2017-18 IMPACT REPORT

Providing free urgent civil legal services to low income residents in 16 counties of Northeastern New York
We continue our life-changing work providing the full range of legal services from information and referral, advice and brief service, negotiation, and full representation.

I am delighted to share with you this report of the Legal Aid Society’s outcomes and impact in Northeastern New York for the last two years. As you can see, we have continued our life-changing work providing the full range of legal services from information and referral, advice and brief service, negotiation, and full representation. All of the services we provide help our clients to achieve more successful outcomes. The few stories that we have space to highlight in this report demonstrate the extraordinary impact legal aid services can have on a family’s life. We are grateful to Donna and Donald Conners, Julianne White, and Nyjah Finkle for their willingness to share their stories.

In addition to great services to our clients, we continued to strengthen our infrastructure and our engagement with the communities where we live and practice. At the Center for Civil Legal Services (95 Central Avenue, Albany) and at all five of our offices, staff are fully engaged with their local communities. Board service, community coalitions, outreach and education are just some of the ways that we interact with our client community and others who serve them.

We continue to provide training to attorneys in our program and collaborate with others statewide in order to provide the best possible qualified staff. We participated in the statewide New York State Bar Association Partnership Conference to provide training in key areas of poverty law. We also continued our internal commitment to fulfill our strategic planning priorities: succession planning, considering a race equity priority, and continuing to affirm and grow greater impact in our communities.

Our Private Attorney Involvement Program (PAI) welcomed of Myleah Misenheimer as the PAI Director in 2017 and continue to seek the involvement of new and continuing private attorneys to give their time and talent to our low-income clients. We are honored to have received the Community Service Award from the Capital Region Pride Center for our PAI Name Change Project at their Gala in October 2018.

In addition, we have seen LASNNY’s profile raised in the media with the positive coverage of our transformative impact on client’s lives throughout the region.

In January 2018 we opened the doors to the Center for Civil Legal Services, a great success. Thank you to everyone, particularly our donors, who joined us for our well attended Grand Opening on May 3rd. Local leadership at the City of Albany, the Albany Housing Authority (AHA) and a $300,000 grant from the Regional Economic Development Council allowed us to complete our first and largest phase of the new Center for Civil Legal Services, located at 95 Central Avenue in West Hill. We continue to move forward toward the next phase of renovation of the remaining Center’s space so that our remaining staff at Colvin Avenue can join us at 95 Central Avenue. The Center also has an exciting initiative on the horizon to work towards ameliorating the poverty experienced by our nearest neighbors surrounding the Center, where 54% of the people are living below the poverty level. For those who of you who missed our incredible grand opening feel free to email me, Myleah Misenheimer or Deanne Grimaldi for a tour of LASNNY’s Center for Civil Legal Services.

Our ongoing work meeting the essential legal needs of our low-income clients continued. In 2017, we handled a total of 9,148 cases, benefiting 19,587 low income residents in our service area. And in 2018, we handled a total of 10,340 cases, benefiting 21,784 individuals.

We continue to create new programs to better serve our clients. I am proud of our new Medical/Legal Project, a new partnership formed in 2017 with St. Peter’s Health Partners and the Albany Law School. Staff Attorney Alexis Kutski did a great job teaching our colleagues at St. Peters’ when and how to contact us on behalf of their patients who need health stabilizing legal services. We look forward to the continued growth and success of the MLP.

I am grateful to our 24-member Board of Directors for their guidance, leadership, and service. Heartfelt gratitude to our Board Chair, Sanjeeve DeSoyza of Bond, Schoeneck and King Attorneys for seven years of service and friendship and availability 24 hours a day.

I am especially proud of the work that all of our staff do. We need all of you! Together we have helped our clients access the income, shelter, safety, and stability that they need to thrive. We continue to plan for the future to ensure our actions, services, and engagement in the community will meet our neighbors’ most pressing needs.
A look back on the past two years, I am humbled by what our Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) Program and volunteers have accomplished. In 2017 the PAI Program closed 264 cases, assisting 605 individuals in our service area. In 2018 our numbers increased to closing 412 cases, assisting 965 individuals. I am happy to have this opportunity to share some of the highlights of the past two years.

