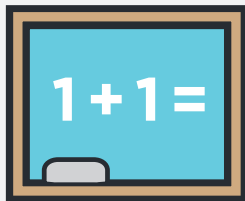


# SOWING THE SEEDS OF JUSTICE

*Texas Appleseed is a public interest justice center that works to change unjust laws and policies that prevent Texans from realizing their full potential.*

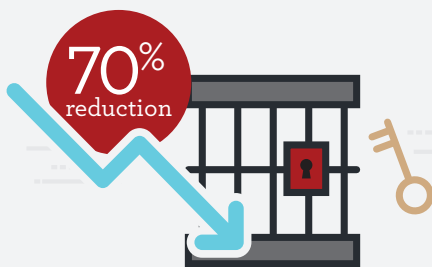


## Legislative Advocacy



On the heels of major local victories propelled by our advocacy — with Houston, Dallas, and Austin ISDs passing pre-K through 2nd grade suspensions bans — Texas Appleseed looked toward statewide change. Young students were often being suspended for minor, age-appropriate behaviors. We were the leading voice that helped end out-of-school suspensions in 2017 for pre-K through 2nd graders in Texas.

In conjunction with our *Pay or Stay* report release, we advocated for legislation to improve the fairness of court procedures for people who cannot afford fines and court costs. An important step towards eliminating debtors' prisons in Texas, the 2017 law that passed requires judges to ask about people's ability to pay at sentencing and to impose alternatives like community service when people cannot pay, as well as places limits on the issuance of arrest warrants for nonpayment of fines and costs.



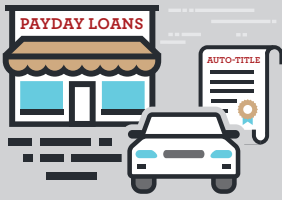
Reforms championed by Texas Appleseed have led to a more than 70% reduction in the number of youth housed in the state's juvenile justice facilities.

Texas Appleseed continually examines how students are disciplined in schools. In 2015, based on our research and concerns, the Texas Legislature reformed truancy laws by decriminalizing the offense. In 2013, the state eliminated the ability to issue tickets to students for school-based, low-level misdemeanors due to our advocacy, resulting in an approximate 60% drop in the number of students being charged in adult criminal court.

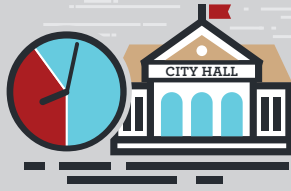


eliminating more than  
**100,000+**  
criminal truancy cases

# Community Action



Texas Appleseed was a key collaborator on the unified ordinance, now passed in 43 cities, that protects payday and auto title borrowers from some of the worst abuses in the industry.



Austin's Juvenile Curfew Ordinance, in effect over 20 years, created a Class C misdemeanor for daytime and nighttime violations. In 2017, we helped lead a 29-member workgroup and teamed with city officials to end the ordinance, helping keep youth from being criminalized.



Texas Appleseed released an influential report shedding light on how banks could better serve immigrants, bringing this population into mainstream banking.



Texas Appleseed advocacy ensured that Galveston, Port Arthur, and other hurricane-devastated Gulf Coast cities rebuilt public housing in areas with access to strong schools, safe environments, and jobs.

# Legal Action and Court Initiatives



**\$150 million**  
more in  
disaster  
recovery

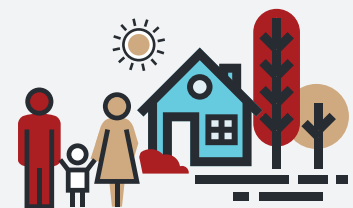
In 2010, a complaint by Texas Appleseed and the Texas Low Income Housing Information Service to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development resulted in \$150 million more funding from disaster recovery being directed to low-income residents affected by Hurricanes Ike and Dolly, and ensured that recovery funds would be directed at the communities most affected.



A complaint filed by Texas Appleseed with the U.S. Department of Justice resulted in an ongoing investigation into civil rights violations of students in the Dallas area charged as criminals for truancy.



In 2015, Texas Appleseed, DRTx, and NCYL brought a legal complaint to the Texas Education Agency about certain school districts using truancy courts to push students with disabilities out of school via GED classes, alternative schools, and coerced homeschooling. TEA's investigation confirmed districts failed to meet their obligations, and they mandated remedies.



Texas Appleseed developed a set of best practices for judges hearing foster care cases to move children more quickly to safe, permanent homes, and worked to train judges across the state to implement those practices.