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November 30th, 2023

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Doing what's legally possible to create a just world since 1966.

ADVOCACY TIPS FOR NOVEMBER

ONE

The Clean Slate Act was signed into law on November 16th, 2023. To learn more, please watch this video announcement (with closed captioning) by NSLS Supervising Attorney John Batanchiev.



NSLS' Civil Rights Project helps represent individuals on civil matters such as:

- *People who need help with reintegrating into the community after facing criminal charges. We cover such topics and issues as:*
 - *Employment discrimination*
 - *Section 8 issues*
 - *Certificates of relief from civil disability/certificates of good conduct*
 - *Denial of a professional license*
 - *Denial of employment due to prior neglect/abuse findings*
 - *Housing*
 - *Public benefits*
 - *Consumer Debt*
- *Transgender, Non-conforming, and Non-binary people overcome the hurdle of name changes and changes to sex designations.*

Suffolk residents can call (631) 232-2400. Nassau residents can call (516) 292-8100.

TWO

Fair Housing Protections for Formerly Incarcerated- The Fair Housing Act (FHA) applies to most private and subsidized housing (including assisted living facilities and nursing homes) and prohibits housing discrimination based on several protected characteristics including race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, and familial status. Although having a criminal record is not a federally protected characteristic, housing providers may violate the FHA by using an individual's criminal history to deny housing to people who belong to protected classes, such as people of color or people with disabilities. Housing exclusions based on criminal history can violate the FHA through (1) disparate treatment (ex. a housing provider may have a practice of denying applicants with misdemeanor convictions if they are Black but accepting applicants with similar convictions if they are white); (2) Disparate impact (ex. blanket bans based on prior convictions); and (3) refusal to make reasonable accommodations (ex. person with schizoaffective disorder convicted of a crime related to being off his medication was not provided a reasonable accommodation in disregarding the conviction when applying for housing). Clients who have faced housing discrimination

can file an administrative fair housing complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) up to one year from the date of the last act of discrimination. To learn more about FHA Protections, [please see the Justice in Aging issue brief](#).

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THREE

Medical Debt Collection- In 2022, the Consumer Protection Financial Bureau (CFPB) received 8,500 complaints relating to medical debt collections including issues of already paid medical bills, bills not owed by patient or family, inaccurate amounts, or collections for bills decades after care. In some instances, collecting debts that are actually not owed or collecting wrong amounts may violate the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act or the Consumer Financial Protection Act. If you receive a medical bill from a debt collector, you can send a verification request to receive more information about the debt. Once verification is received, it is important to request an explanation of benefits from your health insurer to see if you actually owe the debt to the health care provider or contact the health care provider directly if you have more questions about the debt owed. If you dispute the debt, [you should inform the debt collector in writing of the dispute](#). You can also request that the debt collection cease communicating with you, but that must be in writing as well. If you believe a debt collector is collecting on an improper debt, you can make a complaint with the New York State Attorney General on [its website](#) or by calling 1-800-771-7755 or with the Consumer Protection Financial Bureau on [its website](#) or by calling 1-855-411-2372.

NSLS' Consumer Debt Legal Assistance Project provides legal assistance to persons who are experiencing consumer debt problems, especially in the matters of medical and credit card debt. Services may include litigation defense and representation, phone advice, and/or referral for further services, including bankruptcy where appropriate.

Suffolk residents can call (631) 232-2400. Nassau residents can call (516) 292-8100.

FOUR

Today, November 30th, 2023, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation S.1783A/A.372A, which establishes a bill of rights for long-term care facility residents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or living with HIV. The bill prohibits long-term care facilities and their staff from discriminating against any resident on the basis of a resident's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or HIV status. This legislation builds on existing protections from discrimination already established in New York's Human Rights Law by prohibiting long-term care facilities and their staff from making discriminatory decisions based on a resident's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or HIV status, such as:

- Denying admission to a long-term facility

- Transferring or denying a transfer within a facility or to another facility
- Discharging or evicting a resident from a facility

