

# Make Justice Happen

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## Equal Access Champions Program

The Equal Access to Justice Champions Program was started by the Houston Bar Association in 2006, to help ensure placement of Houston Volunteer Lawyers cases with pro bono volunteers. Originally, firms were tiered according to size, and firms within each tier committed to accept a certain number of pro bono cases from HVL each year for five years.

In October 2014, the Boards of the Houston Bar Association and Houston Volunteer Lawyers announced changes to the Champions Program to make available to volunteers a broader array of pro bono matters and to recognize the extensive pro bono work being done by Champion firms. Firms that participate in the Champions Program now pledge to accept, annually, one pro bono case for every five lawyers in their Houston office.

Champion firms also now may count pro bono matters handled through other legal service organizations towards up to one-third of the firm's Equal Access target. To count, the work of such organizations must further HVL's mission to provide free legal services to low-income individuals in the Houston area. Approved organizations include, but are not limited to:\*

- **AVDA (Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse)**
- **Beacon Law**
- Boatpeople SOS
- **Catholic Charities Cabrini Center**
- Disability Rights Texas
- Dispute Resolution Center
- Earl Carl Institute
- **Human Rights First**
- **KIND (Kids in Need of Defense)**
- Lone Star Legal Aid
- Memorial Assistance Ministries
- **Metroplex Veterans Legal Services Program**
- Neighborhood Centers
- **Tahirih Justice Center**
- Texas C-Bar
- Texas Civil Rights Project
- YMCA International

The Champions Program year runs from July 1 to June 30.

If you are interested in becoming an Equal Access to Justice Champion, please contact our Pro Bono Coordinator, Marisa Flores, at (713) 275-0140 or [Marisa.Flores@hvlp.org](mailto:Marisa.Flores@hvlp.org).

Act now.

\*Organizations listed in bold report quarterly to HVL the number of matters accepted by those firms that participate in the HBA's Equal Access to Justice Champions Program.

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