



## Honors for Texas Appleseed!



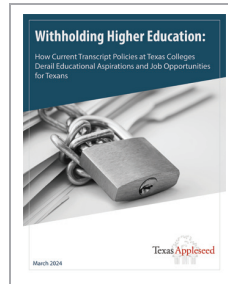
We are proud to announce that we have been designated as a 2024 Best Place to Work and a Best Place for Working Parents via the Austin Business Journal! We are very appreciative of this honor. We truly value our staff and all of their contributions, as well as thank our incredible leadership team and Board of Directors!

## There's More to Celebrate!

We are thrilled that Ann Baddour, Director of the Fair Financial Services Project at Texas Appleseed, was honored on June 6 with the Consumer Champion Award by the Consumer Federation of America. This recognition celebrates her incredible advocacy and tireless work for Texas consumers and families. Congratulations, Ann, on this well-deserved achievement!



## How Transcript Holds Derail Educational Aspirations & Job Opportunities



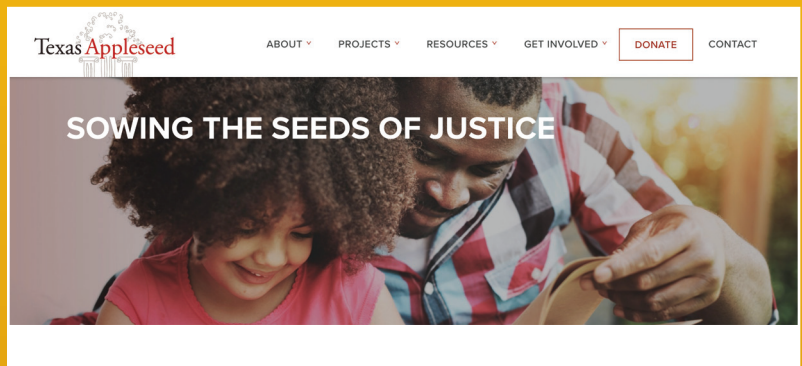
In March, we released a report about transcript holds in Texas called *Withholding Higher Education*. Texas Appleseed obtained data from six Texas colleges: Blinn College, Dallas College, Northeast Texas Community College, San Jacinto College, South Plains College, and Victoria College. We found that by withholding college transcripts for outstanding school-related debts, Texas colleges and universities construct financial barriers that ultimately limit the upward mobility of current and former students.

Of the six schools sampled, there were nearly 55,000 outstanding debts preventing individuals from accessing their college transcript. The average amount of debt was \$583, and the median amount was about \$395. Nearly 58 percent of the debts were more than five years old, suggesting transcript holds are an ineffective means of collecting school-related debts.

Without access to their transcript, students are often unable to transfer to other higher education institutions or secure employment, thereby decreasing their earning potential, stifling economic growth within the state, and inhibiting their ability to repay their debt. To learn more about the report and our policy recommendations, please visit our website.

## Introducing Our New Website

We have a new, updated website that can be found at the same primary URL: [www.texasappleseed.org](http://www.texasappleseed.org). Our website features brand new pages and also includes a refresh of existing pages. If you are unable to find certain resources or information in their usual places, please simply follow the website's new navigation menu. All of the content is there, plus more! We hope you enjoy the fresh, new look!



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## Pilot Program in North Texas is Fully Underway

A new pilot program that kicked off last November is making further progress. The program focuses on coerced debt—debt incurred by an abuser in the name of their victim through threat, force or fraud. The pilot program is coordinated by the Texas Coalition on Coerced Debt, of which Texas Appleseed is a member.

The program will connect survivors of domestic violence with attorneys who can assist them in obtaining a court order declaring them to be a victim of identity theft. Survivors of domestic violence face numerous obstacles to rebuilding their lives after leaving an abusive relationship. The court order can help eliminate barriers to accessing employment, housing, credit, and educational opportunities caused by bad credit and credit burdens due to coerced debt.

After a recruitment period to secure a cohort of pro bono attorneys and finalize partnerships with local domestic violence organizations, we held an in-person training in April with the volunteer attorneys and domestic violence program advocates.

Survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking who are seeking help with coerced debt must be active clients of one of the organizations below in order to be connected to the pilot program. The pilot is currently limited to people who reside in Dallas and Tarrant counties.