In January of 2018, we re-opened our Assigned Counsel Program for clients residing in Albany and Rensselaer Counties, whereby we assist clients petition the court for an attorney to handle their contested matrimonial matters. In 2018, we also expanded our Pro Se Divorce Program to include clients in Saratoga, Washington, Warren, and Albany Counties. We now offer Pro Se Clinics in Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Amsterdam, Hudson, Saratoga, Plattsburgh, and Canton for clients seeking an uncontested divorce. We also expanded our Attorney for the Day Program, an in-court limited-scope representation program where volunteers assist tenants at their first appearance. We increased our presence from two to three days a month. We also added a second tier to the program, so that any client put down for trial could potentially be placed with a volunteer first to appear on a full representation basis.

The PAI program continued to host professional CLE trainings in 2018. In the Spring and the Winter we co-sponsored Representing Victims of Domestic Violence in Family Court, a biannual CLE held at the Legal Project. In April we held an Ethics in Technology training, in addition to our annual Attorney for the Day Training in the Fall, both held at NYSBA. Since 2017 LASNNY has been working with the Pride Center and In Our Own Voices to help meet the demand for name and gender marker changes. At the Pride Center Annual Gala in October 2018 LASNNY, along with name change volunteer attorney, Sharon Couch DeBonis, was honored to receive a Community Service Award. LASNNY also acknowledged the firm Nixon Peabody, LLP for their attorneys’ outstanding work in the area of name and gender marker changes.

Expanding the name change program, LASNNY now assists with name changes for Domestic Violence Victims and First Name Unknown (FNU) clients whose names were incorrectly listed on US arrival and entry documents such as green cards and other immigration documents.

On May 1, 2018, NYSSBA awarded two of LASNNY’s PAI attorneys with Pro Bono Service Awards. Alexander Dunshue received the President’s Pro Bono Service Award for the Fourth Judicial District and G. Kimball Williams received the President’s Pro Bono Service Award for the Third Judicial District. At the 2018 Holiday Party jointly sponsored by LASNNY, the Legal Project and the Albany County Bar Association, LASNNY awarded PAI attorneys Sharon Couch DeBonis and Kathy Walters with Distinquished Service Awards.

I am personally grateful for the guidance offered by Judge Bresin, Judge Caruso, Dan Hurteau, Mal O’Hara, Beth Diebel, Joel Peller, Carl Hasselbart and Lisa Mills, who currently sit on our PAI Committee. Additionally, I am thankful for the PAI Staff at LASNNY including Ryland Wiseman and Sarah Buckowski, our PAI Coordinators and Melody Hardness, our PAI Paralegal.

Thank you all for your time and hard work and for truly being committed to justice for all.

Myleah Misenheim, PAI Director

Private attorneys provide important civil legal services through LASNNY’s PAI (Private Attorney Involvement) Program, which encourages and supports attorneys who offer pro bono services to low-income residents of Northeastern New York. Support for PAI volunteer attorneys includes client and case screening, CLE credits, free training, secondary professional liability insurance and reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses.

