November 26th, 2024



Where Dignity Meets Justice

This Thanksgiving, we extend our warmest thanks for your trust and support. At Legal Services of Long Island, we are deeply thankful for the opportunity to provide our community with much-needed legal services.

May your holiday be filled with joy and appreciation.

NOVEMBER ADVOCACY TIPS

Legal Services of Long Island Has A New Unit!

We are excited to announce that Legal Services of Long Island is launching the Citizenship and Naturalization Project to provide free immigration-related legal services to eligible low-income residents of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. We are currently accepting requests for assistance from legal permanent residents (Green Card holders) who want to apply for U.S. citizenship. Legal Permanent Residents are eligible to apply for citizenship after five years, or three if they are married to a U.S. citizen. We can also assist U.S. citizens who need help proving their citizenship through certificates of citizenship. Next year, we will seek to partner with the private bar to expand the reach of this naturalization program. In the future, we look forward to offering a broader range of services, including immigration assistance for victims of trafficking or domestic violence.

To be screened for eligibility for the Citizenship and Naturalization Project, Nassau residents can call 516-292-8100 and Suffolk residents can call 631-232-2400

Improper Billing Resources for Medicare Enrollees in the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program

Medicare enrollees who are in the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program—a Medicaid program that pays for Medicare costs—should not be billed for healthcare costs, with a few exceptions. Unfortunately, QMB enrollees often face medical bills that are issued to them improperly.

Improper billing (also sometimes referred to as "balance billing") occurs when doctors, hospitals, or other providers charge beneficiaries with both Medicaid and Medicare for copays, co-insurance, or deductibles.

Patients who have both Medicaid and Medicare (including Medicare Advantage) should never be charged for services covered under Medicaid or Medicare. Billing for covered services is illegal under both federal and state law.

QMBs whose provider will not stop billing them for items and services that Medicare covers can contact 1-800-MEDICARE. Consumers can also submit complaints about their debt collection issues by contacting the Consumer Protection Financial Bureau at (855) 411-2372.

Legal Services of Long Island's Senior Citizen Law Project provides legal representation, advice, and referrals to Nassau County seniors in matters involving housing, health care, and social security. The Project also assists with wills, power of attorney and health care proxy forms, pooled trusts, Medicaid planning, consumer debt, and utility shut-offs.

With specific funding from the Nassau County Office for the Aging, the Project assists Nassau County seniors age 60 and older who have a legal issue that meets our priority guidelines.

Telephone consultations assist clients with problem analysis, information, and referral. Individual cases are accepted for representation after case evaluation. Special visits can be arranged for those who are homebound, in-hospital, or nursing home residents.

In addition to the "Helpline" and legal representation, the Project collaborates with Senior Citizen social agencies, provides training, and participates in community information events that target seniors. Nassau residents can call 516-292-8100.

Social Security Benefits for Family Members of the Retired or Disabled Beneficiaries.

For those receiving Social Security retirement benefits, some family members may also qualify to receive benefits. Spouses, ex-spouses, and children of the retired worker or disabled worker may receive a monthly payment of up to one-half of the retirement benefit amount. These Social Security payments to family members will not decrease the amount of the worker's retirement benefit. When a worker dies, certain family members may be eligible for survivor's benefits. Widows, widowers, surviving divorced spouses, children, and dependent parents may qualify for benefits on the deceased worker's record. To learn more or to apply for benefits, visit the <u>Social Security Administration's website</u>.

HEAP Opened on November 1st, 2024

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes. If you are eligible, you may receive one regular HEAP benefit per season and could also be eligible for an emergency HEAP benefit if you are in impending danger of running out of fuel or having your utility service shut off. This benefit is only open from November 1st through the winter or until funding runs out. Eligible New Yorkers can get up to \$1,000 to cover heating bills, \$4,000 to repair a boiler, and \$8,000 for a boiler replacement. To learn more or to apply, please visit the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance website or go to your local Department of Social Services office in Suffolk or Nassau.

