critical to achieving your goals of fairness, affordability, and equity.

As currently proposed, the Executive Budget does not grant IOLA the full \$102.5 million in spending authority requested. These funds are **not taxpayer dollars**; they are generated through interest on attorney escrow accounts and are already held by IOLA for the express purpose of supporting civil legal services statewide, as authorized by statute.

In 2024, IOLA initiated a five-year, competitively bid contracting process designed to provide long-term stability and predictability for service providers. This multi-year approach—widely embraced by the field—enables organizations to plan responsibly,

recruit and retain staff, and meet increasing demand for services. It is already improving coordination and strengthening service delivery across the state.

Without the additional \$25 million in spending authority needed to fully fund IOLA's request, the second year of these contracts faces significant cuts. Such reductions would result in job losses, diminished services for vulnerable communities, and the unraveling of carefully planned innovations—directly undermining the policy goals your budget seeks to advance.

We respectfully ask you to address this issue in the 30-day amendments by providing IOLA with the full appropriation authority required to honor its multiyear commitments. Doing so will reinforce New York's commitment to stability, equity, and access to justice, and ensure that civil legal services providers can continue their vital work in supporting the state's affordability and immigrant protection agenda.

Thank you for your leadership and for your continued commitment to ensuring fairness and opportunity for all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

The New York Legal Services Coalition

Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys

Monroe County Bar Association

Teamsters Local 264

A. Côté Consulting Group PLLC

Access Justice Brooklyn

Brooklyn Defender Services

Build Up Justice NYC

Catholic Charities Community Services,
Archdiocese of New York

Catholic Migration Services

CCCS of Rochester

Center for Elder Law & Justice

Central American Refugee Center -
CARECEN NY

Child and Family Services of Erie
County

City Bar Justice Center

Domestic Violence Project | Urban
Justice Center

Empire Justice Center

Erie County Bar Association Volunteer
Lawyers Project

Finding Your Cup LLC

Frank H. Hiscock Legal Aid Society

Genesee Co-op FCU

Her Justice

Hope's Door

Housing Conservation Coordinators

Hudson Valley Justice Center

Hurwitz Fine PC

Immigration Law & Justice New York

JASA|Legal Services for Elder Justice

Jensen, Marks, Langer & Vance LLC

Journeys End Refugee Services

JustCause

Lawyers For Children

Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.

Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (LASNNY)

Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.

Legal Services NYC

Legal Services of Central New York

Legal Services of Long Island

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

Linden Financial Consultants, LLC

Make the Road New York

Mancuso Brightman PLLC

Mobilization for Justice, Inc.

Monroe County Assigned Counsel Program

Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.

New Economy Project

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)

New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

New York State Citizen Review Panels for Child Protective Services

NMIC

Pace Women's Justice Center

Partnership for the Public Good

President, New York County Lawyers Assn

Pro Bono Net

Rural Law Center of New York

Sanctuary for Families

TakeRoot Justice

The Bronx Defenders

The Door - A Center of Alternatives, Inc.

The Family Center

The Fazili Firm

The Legal Aid Society

The Legal Aid Society of Rochester, NY

The Legal Project

United Community Center of Westchester, Inc

UnLocal

Urban Justice Center

Urban Resource Institute
Volunteer Lawyers Project
Volunteer Lawyers Project of CNY, Inc.
Volunteers of Legal Service
Western New York Law Center, Inc.

David A. Munro, Esq.
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Center for Elder Law & Justice

Individuals:

Aalok Karambelkar
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Afia Babar, MD - Member of the Board
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Amy Barasch
Ann Monroe- Vice President of Center
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Anne McKenna
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Anne M Noble
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Bridget Healy, Board Chair, NYLAG
Brooke Richie-Babbage
Bryan Roberts
Cat McCulle
Catherine Doyle
Cathy Creighton
Dany Rothemund

Greta Mosley
Henry Freedman
Holly Hejmowski
Joel Frank
Joshua Feinstein
Julie Miller
Katherine J. Bestine
Katie Blum
Katie Ireland
Kristen M. Clark
Kristine Brown
Krystal Bertrand
Laura Dwyer
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Leslie Fox
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