ALBANY

Stanton F. Ackerman Maria A. Connor

Jennifer Albright Courtney Arpirt

Paula Barbarelo Lawrence Becker

Bill Benlag

Justin Birzon

Joel Blau

Ira Bloom***

Leah Bohnjowski

Michael Bonfiglio

Christian Brenner***

Mark Cardinal

John Cassy***

J. Rochelle Cavagnah

Jordan Chisolm

Anne Reynolds Coppers

Kelly M. Curro

Jain Czajn***

Nina Daratos

Elizabeth D’Agostino

Justin Giammas

Melissa Dobson

Caitlin Donovan

Joseph Dougherty

Christian Drusch

Eric Dyer

Byrge Finkelman

Brent Drury***

Tara Gaston

Charles Harding

Carl Hasselbart

Stephen Hayford

Daniil Hurteau

Jelka Joseph

Thomas Kees***

Abe Keri

Kristen King

Christopher Langlois

Mark Lansing

Chelsai Lester

Gabriella Levine

Max Lindsey

Salvatore Lomante

Gloria Lopez

Erin Lynch***

Tara MacNeill

David Maricucci

Justin Murry***

Vanessa Murphy

Michael O’Brien***

Michael J. O’Connor***

Thomas O’Connor

Matthew O’Neill

Lynne Papazian

Kristin Petrela

Joseph Pinti***

Tara Anne Pleet

Saima Qureshi

Erico Rangel***

Margaret Sowastrya

Rosa

Michaela Mathers***

Robin Pfifer Ryan

Lawrence Schilling***

Tina Scisciotto***

Arthur Siegel***

Haven Sherwin

Chloe Skiff

Mary Louise Stanford

Christopher Stevens

Edwin Toben

Peter Tramach

Alex Tumolo***

Rayhnea Turner

Bruce W. Jackson

Kathy Walter***

List of PAI’s Volunteers from January 2017 through December 2018

ALBANY/RENSSLESER

COUNTY ASSIGNED

COUNSEL PROGRAM

Stephen Weiss*****

Robert Adams

John Carpenter

Richard Rowley

Kathy Walters*****

Jo Ann Shartrand

Morgan Ruthman**

Saima Qureshi

Tara Anne Pleat

Joseph Pinto***

Michael J. Rossi

Bruce Wagner

June Caudill***

Robert H. Cohen

Eileen Walsh Gallagher

Theresa Levine

Shain Neumeier

Amanda Rose****

Bethany Schumann-McGee***

Vikki Prigree***

RENSSLEAER

Laura Darling

Sharon Couch

DeBonis***

Teresa Eddy

Stephan Weiss*****

Marissa Wiley****

G. Kimball Williams****

Melissa Zambiri

Jeffrey Zimring

CLINTON/ESSEX/FRANKLIN

Heidi Dell

Joel Feller***

Jack Piller

COLUMBUS/GREENE

Veronica Kosch

Lisa Mills***

Louise Roback

Max Zacker

MONTGOMERY/ FULTON/SCOTCH/ HONORABLE

Robert H. Cohen

Eileen Walsh Gallagher

Theresa Levine

Shain Neumeier

Amanda Rose****

Bethany Schuman-McGee***

Vikki Prigree***

RENSSELAER

Laura Darling

Sharon Couch

DeBonis***

Teresa Eddy

Marc S. Ehrlisch**

Robert Hussar

Joseph Kay

David Morgen

Erik Penso

Jena Rothstein

Mia Wolfe

SARATOGA

Tammy Asquett

Heather Brondi

Christine Carkry

Daryl Cuyler

Nancy Delan

Andrea Didomino

John Dorrin

Alex Dunshue*****

Michael Engler

Meg Gilmartin

Ron Kim

Christopher Luhn

Robert Andrew McKee

Mirella Nits

Branca Peace

Bruce Stevens

Debra Venni

Jon Whalen***

James Whigaus

SCHENECTADY

Courtney Delia

June Caudill***

John Patterson

Richard Rowley

Kathryn Jenisse*****

OTHER

Clifford Eisenhut

( Scotia, NY)

Shain Neumeier

(Springfield, MA)

Helen Lee (NYC)

Rebecca Jones (New Zealand)

ALBANY/RENSSELAER

COUNTY ASSIGNED

COUNSEL PROGRAM

Randal Kohoe

Barbara King

Larry Kvitz

Chris Kins

Gerald Leary

Barrett D. Mack

Jean M. Mahserian

David Manniruci

Mark McGarry

John McNamara

Stephen Melnikov

Robert Molloy

Joanne Monagan

Aasi Neft

The Spinney Group and Myleah Misenheim

LASNNY PAI Program Director


Attorney for the Day Volunteers, Morgan Ruthman, The Spinney Group and Myleah Misenheim, LASNNY PAI Program Director
The Connors

By Megan Harrington

Donna Connors and her husband, Donald, purchased their Columbia County home back in 2004 when Donna says, “Banks were giving away mortgages like hot dogs at a baseball game.” Their modest $225,000 home sits on 5 acres of property, just outside the city of Hudson and at first, their monthly payment was a reasonable $1,300. However, they soon saw their payment spike under an adjustable-rate mortgage. During this same time period, their small business began losing money due to the downturn in the economy and the Connors found themselves unable to keep up with their mortgage payments. Donna explains, “The most lucrative areas of our business were major kitchen and bath renovations and water treatment. When the economy started heading down the toilet, most of our customers (as well as ourselves) were mainly concerned with keeping their homes and the focus became repairing instead of renovating or upgrading.” She continues, “At the same time, our mortgage payments doubled. It was the perfect storm. Legal aid was the lifeline that saved us, and I’m certain, many others too.”

Donna and Donald first contacted a local housing agency where they discussed their options. From there, they were referred to the Legal Aid Society of Northern New York (LASNNY). Donna says, “We visited the LASNNY office and met with Shruti Joshi, a staff attorney.” Joshi was assigned to the Connors’ case and immediately got to work. Donna says, “Shruti was so professional and it was so easy to work with her.”

