



**COMMUNITY
JUSTICE
ADVOCATES
OF UTAH**



Hayley Cousin

Executive Director

Community Justice Advocates of Utah

Office: (801) 697-2055

hcousin@cjaau.org

Citlali Jauregui

Communications Specialist

Holy Cross Ministries

Office: (385) 257-2456

cjauregui@hcmutah.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - JULY 21, 2025

Holy Cross Ministries Strengthens Medical Debt Legal Advocacy Through Strategic Collaboration with Community Justice Advocates of Utah

Salt Lake City, UT: This week, [Holy Cross Ministries](#) announced a new partnership with [Community Justice Advocates of Utah](#) that will strengthen their Medical Debt Legal Advocate program and delivery of free legal services.

Holy Cross Ministries was granted authorization by the Utah Supreme Court in May 2021 through the [Legal Regulatory Sandbox](#) ("Sandbox") to begin operating their Medical Debt Legal Advocate (MDLA) program. In this program, Holy Cross community health workers are trained by [Innovation for Justice](#) (i4J) in how to provide limited-scope legal services to individuals facing medical debt.

Since launching the program, Medical Debt Advocates at Holy Cross Ministries have delivered over half a million dollars in either pending or confirmed medical debt relief to Utahns, in addition to negotiating with creditors and explaining rights and responsibilities to debtors.

In 2024, Community Justice Advocates of Utah (CJAU) received an Order for Authorization to Practice Law from the Utah Supreme Court to oversee frontline workers at community-based organizations who would provide legal services in the areas of medical debt, housing stability, and civil protective orders. CJAU has partnered with i4J to further expand the Medical Debt Legal Advocate program.

After four years of successful operation as a standalone Sandbox entity, Holy Cross Ministries made the decision to withdraw as an independent entity in the Sandbox and begin operating under Community Justice Advocates of Utah's Supreme Court Order. This strategic decision will enable Holy Cross Ministries' existing and future Medical Debt Community Justice Advocates to access greater support, participate in ongoing training tailored to their needs, and integrate into a broader network of community-based organizations who are offering legal services alongside social services.

“We are eternally grateful to the amazing i4J team for connecting us with CJAU,” said Emmie Gardner, Chief Executive Officer of Holy Cross Ministries. “We feel our partnership with CJAU will provide the technical support and continued role development of this new discipline of community justice advocacy. Our Medical Debt Community Justice Advocates are excited for the continued mentoring and training to help them with their busy caseloads of clients who are struggling with their medical bills.”

“We are thrilled to partner with Holy Cross Ministries in working to ensure that Utahns have access to legal help when faced with medical debt,” said Hayley Cousin, Executive Director of Community Justice Advocates of Utah. “Their community health workers have been providing critical services since 2021 that serve to financially stabilize individuals and families, and by extension, our communities throughout Utah. We look forward to providing ongoing support to ensure the longevity of the program at Holy Cross.”

Established by the Utah Supreme Court in 2020, the Sandbox was designed to enable organizations to explore innovative, nontraditional methods of delivering legal services. It has served as a valuable space for testing and refining new service models, allowing entities to identify scalable, sustainable models. While in her role at Timpanogos Legal Center, Hayley discovered the importance and effectiveness of providing centralized oversight and support for advocates in disparate organizations, which reduces barriers to participation for smaller nonprofit providers while promoting consistency and stability across programs. The partnership between Holy Cross Ministries and Community Justice Advocates of Utah reflects the Sandbox’s success in fostering intentional innovation within Utah’s legal services landscape.

Holy Cross Ministries joins a growing consortium of community-based organizations statewide who have partnered with CJAU to deliver legal services alongside social services in order to provide more comprehensive services to Utahns.

—

About Holy Cross Ministries: Holy Cross Ministries is a nonprofit organization that provides wraparound services for immigrant and underserved communities in Utah’s Wasatch Front and Wasatch Back. Our history dates back to 1875, when the Sisters of the Holy Cross, who sponsor HCM, first came to Utah. For decades these pioneering Sisters built and managed schools and hospitals throughout the state. Today we continue their legacy of compassionate service through health, justice and education programs. Learn more at hcmutah.org.

About Community Justice Advocates of Utah: Community Justice Advocates of Utah (CJAU) leverages the legal regulatory reform available in Utah to support and train nonlawyer justice advocates across the state to empower them with the tools necessary to effectively assist their clients in accessing and exercising rights afforded them by the law. CJAU provides key infrastructure to justice advocates, including holding legal regulatory authorization, collecting and analyzing data, delivering ongoing attorney mentorship and training, and providing malpractice insurance. Learn more at cjau.org.