



Session is Almost Here

Texas' 89th legislative session is right around the corner, starting in January. All of our teams will be at the Capitol, advocating for important laws to help Texas children, families and communities. We have created a special legislative page on our website to serve as

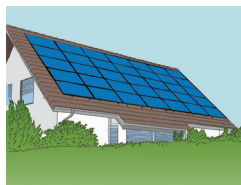
the hub for all of our materials. Please check it frequently throughout session, as new content will be added weekly.

Here's what our legislative page will house:

- Legislative priorities for each of our project areas.
- Action alert notices, which contain ways for you to help send important messages to lawmakers at critical times during session.
- A host of other resources, such as reports, fact sheets, and blog posts.

Find our legislative page under the Get Involved section of our website or go here: www.texasappleseed.org/89th-texas-legislature.

The Dark Side of Solar



The power generated from rooftop solar has the potential to benefit the Texas grid and family budgets. But, solar panel-related fraud and scams have skyrocketed in the last several years. Our report, *Dimming the*

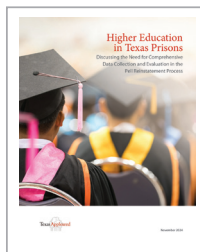
Benefits of Residential Solar in Texas, outlines complaints made to the Texas Office of the Attorney General and the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. From 2018 to 2023, complaints to the entities increased by 818% and 576%, respectively.

Here are some additional report findings:

- Residents in 141 of the 254 Texas counties submitted solar panel-related complaints to the Office of the Texas Attorney General, indicating that problematic practices are widespread.
- Among the complaints submitted by Texans, 45% noted problems with false or misleading statements, and 37% mentioned unsatisfactory service.
- Many of the harmful practices targeted older Texans and people who are not native English speakers, and included misleading statements that there would be no electric bills after installation of the panels, false promises of government tax credits, and forgeries of signatures or other deceptive practices used to execute financing contracts.

Find the report at the link below or on our Fair Financial Services Project page: www.texasappleseed.org/dimming-benefits-residential-solar-texas.

Higher Education in Prisons Report



Postsecondary education is a vital component of successful reentry for incarcerated individuals, their families, and their communities. In 2020, Congress passed the FAFSA Simplification Act that reinstated Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated students—regardless of sentence length or offense. Today, correctional institutions

are now able to launch Pell-funded programming as part of their reentry and workforce education efforts.

For Pell Reinstatement to be sustainable, higher education stakeholders must recognize the importance of data collection and evaluation in building out prison education programming. To provide a framework for how this can come to fruition, our report, *Higher Education in Texas Prisons*, does the following:

- Explores the transformative benefits of postsecondary education.
- Conveys what is currently happening regarding higher education in Texas prisons.
- Explains the process of becoming a Pell-funded Prison Education Program (PEP).
- Delves into the data points and data collection models that can inform each institution's PEP evaluation efforts.

Find the report at the link below or on our Criminal Justice Project page: www.texasappleseed.org/higher-education-texas-prisons.

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Supporter Spotlight: Andrew Vickers



Over the past year, we have profiled different Texas Appleseed supporters in our e-newsletters. We're now excited to bring our Supporter Spotlight to our print issue. Andrew Vickers is a Partner at DuBois Bryant & Campbell. He is also the President of Texas Appleseed's Emerging Leaders Council (ELC). ELC members work on pro bono projects for our nonprofit and find other innovative ways to support us. We thank Andrew for his support and for sitting down with us to answer a few questions:

What does justice mean to you?

"Justice is having the opportunity, the resources, and the means—whoever you are—to have your voice heard and to seek a fair hearing on issues that are important to you, both in court and at the political level. I don't think we have achieved that comprehensively throughout Texas yet, but I'm grateful for the people working to make that a reality every day."

What do you appreciate about your partnership with Texas Appleseed?

"Being a member of the Emerging Leaders Council gives me the opportunity to interact with smart, engaged, and effective advocates. I am always impressed with the ideas and perspectives that Appleseed staff and my colleagues on the Council bring to the table. I always look forward to the meetings with these folks who work on issues of justice, access to justice, and justice reform."

Why do you invest in Texas Appleseed?

"I support Texas Appleseed because Appleseed has a team of subject matter experts who have the time and expertise to push on a number of really important public policy issues at the local level and the statewide level. Knowing that there is a one-stop shop of trusted professionals to immediately and effectively devote resources and expertise to enact change is invaluable."

Integration & Segregation Report



In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional. The court recognized that separate but equal is not, in fact, equal and mandated desegregation. However, 70 years later, schools and neighborhoods across America are largely more segregated than they were in the 1950s and 1960s, and the schools that primarily serve Black and Brown children are still under-resourced.

Our new report, *Segregation's Impact and the Pursuit of School Integration*, seeks to foster conversations about what integration actually means and functionally looks like. It evaluates school

integration as a means of addressing pressing issues of education equity and racial justice, utilizing Beaumont, Texas, as an example of how integration efforts have failed in the past, manifest today, and could succeed in the future. This report acknowledges that much work remains to fulfill *Brown's* promise, and Texans in communities like Beaumont are ready to make forward progress.

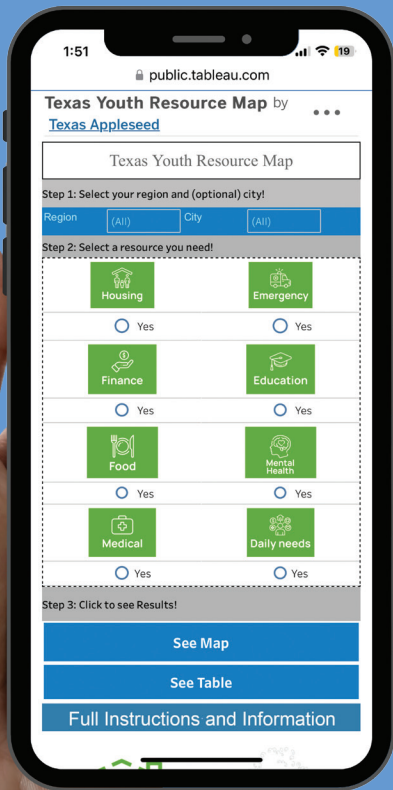
Find the report at the link below or on our School & Neighborhood Segregation Issue page: www.texasappleseed.org/segregations-impact-and-pursuit-school-integration.

Another Magical Night at the Good Apple Dinner

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported our nonprofit at the Good Apple Dinner! Our annual event took place at the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin on November 7th.

Lael and Peter Brodsky accepted our highest honor, the 2024 J. Chrys Dougherty Good Apple Award. We also celebrated two outstanding law firms, **Sidley Austin LLP** and **Latham & Watkins**, who each received our 2024 Pro Bono Leadership Award.





Texas Youth Resource Map

Our Texas Youth Resource Map is a new online tool to help youth experiencing homelessness, educators who support students who are homeless, and other service providers locate essential services across Texas. It contains more than 800 resources.

Users can filter resources by region and category. People can locate food pantries, emergency shelters, medical care, mental health care, social services, transportation, child care, and more. The site can produce information on an interactive map or in a list format.

Find it by visiting the News section of our Youth Homelessness Project page.

INSIDE: Legislative Session | New Reports | Supporter Spotlight | Good Apple Dinner Photos

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