Joshi says, “The Connors reached out to us in early 2017 because they had fallen behind in payments due to loss of income. They had already declined for a loan modification, but they were given vague boilerplate reasons for the denial.” Joshi says that fortunately when she got involved, the Connors were still in settlement conferences. She explains, “It’s required under law that both parties [lender and homeowner] negotiate under good faith to try and avoid foreclosure.” In an effort to reach a deal, Joshi went over the modification denial in more detail and she was able to point out to the bank why their initial responses were incorrect. Thanks to Joshi’s diligence, the Connors were granted a loan modification and their new payment is much more affordable. Joshi says, “The bank eventually came back with an offer and now the Connors have a lower monthly payment and a lower interest rate.” She continues, “Donna and Donald’s life really turned around at this point and things started looking up.”

Donna couldn’t agree more. She says, “After we received the modification, we were able to reconstruct our lives and move forward.” With their load lightened, Donald was able to secure a new job as a full time plumber and Donna began running her own home business, a doggie daycare. Donna says, “Our property has great fencing and a big yard – it’s ideal for the daycare as well as the therapy dogs that we raise.”

By staying in their home/at their property, the Connors have been able to keep their dogs – something that might not have been possible if they lost their home and had to look for a rental. The pets are a part of the Connors family, but they also benefit the local community – Donna takes the therapy dogs for visits at a nearby assisted care home and youth detention center.

The Connors’ story has a happy ending, thanks in part to Joshi’s hard work and Donna and Donald’s willingness to seek help. Joshi says, “Homeowners don’t always understand legal jargon… the Connors could have just ‘Okay, we’re headed for foreclosure, there’s nothing we can do,’ but instead we were able to help them understand their options.”

Geri Pomerantz, managing attorney of Legal Aid’s foreclosure prevention project, reiterates the importance of having legal help. She says, “Donna’s case demonstrates the difference that having an attorney—especially a highly competent, tenacious, and dedicated attorney like Shruti Joshi—can make for a homeowner in a residential mortgage foreclosure action.”

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“Legal aid was the lifeline that saved us, and I’m certain, many others too.”

— Donna Connors
The Center for Civil Legal Services

LASNNY has made a bold move—one that will change the perception of the Legal Aid Society and its presence and ability to serve the community. To accommodate the growing demand for urgently needed legal services, LASNNY completed the first wave of its move into a larger facility in Albany. The Center is more accessible to clients, and closer to many community partners and client resources.

While this location has significantly more space, its storefront visibility on a main thoroughfare of the Capital Region also allows for much more. Most importantly, with the completion of the Center, LASNNY will be more effective in how it provides the urgently needed, stabilizing legal services so crucial to helping people to move out of poverty.

The Center for Civil Legal Services is a three-story, 21,000 square-foot building, erected in the early 1900s, and later redesigned. With our modest renovation, it will house 47 offices, several small consult rooms, a large conference room for 75 people with remote meeting technology to be phased in, a pro bono volunteer space called The Beehive with amenities, and an expansive walkout basement.

Help us meet our goal!
We currently have $296,000 to raise to meet our $1,860,000 goal.

Your support is crucial to complete this project. Contact Deanne at dgrimaldi@lasnny.org or call (518) 689-6336.

To donate by check, indicate "Albany Capital Campaign" and mail to: LASNNY, 95 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206.

To donate online, visit our website www.LASNNY.org/donate/center-civil-legal-services for more information.

The Center’s New Pro Bono Bee Hive offers volunteers amenities and a private office for working meeting with clients.
On May 3, 2017 supporters gathered to celebrate the opening of the Center for Civil Legal Service located at 95 Central Avenue in Albany and thank you again to those whose donations made the first phase possible. (For more about this initiative see article on page 9)

F. Michael Tucker, Senator Neil Breslin, Lillian Moy, Mike Yevoli, Regional Director Empire State Development, Dan McCoy, Albany County Executive

Ed Swyer, Leslie Thiele, Steve Longo, Kim Williams, Tom O’Connor

E. Stewart Jones, Jr., Kimberly Sanger Jones, Lillian Moy, Assemblymembers Pat Fahy and John McDonald, Ed Kaplan

Sanjeeve DeSoyza, LASNNY Board President

Steve Longo, Albany Housing Authority Director

Mindy Derosia and Jackie Mahoney, Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region.

