



HIV & AIDS Legal
Services Alliance

COMMUNITY ADVISORY

September 25, 2009

**To: Community Stakeholders, Southern California HIV
Community and AIDS Service Organizations:**

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As you may have heard, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger used his line item veto to strip \$52 million in state general funds allocated to HIV/AIDS programs from the already lean budget adopted by the California Legislature. That cut has forced the County of Los Angeles Office of AIDS Programs and Policy (OAPP) to make difficult choices in the continued funding for HIV services. HALSA has been notified of a future elimination of funding that supports our Discrimination, Immigration and Public Benefits practices. These cuts will be effective at the end of February, 2010, and we are taking a number of immediate steps to make up for the shortfall these cuts represent.

LEADERSHIP IS WORKING TO REPLACE FUNDS LONG-TERM ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY UNAFFECTED

We are working diligently with community stakeholders to identify and obtain both short-term and long term replacement funds. Our goal is to continue the provision of legal services to the HIV/AIDS community at the same capacity and in the same practice areas for 2010 as we have provided in 2009. While these cuts may affect our future client capacity, they will not determine our long-term viability. HALSA's Board of Directors and senior leadership will take the appropriate financial steps to ensure the continued provision of legal services for low-income Southern Californians living with HIV/AIDS beyond 2010.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Until then, our ability to meet the legal needs of low-income people living with HIV, particularly in the affected practice areas, could be impacted and we may have to turn clients away before the holiday season. We hope that you will consider an immediate gift to HALSA in order to ensure that we can continue to represent individuals fired from jobs or kicked out of schools due to overt HIV discrimination, or clients denied access to public benefits. You may make a donation 24 hours a day via our website at www.halsalegal.org or help us raise funds by [joining TEAM HALSA](#) as part of AIDSWalk Los Angeles on October 18th. You can register for the walk by using the link on the home page of our website.

CASE ACCEPTANCE MAY BE AFFECTED UNTIL NEW FUNDING CAN BE SECURED

In the interim, our legal staff is focusing on our current cases in the affected practice areas due to the substantial volume of existing clients. At this time, we are not able to provide full representation for new clients in our Immigration or Discrimination practice areas. Public Benefits cases will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. However, we are committed to providing community education, limited scope assistance, counsel and advice and referrals for clients needing legal assistance in all of our practice areas, including the ones impacted by these cuts.

For individuals and families who do not qualify for free assistance, or for those who seek assistance outside our areas of expertise, HALSA provides referrals to private practice attorneys in Los Angeles County who have been screened and selected based on their experience in specific areas of the law.

Note that our Housing, Tax, Debt Harassment and Future Planning practices are unaffected and currently operating as usual.

Institutions needing the most up-to-date information regarding the services we are able to provide, may call Peggy Farrell, Legal Director at (213) 637-1037. Individuals seeking legal assistance may contact our Client Services Line at (213) 637-1690.

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