NSLS PRESENTATIONS



LEARN ABOUT

LAW SERVICES

Please join us for our new series "Learn About Law Services" on Thursday, December 14th, 2023 from 1:30 to 2:00 pm where we will highlight and discuss two of our units: the **Veterans' Rights Project and the Public Benefits Unit**. Learn about the types of cases each unit can handle and how to make referrals. [Please register to attend this training.](#)

LEGAL SUPPORT CENTER FOR ADVOCATES



training

Did you miss any of our Learn About Law Services Presentations? Feel free to watch them on [our YouTube Channel!](#)

PREVIOUS Legal Support Center for Advocates TRAININGS

Nassau Suffolk Law Services' Legal Support Center hosted Nancy Nierman of the Community Service Society's Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) on November 13th, 2023 to provide expert information on formulating a plan to eliminate your student loans. The training focused on repayment options, such as the new SAVE plan and time-limited relief, which may give you credit toward forgiveness programs. In addition, we offered tips on how to navigate the return to repayment. Don't miss this chance to learn how to take advantage of key opportunities available to you within the federal student loan system. [Please register to view this training.](#)

On September 8th, 2023, the Legal Support Center presented "**Hero's Guide to Strategic Student Loan Repayment.**" NSLS hosted Nancy Nierman of the Community Service Society's Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) which provided borrowers with the knowledge and tools needed to conquer their student loans with confidence. We delved into various student loan repayment options, exploring federal forgiveness programs and other relief initiatives available to federal student loan borrowers. Whether you're just starting to repay your loans or seeking ways to optimize

your current repayment plan, this webinar is your ultimate guide. [Please register to view this training.](#)

On July 13th, 2023, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "**A Fresh Start: Getting out of Default on your Student Loans.**" Michelle Kimpson, Consumer Debt Unit Law Graduate, discussed how eligible borrowers who failed to make payments on their federal student loans and now are in default can find multiple options to get out of default. [Please register to view this training.](#)

On June 8th, 2023, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "**Getting Ready to Unpause: Student Loan Updates and Repayment Options.**" Consumer Debt Law Project Law Graduate, Michelle Kimpson, discussed the different student loan updates and repayment options that persons with higher education debt can access prior to or once the student loan payments resume this year. [Please register to view training.](#)

On May 25th, 2023, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "**An Overview of Mental Health Housing on Long Island.**" Supervising Attorney, Paola Arango, discussed the different types of mental health housing including an overview of the tenant application process and the rights of tenants in the event of an eviction. [Please register to view the training.](#)

The Legal Support Center for Advocates Training: "**Let's Keep Kids Safe from Bullying: An Overview of the Dignity for All Students Act**" was held virtually on April 27th, 2023. Nassau Suffolk Law Services Supervising Attorney, Lynn Iacona, provided an overview of New York's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) which seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. [Please register to view the training.](#) [The slides can be viewed on our website as well.](#)

The **Social Security Overview: the Application and Appeal Process** LSCA training was held virtually on March 30th, 2023. Nassau Suffolk Law Services Supervising Attorney Sarah Kupferberg reviewed the process for applying for social security disability (SSD and SSI) benefits including the standard and appealing an unfavorable decision. [Please register to view the training.](#)

[Links to all of our prior trainings can be found on our website.](#)

If your organization is interested in having Nassau Suffolk Law Services present on what services we provide or a specific area of law, please contact the Legal Support Center for Advocates at 631-232-2400 extension 3324 (advocates only).

UPCOMING CLINICS, EVENTS, AND LEGAL HELP RESOURCES

Upcoming Community Legal Help Project Dates

During the month of December, our Suffolk Community Legal Help Project will be at the Brentwood Public Library, the Middle Country Public Library (Centereach), the Half Hollow Hills Public Library (Dix Hills), and the Patchogue Library. Appointments are preferred but walk-ins are welcome. To make an appointment or for other legal issues not listed, please call our hotline at (631) 822-3272.

NEW! The Community Legal Help Project has expanded into Nassau County! We will be at the Nassau County District Court Resource Center in Hempstead and the Long

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH A LEGAL PROBLEM?

The Community Legal Help Project will have volunteer attorneys giving free legal information to Suffolk County residents ONLY. Dates and locations listed below.