Michael Whiteman, Lillian Moy, Phil Gitlen

Kim Williams, Tom O’Connor, Sanjeeve DeSoyza, Will Nolan, David Cost, John Henry, Marquita Rhodes, Jeff Baker, Michael Murray, Thad Rutherford, Norma Meacham

Assemblyman John McDonald at the podium

John Henry, Carolyn Slovic, Michael Whiteman, Leslie Thiele, Michael Murray, Phil Gitlen, Whiteman Osterman & Hanna

Victor Mazzotti, Deanne Grimaldi
Justice for All Campaign

The Annual Fund for the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York

Thanks to our donors who contributed in 2017 and 2018, improving access to justice for our low income neighbors throughout Northeastern New York.

Contact Deanne Gizmaldi, Director of Development at dgrimaldi@lasnny.org or (518) 689-6336 for more information about the campaign or how to become a member.


Campaign Co-Chairs: E. Stewart Jones, Jr and Thomas J. O’Connor

2017

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Labatt, LLC
Law Office of Mark S. Mishler
Law Office of Patricia L.R. Rodriguez
Law Offices of Ronald J. Kim, PC
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Law Firm of Alex Dell, PLLC
Wilson Elser

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Hinman Straub, P.C.
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Italian American Bar Association
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Girvin & Felarazzo, PC
Heslin Rothenberg Farley & Mersit PC

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McNamee Lochner PC.
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Thurizz, Ford, Gold, Butler & Monrose, LLP
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Young/Sommer LLC

2018

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Roemer Wallens Gold & Mineaux LLP
Stephanie A White PLLC
The Law Office of Ed Ryan
The West Firm, PLLC
Thorn Gershon Tymann and Bonanni, LLP
Vella, Carbone & Associates, LLP

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Schenectady County Bar Association

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ABS Solutions
Bethany Reformed Church
CSM Group, LLC
GE Foundation Matching Gifts
JP Morgan Chase & Co (Workplace Giving)
MK Dignum Insurance Agency
United Way of the Greater Capital Region (SEFA)
University at Albany
Nyjah Pringle, a permanently disabled 24-year-old, was enrolled at the University of Albany when illness interfered with her studies. Nyjah, who suffers from sickle cell anemia and other chronic health issues, was hospitalized and ultimately fell into a coma. “I became very sick and needed to withdraw from school for medical reasons,” Nyjah says.

Unfortunately, Nyjah didn’t complete the withdrawal process in time, so she was still responsible for the semester’s tuition, room, and board. According to Nyjah, that’s where her troubles began. She recounts, “While I was in the hospital, the University sent bills to my old dorm address. I didn’t find out about any of this until I woke up from the coma.” SUNY eventually sued Nyjah for the outstanding balance and a $5,000 default judgment was placed against her.

Nyjah sought help from Legal Aid Hudson Valley and Legal Aid NYC, but because Nyjah lives out of the service area and the venue being in Albany County, it was a struggle to find representation. Eventually Nyjah received assistance from the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, primarily, the Closing the Gap program. With this assistance, she was able to represent herself in court against the State of New York.

The Closing the Gap program is funded by the Legal Services Corporation (“LSC”) Pro Bono Innovation Fund. Its aim is to close the urban/rural service gap in northeastern upstate New York through innovative uses of technology and cross program collaborations. Closing the Gap’s primary goal is to aid unrepresented litigants in consumer debt and housing matters.

Nyjah says, “I represented myself, but I received a lot of help from Melody Harkness [LASNNY program coordinator for Closing the Gap]. Instead of going on Wikipedia or YouTube, like most people my age do, I was able to get real legal advice.” At her court date this past August, Nyjah was able to provide pertinent records to support her case. Even more importantly, the advice she received from the Closing the Gap program helped her keep those health records private and off the public record.

Despite the long shot, Nyjah won the case against the Attorney General and SUNY Albany and settled for a $500 payment. LASNNY Development Director Deanne Grimaldi says, “This isn’t a case that someone would have taken, but through the Closing the Gap program we were able to assist.” Melody Harkness was thrilled with the case’s outcome, saying, “Ms. Pringle was so diligent, and her faith was so strong. The judgment ultimately went in her favor despite being told over and over again that she had a ‘loser case.’”

