



TEXAS LAWYERS FOR TEXAS VETERANS 2018-2019

The State Bar of Texas implemented Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans (TLTV) in July 2010 to develop and assist pro bono legal advice clinics for military veterans and their families throughout the state. Texas has the second-highest population of veterans in the nation, and a distressing number of Texas veterans are living in poverty or without homes. As a result, some veterans don't have the resources, financial or otherwise, to seek and retain legal counsel. TLTV provides essential resources that enable local bar associations and legal aid organizations to provide brave veterans the civil legal assistance they need and deserve.

Local Bar Associations and Legal Aid Organizations

Since the project's launch, more than **32,000** veterans have been served by more than **11,000** volunteer attorneys, paralegals, and law students through local bar association and legal aid organization veterans legal clinics in Texas. Over **1,500** veterans received limited-scope or full-scale representation from these organizations this year. The State Bar of Texas TLTV hotline receives daily calls from veterans looking for referrals to local clinics or other resources. Their legal needs vary, but many common issues include will execution, benefits issues, and family law.



Baylor Law Veterans Clinic staff, students, and volunteer attorneys with their 1,000th veteran served.

and are mentored through the program. Local paralegal organizations provide many clinics with effective administrative volunteers as well.

Most local bars offer advice to veterans who are referred to them, no matter their income eligibility. Veterans continue to be grateful for the support and assistance they receive through the program; however, many veterans remain in need of legal assistance.

If your local bar association is interested in starting a clinic or partnering with an existing clinic, please contact the Local Bar Services Department at **(800) 204-2222, ext. 1514** or **localbars@texasbar.com**. Our department can provide resources like the Clinic in a Box or the Veterans Clinic Marketing Tool Kit that will assist you in establishing a clinic and keeping it going. The Clinic in a Box contains everything an organization needs to host a veterans legal clinic — applications, forms, office supplies, and more. The Tool Kit provides in-depth resources to organize and publicize local veterans legal clinics to potential veterans and volunteer attorneys.

*Volunteer attorney
Sara Norman
presents
a Wills/Estate
Planning Seminar
to local veterans at
the Jefferson County
Vet Center on
November 2, 2018.*



More than 25 bar associations and organizations are currently participating statewide, including: the Amarillo Area Bar Association, Austin Bar Association, Baylor Law School, Bell County Bar Association, Dallas Bar Association, Denton County Bar Association, El Paso Bar Association, Houston Bar Association, Jefferson County Bar Association, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, Lone Star Legal Aid, San Antonio Bar Association, and Tarrant County Bar Association.

Clinics would not be possible without committed volunteers. Attorneys across the state have dedicated thousands of hours to serve our veterans. Local universities have provided many clinics with pre-law/law students who can earn pro bono hours

Statewide Access to Justice Efforts

The Texas Access to Justice Commission with its co-sponsor, the State Bar of Texas, honored veterans throughout the state at the 2019 Champions of Justice Gala Benefiting Veterans. More than \$455,000 was raised to help provide civil legal services to low-income Texas veterans. Proceeds are distributed by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF) and dedicated to the provision of civil legal services for low-income Texas veterans.

Keynote speaker for the evening was Phil Klay, a graduate of Dartmouth College and a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. He served in Iraq's Anbar Province from January 2007 to February 2008 as a public affairs officer.

Klay spoke with conviction about the needs of veterans as they return home, highlighting the importance of helping veterans navigate the system and remove bureaucratic barriers to essential and lifesaving services. At times devastating but also tinged with heartwarming humor, a bit of singing, and



Color Guard Presentation by Marines of Inspector Instructor Staff, Weapons Company, 1st Battalion 23d Marine Regiment in Austin, Texas.

incredible depth, Klay's address compelled attendees to prioritize the complex needs of veterans and continue the work to clear the hurdles they face. Klay stated that veterans are more likely than members of the general population to vote and to be involved in the community and that a powerful "antidote to alienation is service."

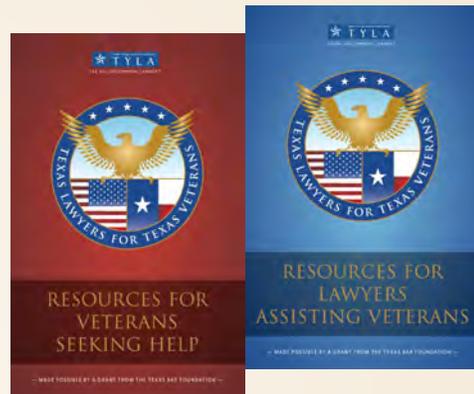
Klay implored the audience to ponder the challenge of veterans as they seek to "reconcile the world [they've] been a part of with the world around them [at home]."

TAJF provides funding to 14 nonprofit organizations throughout the state that provide free legal services to veterans with civil legal matters including the denial of critical medical care, legal issues related to disabilities, family law matters, the denial of benefits, and other issues that may arise due to a veteran's absence from home during military service.

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation also coordinated the Texas Veterans Legal Aid Week (TVLAW), a statewide effort in honor of Veterans Day. During the week of November 11-17, 2018, legal aid programs, local bar associations, law schools, and pro bono private lawyers provided civil legal services for qualified Texas veterans in various locations throughout the state.

Texas Young Lawyers Association

The Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA) produced the informative pamphlets *Resources for Veterans Seeking Help* and *Resources for Lawyers Assisting Veterans*. If you'd like to request these pamphlets, please contact the State Bar of Texas Public Information Department at pamphlets@texasbar.com.



How Can You Help?

Local bar associations are always in need of volunteers for their veterans legal clinics. If you would like to volunteer at an existing clinic, please contact your local bar association directly or contact the Local Bar Services Department at **(800) 204-2222, ext. 1514** or localbars@texasbar.com. Our department will connect you with your nearest existing legal clinic. Veterans will be thankful for any level of service you can commit. For many, just getting to talk one on one with an attorney for 15 minutes can relieve a huge burden. texasbar.com/veterans



JCBA Veterans Legal Initiative coordinator Melissa Kirchmer and volunteer attorney Chris Kirchmer promote the veterans program at the Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas' Red, White & YOU Veteran Job/Resource Fair on November 8, 2018.