<p>TUESDAY DECEMBER 5 2PM-5PM BRENTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY ATTORNEY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO: Family (Child Support, Visitation, Custody) Matrimonial Criminal Immigration</p>	<p>TUESDAY DECEMBER 19 2PM-5PM BRENTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY ATTORNEY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO: Family (Child Support, Visitation, Custody) Matrimonial Criminal</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6 3PM-6PM HALF HOLLOW HILLS COMMUNITY LIBRARY ATTORNEY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO: Family (Child Support, Visitation, Custody) Matrimonial Criminal Consumer Debt</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 20 3PM-6PM HALF HOLLOW HILLS COMMUNITY LIBRARY ATTORNEY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO: Family (Child Support, Visitation, Custody, Order of Protection) Matrimonial Criminal Consumer Debt Bankruptcy</p>
<p>THURSDAY DECEMBER 7 2PM-5PM MIDDLE COUNTRY PUBLIC LIBRARY AT CENTEREACH ATTORNEY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO: Family (Child Support, Visitation, Custody, Order of Protection, Parenting Time, Neglect, Abuse) Matrimonial Criminal</p>	<p>THURSDAY DECEMBER 21 2PM-5PM MIDDLE COUNTRY PUBLIC LIBRARY AT CENTEREACH ATTORNEY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO: Family (Child Support, Visitation, Custody, Order of Protection, CPS - Not Fair Hearings or Appeals, Parenting Time, Neglect, Abuse) Matrimonial Criminal (Traffic/Motor Vehicle, Post-conviction) Senior Citizen Landlord/Tenant (Evictions, Section 8, Town Zoning Violations)</p>
<p>TUESDAY DECEMBER 12 2PM-5PM BRENTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY ATTORNEY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO: Family (Child Support, Visitation, Custody, Order of Protection, CPS - Not Fair Hearings or Appeals) Matrimonial Criminal (Traffic/Motor Vehicle, Post-conviction) Senior Citizen Immigration Bankruptcy</p>	<p>THURSDAY DECEMBER 14 2PM-5PM MIDDLE COUNTRY PUBLIC LIBRARY AT CENTEREACH ATTORNEY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO: Family (Child Support, Visitation, Custody) Matrimonial Criminal Immigration</p>

REMINDER:
 CLHP WILL BE CLOSED FROM 12/25/23 TO 1/1/24

Assisting residents over the age of 60 years old
 (Medical Applications, Wills, Living Wills, Power of Attorney, Healthcare Proxy, Medicaid Fair Hearing)

Appointments preferred; walk-ins welcome.
 Call (631) 822-3272 for more information or to schedule an appointment with an attorney.

BRENTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY
 34 Second Ave. Brentwood, NY 11717

HALF HOLLOW HILLS COMMUNITY LIBRARY
 55 Vanderbilt Pkwy. Dix Hills, NY 11746

MIDDLE COUNTRY PUBLIC LIBRARY AT CENTEREACH
 101 Eastwood Blvd. Centereach, NY 11720

PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD LIBRARY
 54-60 E. Main St. Patchogue, NY 11772

Beach Library in December. To make an appointment or for other legal issues not listed, please call the Nassau hotline at (516) 281-7422.

Our Community Legal Help Project December Flyers are in English and Spanish and can be found on [our website](#).

The Community Legal Help Project seeks volunteer attorneys with experience in matrimonial, family, and immigration law to give half-hour consultations during our library hours. If you are interested, please [email us](#) today!

NSLS Sealing Clinic

NSLS staff are available to access, review, and verify your RAP sheet (also known as your criminal history record) to see if you are eligible for your criminal records to be sealed and any other re-entry services that will make it easier for you to be employed, find housing and obtain credit. Available for Nassau County residents every 3rd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 10am to 12pm or every 3rd and 4th Thursday of the month from 2pm to 4pm. Please call (516) 292-8100. Feel free to [download and share the flyer](#).

Sealing Clinic

Every 3rd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 10am to 12pm

OR

Every 3rd and 4th Thursday of the month from 2pm to 4pm

LIMITED SPACE!
 Call (516) 292-8100 to reserve a 15-minute session.