Nyjah says the experience has inspired her to keep fighting for disability rights and encourage others to work with LASNNY and the Closing the Gap program. She says, “I’m just so happy that this ordeal is over and that I can focus on my health now.” Nyjah is currently in the hospital, but someday hopes to re-enroll in school and finish her studies. She says, “I want to earn that degree. I want to hang it on the wall for my mom.”

“This isn’t a case that someone would have taken, but through the Closing the Gap program we were able to assist.”

— Melody Harkness
2017 Revenue and Expenses

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (LASNNY) is a non-profit law firm, providing assistance and representation to poor and low-income people in civil, not criminal, cases. 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.

2017 LASNNY NUMBERS: 9,148 cases closed 19,587 people benefitted $1,168 cost per case

Revenue

State Grants........................................ $ 2,349,339.39
County/City Grants............................... 425,480.66
Other Grants...................................... 494,858.80
Miscellaneous Income.......................... 98,765.12
Private Fundraising............................. 438,103.22
Legal Services Corporation................... 1,424,308.29
Other Federal Funds............................ 377,726.93
Interest on Lawyers Accounts................. 1,035,625.00
Judiciary Civil Legal Services................. 4,332,353.00
TOTAL ........................................... $10,976,560.41

Expenses

PERSONNEL:
Lawyers .......................................... $ 4,572,222.42
Non-Lawyers .................................... 1,854,141.11
Fringe Benefits.................................. 2,339,650.70

OPERATING:
Space & Utilities ................................ 214,020.99
Office & Related Expenses...................... 279,542.18
Contract Services................................. 790,764.42
Library............................................. 117,157.60
Client Litigation Expenses ...................... 18,524.32
Travel & Training................................ 216,674.58
Miscellaneous.................................... 283,228.15
TOTAL ........................................... $10,685,926.47

2018 Revenue and Expenses

2018 LASNNY NUMBERS: 10,340 cases closed 21,784 people benefitted $1,064 cost per case

Revenue

State Grants........................................ $ 2,135,408.27
County/City Grants............................... 478,775.65
Other Grants...................................... 356,785.13
Miscellaneous Income.......................... 306,656.27
Private Fundraising............................. 705,715.67
Legal Services Corporation................... 1,366,492.47
Other Federal Funds............................ 452,902.34
Interest on Lawyers Accounts................. 1,050,000.00
Judiciary Civil Legal Services................. 4,799,926.00
TOTAL ........................................... $11,652,660.80

Expenses

PERSONNEL:
Lawyers .......................................... $ 4,716,944.89
Non-Lawyers .................................... 1,972,815.65
Fringe Benefits.................................. 2,343,678.08

OPERATING:
Space & Utilities ................................ 312,482.87
Office & Related Expenses...................... 278,406.19
Contract Services................................. 652,021.11
Library............................................. 114,847.17
Client Litigation Expenses ...................... 23,366.95
Travel & Training................................ 190,429.85
Miscellaneous.................................... 392,566.20
TOTAL ........................................... $10,997,558.96
"Every letter stands for something, but I couldn’t tell you what," White said and adopted a chihuahua from a friend who has sold her other dogs which cost a little more but allowed support animals. She moved out the Legal Aid in June 2017 filed complaints with the state Division of Investigators helped her apply for SNAP benefits and drafting a will, and they took up this complaint.

Attorney Brenna Sharp said there were three designated apartments where tenants can have emotional support animals. The three apartments were occupied, and housing authority officials had denied her request to have a dog. A tenant from the first floor. Landry said the authority was concerned about White having the dog in a seven-floor unit because they had defaulted on the other tenants who did not like dogs or were allergic to them.

"The state and the federal government felt that we couldn’t restrict it to these areas," he said. White also shared her story Monday in testimony before Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, who was holding a public hearing in Albany about civil legal services.

Deanne Grimaldi, director of development for the Legal Aid Society, said White’s situation is the type of case the society deals with because they can transform people’s lives.

"This is a health issue. It’s an emotional health issue," she said. The society covers a 16-county region that includes Warren, Washington and Saratoga counties. Among the services it provides are help dealing with foreclosures and domestic violence, and eviction prevention. All of the services are free.

"Someone comes in the door with one legal problem and we can help them with a variety," Grimaldi said. Article reprinted with permission from Lee Publications, dba The Post-Star, Lawrence & Cooper Streets Glens Falls, NY | www.PostStar.com
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