



Last-minute ‘sweep’ undermines low-income New Yorker’s Access to Justice, according to the New York Legal Services Coalition

Governor, Legislature assure legal community it is a one-time occurrence

In a last-minute move during budget negotiations, lawmakers have agreed to a one-time, \$55 million “sweep” from the Interest on Lawyer Accounts (IOLA) Fund to cover the cost of the state’s foreclosure prevention program (HOPP) at \$40m and eviction prevention services at \$15m. The proposal was put forth by the Governor in the [final hours of negotiations](#). While legislators pushed back -- given that IOLA funds are not tax levy dollars, and the sweep would reduce the net amount of funds available to provide civil legal aid to low-income New Yorkers -- the move was ultimately agreed to so that critical programs were fully funded.

Governor Hochul’s initial executive budget had proposed sweeping \$100 million from IOLA to New York’s General Fund. However, in response to the public outcry from legal aid advocates, other nonprofit leaders, and a diverse cross-section of the private bar, that proposal was rescinded on February 15.

“Never, in the IOLA Fund’s 40-year history, have the funds been removed like this. IOLA was established with the sole purpose of independently distributing funding generated from interest on accounts held by lawyers for their clients. New York has a civil justice gap of over \$1 billion and providers are struggling to hire and retain staff due to low wages and burnout – now there is \$55 million less available to fill that gap”, said **Kristin Brown, President of the NY Legal Services Coalition**.

“The Governor and Legislators have assured us that this is a one – time occurrence. We look forward to working together to take measures that will ensure that these funds are protected for generations to come,” said **Sal Curran and Jessica Rose, co-chairs of the Legislative Steering Committee of the New York Legal Services Coalition**.

About the New York Legal Services Coalition

The New York Legal Services Coalition is a statewide association that represents the interests of civil legal services organizations and the communities they serve. Our members collectively provide services in a wide variety of areas including family law, housing, immigration, civil rights and public benefits across all 62 counties of New York State.