One Hellen Keller Way
 Hempstead, NY 11550

NSLS staff are available to access, review, and verify your RAP sheet (also known as your criminal history record) to see if you are eligible for your criminal records to be sealed and any other re-entry services that will make it easier for you to be employed, find housing and obtain credit.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



VOLUNTEER LAWYERS *make a difference*

A little more about our volunteer needs:

Nassau County

Volunteer Lawyers Project

The Volunteer Lawyers Project is an innovative pro bono program to expand the availability of legal services to Nassau County residents in need. The Project provides an opportunity for attorneys to represent clients and volunteer their time and expertise by providing free legal services. The Volunteer Lawyers Project has a need for pro bono assistance in the areas of Chapter 7 Bankruptcy, Divorce, Article 17A Guardianships, Health Care Proxies, Name Changes, Power of Attorney, and Wills. Contact: Reisa Brafman, Esq., 516-292-8100 ext. 3380, rbrafman@nsls.legal

Bankruptcy Clinics through the Volunteer Lawyers Project

Currently, clinic appointments are one-on-one with attorneys consulting with clients in person, by phone, or virtually. Volunteer attorneys provide guidance to those considering bankruptcy, screening for referral to pro bono attorneys for filing of Chapter 7 petitions. This is a limited engagement, though participating attorneys may also be referred cases.

Contact: Reisa Brafman, Esq., 516-292-8100 ext. 3380, rbrafman@nsls.legal

Community Legal Help Project

The Community Legal Help Project recently expanded into Nassau County. We are looking for attorneys to provide pro bono half-hour consultations with Nassau County Residents. The areas of law most in need are immigration, family, matrimonial, elder, and bankruptcy.

Contact: Roberta Scoll, Esq., 516-292-8100 ext. 3115, rscoll@nsls.legal

Suffolk County

Pro Bono Project

The Pro Bono Project is an innovative pro bono program to expand the availability of legal services to Suffolk County residents in need. The Project provides an opportunity for attorneys to represent clients and volunteer their time and expertise by providing free legal services. The Pro Bono Project has a need for pro bono assistance in the areas of Chapter 7 Bankruptcy, Divorce, Article 17A Guardianships, Health Care Proxies, Name Changes, Power of Attorneys, and Wills.

Contact: Carolyn McQuade, Esq., 631-232-2400 ext. 3325, cmcquade@nsls.legal

Community Legal Help Project

The Community Legal Help Project (CLHP) is a partnership of legal providers created by the NYS Permanent Commission on Access to Justice and the Suffolk County Access to Justice Committee. The CLHP's network of non-profit partners and pro bono volunteers currently provides legal information and referrals, and limited-scope representation through a phone line and brief in-person consultations at public libraries. Attorneys with a background in immigration, family, elder and/or matrimonial law are needed to assist the community. Volunteer attorneys can dedicate their time monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or at their leisure.

Contact: Rashika Hettiarachchi, Esq., 631-232-2400 ext. 3391, rhettiarachchi@nsls.legal

GIVE AND MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE FOR LONGISLANDERS IN NEED

This year we reach out to all of our supporters in hopes that you will continue to support Law Services, the largest provider of free civil legal assistance to Long Islanders in need. The past few years have shown us when we help, respect, and support each other, together we can accomplish anything, and our Long Island communities will once again thrive. For many Long Islanders, having a stable income, permanent housing, access to healthcare, and, most importantly, access to equal justice under law, gives them the support they need to begin to rebuild their lives. Your continued support can really make a difference to your neighbors in need by assisting Nassau Suffolk Law Services in "Doing What's Legally Possible to Create a Just World." We are Long Islanders helping Long Islanders.

[Support Law Services' Programs](#)

NASSAU SUFFOLK LAW SERVICES
631 232-2400 | 516 292-8100 | 631 369-1112
www.nslawservices.org

Was this email forwarded to you? Stay up to date all year round by [signing up for our Legal Lessons](#).



Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee | 1757 Veterans Highway, Suite 50, Islandia, NY 11749

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