The Public Benefits Unit provides legal assistance to persons who experience problems with public benefits programs that are administered by the local Departments of Social Services, including:

- Welfare (TANF and Safety Net)
- Medicaid
- Food Stamps (SNAP)
- Child Care Assistance
- HEAP
- Emergency shelter for the homeless
- Unemployment insurance appeals and overpayments
- Other emergency assistance programs





We also assist low-income households in establishing Supplemental Needs Trusts to eliminate the Medicaid spend-down and assist homeless families in obtaining rent supplements from DSS to enable families to leave the shelters or retain permanent housing. Nassau residents can call 516-292-8100 and Suffolk residents can call 631-232-2400



Housing Insecurity Prevention Assistance Programs Open

Town of Babylon's Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program opened on December 18th, 2023. This program is for extremely low-income households who are in rental arrears to help residents regain housing stability and prevent homelessness. For more information and to apply, please visit Long Island Housing Partnership's website.

Town of Babylon's Mortgage Arrears Program opened on February 27th, 2024. The Town of Brookhaven (Town) is making CDBG-CV funds available for low to moderate-income Town of Babylon residents with mortgage arrears incurred due to a COVID-19-related loss of income. Funds will cover a maximum of 6 consecutive months of arrears, subject to a cap of \$50,000, and are paid directly to the lender. For more information and to apply, <u>please visit the Long Island Housing Partnership's website.</u>

Legal Services of Long Island, in partnership with Empire Justice Center, can now assist Nassau and Suffolk residential tenants with housing-related legal problems (like eviction) and a household income of up to 80% of the Area Median Income. Services are available through this partnership regardless of immigration status. Please call the office closest to you to see if you are eligible for legal services. Interpreters are available. Suffolk residents west of 112 can call 631-232-2400 and east of 112 can call 631-369-1112. Nassau residents can call 516-292-8100. Feel free to share our flyer in both English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole

Check out our latest Know Your Rights Tenant fact sheets in English, Spanish, and Creole.







Fact Sheets on Illegal Evictions in Suffolk County in English, Spanish, and Creole









LEGAL SUPPORT CENTER FOR ADVOCATES



LEGAL SERVICES TRAINING

Legal Services of Long Island's Legal Support Center for Advocates presents "Emergency Housing Assistance on Long Island" on Friday, December 6th, from 1 pm to 2 pm.

The Legal Support Center for Advocates presents, "Emergency Housing Assistance on Long Island." Join us on Friday, December 6th, from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm to learn about Department of Social Services services and procedures, as well as resources, when assisting a client in need of emergency housing assistance. <u>Please register for this Legal Support Center for Advocates training taking place on December 6th, 2024 from 1:00pm to 2:00pm.</u>

Did you miss our past LSCA presentations? Check them out today!

On Tuesday, November 12th, Legal Services of Long Island's Legal Support Center for Advocates and the Education and Disability Rights Project Attorneys presented "Know Your Rights: Contemporary Issues in Education." We discussed steps in the special education classification process, independent educational evaluations, and the declassification procedure of a student with an IEP. Further, we discussed the school procedure for disenrolling a student, the rules regarding school attendance in New York, and what to do when your child is being bullied in school. Slides are available on our website. View the recording on our YouTube Channel.

On October 30th, 2024, Legal Services of Long Island's Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "Knowledge is Power: Legal Steps After a Domestic Violence Incident." Supervising Attorney Larry Tuthill discussed orders of protection, child custody orders, and how to be evaluated for services by the Suffolk County Domestic Violence Project. Slides are available on our website. View the recording on our YouTube Channel.

Legal Services of Long Island's Legal Support Center for Advocates presented, "Understanding the 17A Guardianship Option for Parents" on October 29th, 2024. We discussed resources, services, and procedures that can assist your clients considering a 17A guardianship for their intellectually or developmentally disabled child. Also, learn how your clients may be eligible for our upcoming FREE legal clinic which will provide free advice and







counsel to individuals considering the 17A Guardianship process. *Please note that this presentation is appropriate for advocates and professional staff only. This is not a presentation geared towards parents* Slides can be accessed on our website. View the training on our YouTube Channel.

On October 17th, 2024, Legal Services of Long Island presented "Know Your Rights About Medical Debt." Supervising Attorney Sharon Campo provided medical debt updates and reviewed ways to prevent and combat medical debt. Slides can be accessed on our website. View the recording on our YouTube Channel.

On September 13th, 2024, The Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "Understanding the Importance of Advanced Care Directives". We discussed basic advanced care directives you or your clients may need while planning for their future. Also, learn how you or your clients may be eligible to attend our upcoming Advance Care Planning Clinic. Slides can be accessed on our website. View the recording on our YouTube Channel.

