

# About the Legal Aid Society

## Our Mission

*The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York provides effective, free civil legal services and education to and advocacy for people with low income or other barriers to accessing the legal system. We secure basic needs, protect and preserve legal rights, provide equal access to justice and seek fairness and dignity for our clients.*

## Who we are:

We are a law firm for poor people. We provide assistance and representation to low income people in civil, not criminal, cases.

Our service is free. There is no cost for any of the services we provide.

We believe that everyone has the right to equal justice regardless of the ability to pay.

We will help you secure, protect, and preserve your legal rights.

Our staff are highly skilled, committed individuals who are experts in the practice of poverty law.

We are not a government agency.

**Serving Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, St. Lawrence, Warren and Washington Counties, and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe.**

The Legal Aid Society does not discriminate against applicants for services based on race, color, creed, marital status, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation or sexual identity, or disability. If you believe you have been wrongfully denied services, you may file a grievance. Any legal aid staff member can provide you with a copy of the complaint form. It is also posted on the website [www.lasnny.org](http://www.lasnny.org).

## How to reach us:

We have five offices providing services to the residents of 16 counties. Call the one nearest you.

- **Albany Office:**  
55 Colvin Ave., Albany NY 12206  
(518) 462-6765 or 1-800-462-2922  
Fax: (518) 427-8352
- **Amsterdam Office:**  
1 Kimball St., Amsterdam, NY 12010  
(518) 842-9466 or (800) 821-8347  
Fax: (518) 843-1792
- **Canton Office:**  
17 Hodskin St., Canton, NY 13617  
(315) 386-4586 or (800) 822-8283  
Fax: (315) 386-2868
- **Plattsburgh Office:**  
100 Court St., PO Box 989  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
(518) 563-4022 or (800) 722-7380  
Fax: (518) 563-4058
- **Saratoga Springs Office:**  
40 New Street  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
(518) 587-5188 or (800) 870-8343  
Fax: (518) 587-0959

## Please call first.

We interview new clients by phone. If you do not have a phone, you may use any of the 800 numbers listed above.

[www.lasnny.org](http://www.lasnny.org)

**Free Legal Services**  
for Low Income People

## This pamphlet...

is designed to tell you about the Legal Aid Society. It does not contain legal information or advice about specific legal problems. If you have any questions about the information in this pamphlet, or if you have a specific legal question or problem, call us.

## Funding:

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York is funded by grants from the Legal Services Corporation, the Interest on Lawyer Account Fund of the State of New York, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, United States Department of Justice, New York State Legislature, New York State Office of the Attorney General, NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, Disability Rights New York, Albany County Department for Aging, Fulton County Office for Aging, St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging, Washington County Office for the Aging, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Office for the Aging, City of Saratoga Springs, New York State Bar Foundation, United Way of the Greater Capital Region, Albany Law School, Hunger Solutions New York, NYS Unified Court System Judiciary Civil Legal Services, Warren County, Albany County Department of Social Services, Schenectady Community Action Program, Joseph's House, City of Schenectady, City of Albany, City of Troy, New York State Attorney General Homeowner Protection Program, IRS Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, Clinton County Office of Aging, Rensselaer County Department of Aging, Rensselaer County Bar Association Speck Fund, Pro Bono Volunteer time, law firms, corporations and individuals through the Justice for All Campaign.

**JUSTICE FOR ALL CAMPAIGN**

**For more information, or to make a donation, visit us at**

[www.lasnny.org](http://www.lasnny.org)

**Legal Aid Society**  
of Northeastern New York

55 Colvin Avenue, Albany NY 12206  
(518) 462-6765 or 1-800-462-2922

 printed on recycled paper

**We can help.**

**If you can't afford a lawyer...**



**LAS**  
**NNY**

Fighting for *Fairness*  
Promoting *Justice*

**Legal Aid Society**  
of Northeastern  
New York, Inc.

### About your call:

#### Confidential

Everything you say to anyone at Legal Aid is confidential. When you first call our office we will ask you questions about your income, your family size, what county you live in, your citizenship, and the nature of your legal problems. This information is used to determine your eligibility for our services.

#### If you are eligible for our help...

you will be called back by an attorney or a paralegal who will learn the facts of your case and discuss ways in which we may be able to help you.

#### What we can do for you...

We may give you legal advice, information, or a referral to another agency or program. We may provide brief service, such as making some telephone calls or writing letters on your behalf. We may represent you at a hearing or in court. How we handle your case depends on what it is you want, what it takes to solve your problem, and the availability of Legal Aid staff.

#### What if you think we can't help?

Even if your legal problem is not listed under the title "Some types of cases we handle," call us anyway. We may be able to help.



### Eligibility for Legal Aid:

- You must be low-income within our financial guidelines or be eligible for a special project.
- You must live in one of the following counties: Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, St. Lawrence, Warren or Washington, in the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, or be homeless.
- You must have a *civil*, not a criminal, legal problem.

#### Help us help you:

We may ask you to help us gather information, make contact with others who are involved, and keep us informed of any changes or new developments.

Have all the facts, documents, names and dates about your problem available to help us understand your problem.

#### You need to know...

We regret that we cannot represent everyone who calls us for assistance.

However, even if we can't take your case, we will try to provide you with information to help you protect and enforce your Legal Rights.

### Some types of cases we handle:

- **Government Benefits and Unemployment Insurance:** Denials, cut offs and reductions in Public Assistance (Welfare), Food Stamps, and Unemployment Insurance Benefits.
- **Disability:** Denials and terminations of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability (SSD) benefits.
- **Health Care:** Medicaid, Medicare, and hospital care.
- **Housing:** Evictions, utility shut-offs, poor housing conditions, and public and Section 8 housing problems.
- **Family Law Matters:** Domestic violence, some child support matters, and, in certain counties, divorce cases.
- **Consumer Problems:** Debt collection, repossessions, wage garnishments and bankruptcy.
- **Children's Legal Issues:** Children's SSI, education and special education matters.
- **Immigration Matters:** Applications for residency, citizenship and Employment Authorization Documents.

You have a right to know your legal rights.

#### Our Volunteer Lawyer Program:

If our legal staff is not able to help you with your problem we may be able to refer you to our Private Attorney Involvement Program (PAI): private lawyers who voluntarily accept cases from Legal Aid free of charge. Eligibility for referral to our PAI program is determined in the same way it is for all Legal Aid services.

#### Community Legal Education

In addition to the services we provide to individual clients, we also provide training, education and written materials to groups and organizations of low income people about their legal rights in order to prevent legal problems from occurring.

#### Improving Our Service

It is important to us to know your opinion of our work. If you don't like something we have done, we urge you to tell us. You can make a suggestion or file a complaint at any of our offices, just by telling any staff member. We will even help you prepare your complaint. Suggestions and complaints are investigated by our Executive Director who will let you know the results.