- Genesis Women's Shelter & Support at 214-946-HELP (4357) or by visiting [www.genesisshelter.org](http://www.genesisshelter.org)
- Mosaic Family Services, Inc. at 214-823-4434 or by visiting [www.mosaicservices.org](http://www.mosaicservices.org)
- SafeHaven of Tarrant County at 1-877-701-7233 or by visiting [www.safehaventc.org](http://www.safehaventc.org)
- Texas Muslim Women's Foundation at 972-880-4192 or by visiting [www.tmwf.org](http://www.tmwf.org)
- The Salvation Army of North Texas at 214-424-7208 or by visiting [www.salvationarmytx.org/north-texas/fight-for-justice](http://www.salvationarmytx.org/north-texas/fight-for-justice)



L to R: Lindsey Conway (Texas Appleseed); Lena Martinez-Wolfinger (Texas Appleseed); Brittany Hightower (Lone Star Legal Aid); Briana Gordley (Texas Appleseed); Ann Baddour (Texas Appleseed); Molly Voyles (Texas Council on Family Violence); and Lauren Lluveras (Texas Council on Family Violence) in Dallas April 22-23, 2024, at the training.

## Don't Miss the Good Apple Dinner this November

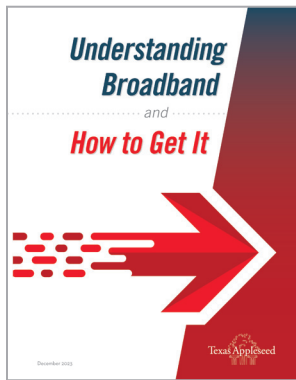
The Good Apple Dinner will take place on November 7, 2024, at the beautiful Four Seasons Hotel in Austin! It's a night to reconnect with friends and colleagues, support Texas Appleseed's mission, and celebrate legal heroes. We hope you will join us!

Texas Appleseed will present **Lael and Peter Brodsky** with the 2024 *J. Chrys Dougherty Good Apple Award* for their extensive philanthropic work, deep involvement in their community, and commitment to achieving justice for vulnerable Texans. We will also present the 2024 *Pro Bono Leadership Awards* to two outstanding law firms, **Sidley Austin LLP** and **Latham & Watkins**.

Sponsorships are available, so please secure a table today! For more information, visit the Good Apple Dinner page of our website, found under Get Involved.



Lael and Peter Brodsky



## Broadband Access is Necessary for All Texans

Our community toolkit, *Understanding Broadband and How to Get It*, has information for Texas residents who don't currently have access to broadband. It contains a wealth of information for people who need a primer, including the following:

- Various technologies available for your home, and the pros and cons of each option.
- Key terms you may need to know.
- How to identify the options available for your area and the steps that may be required to install broadband internet at your residence.
- Resources on what to do if there aren't good options for broadband currently available to you.

Creating access to broadband offers better opportunities for people and businesses in our state, and Texas Appleseed is working to ensure all Texans have access. It is increasingly important for health/telemedicine purposes, meeting educational needs, growing or starting a business, and capitalizing on employment opportunities.

The community toolkit is available on our website. It will be available in Spanish, and we will also have an accompanying brochure that will be professionally printed and made available to areas across Texas where there is low access to broadband.

## LSAT Prep Scholarship Final Round for 2024

The deadline to apply for our scholarship is September 13, 2024. This scholarship helps low-income people of color in Texas expand their law school options by covering the full cost of a Kaplan LSAT preparation course. We believe that law school should be accessible to all qualified students. Find the application and further details by visiting the Diversity Legal Scholars page of our website.







# The CORE

Our blog, The Core, is a great place to learn more about our work and dive deeper into certain issues. Recently, we've published blogs on the sealing and expunction process in Texas, the lack of treatment for substance use disorders in state jails, and about a proposed rule from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau regarding excessive overdraft charges at the nation's largest banks.

Please follow us on social media and subscribe to our e-newsletter if you haven't already, where we provide you with updates on our work, including our latest blog posts.

**INSIDE:** [New Website](#) | [Best Place to Work](#) | [Broadband Community Toolkit](#) | [LSAT Prep Scholarship](#)

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