On August 28th, 2024, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "Empowering Your Future: Managing Student Loan Debt." Nassau Suffolk Law Services' Legal Support Center for Advocates welcomed Nancy Nierman of the Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP). Ms. Nierman provided updates on the current student loan landscape including repayment options and other ways to discharge your student loans. EDCAP is a program of the Community Service Society of New York. Slides can be accessed on our website.. View the recording on our YouTube Channel.

On March 7th, 2024, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "Insights Into Attaining Student Debt Relief." Nancy Nierman of the Community Service Society's Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) provides expert guidance and essential insights on attaining student debt relief and navigating repayment. During the training, we review repayment options, with a focus on the new SAVE plan, and provide practical solutions and advice for struggling borrowers. We provided an overview of federal forgiveness and discharge options and the One-Time Payment Count Adjustment that grants additional credit toward some of those programs. Please register to view this training.

Links to all of our prior trainings can be found on our website.

Did you miss any of our *Programs of Legal Services of Long Island* Presentations? Feel free to watch them on our YouTube Channel!

UPCOMING EVENTS

17-A Guardianship Clinic

In Suffolk County, our Suffolk County Pro Bono Project is teaming up with volunteer attorneys to provide eligible low-income Suffolk County residents with advice counsel and information on 17-A Guardianships to Parents/Caretakers. Spread the word by downloading our flyer.

Once a client is determined eligible, they can meet with a volunteer attorney to ask questions and receive advice and counsel on the 17-A Guardianship process.

Interested Suffolk County residents should call (631) 232-2400 ext. 3331 by December 1st. Clients should leave their name and contact









information and we will get back to them to set up an eligibility intake appointment.



REE UPCOMING LEGAL CLINI

Advice, Counsel and Information on 17A Guardianships for Parents/Caretakers

Legal Services of Long Island is hosting a FREE Advice and Counsel Clinic in December of 2024 for eligible low-income Suffolk County residents at our Islandia office.

Once a client is determined eligible, they can meet with an attorney to receive advice and counsel about the 17A Guardianship process. Clients can ask questions and get feedback about their specific situation on how to file a 17A Juardianship for their intellectually or developmentally disabled child. This clinic is appropriate for parents of disabled children aged 17 years old or older.



After an intake appointment is completed and eligibility is determined, clients will be invited to the advance planning clinic in December which will be conducted in person at our Islandia your clients have any questions, Suffolkprobono@legalservicesli.org and include the words "Advance Planning Clinic" in the subject line.

Interested in volunteering? If you are an admitted attorney and are interested in volunteering for the clinic, please contact Sharon Campo at scampo@legalservicesli.org.



PRO BONO ATTORNEYS NEEDED

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 needs 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@legalservicesli.org

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 guide 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@legalservicesli.org

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@legalservicesli.org





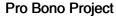










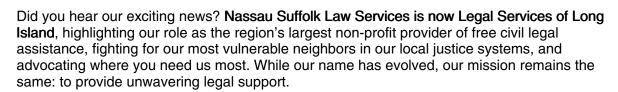


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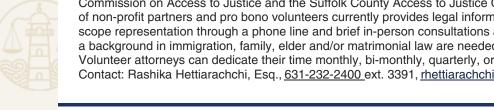
Contact: Kiersten Bartolotta, Esg., 631-232-2400 ext. 3311, kbartolotta@legalservicesli.org

The Suffolk County Pro Bono Project is now on Paladin! Please take a look at our current volunteer attorney opportunities and connect with us!

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 limitedscope 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@legalservicesli.org

























WHERE DIGNITY MEETS JUSTICE



Join Nassau Suffolk Law Services as we continue to illuminate pathways to justice under our new name,

Legal Services of Long Island (LSLI).

Help us guide our communities and neighbors in need towards accessible free legal services for all.

Watch Us Evolve













Legal Services of Long Island is a 501(c)(3) and your donation is 100% tax-deductible. Join us in our mission to provide free, quality civil legal representation to Long Island's neediest residents.

Donate

HOME OUR TEAM

TESTIMONIALS

LOCATIONS

LEGAL SERVICES OF LONG ISLAND 631 232-2400 | 516 292-8100 | 631 369-1112

www.legalservicesli.org

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