

February 14th, 2025



Where Dignity Meets Justice

FEBRUARY ADVOCACY TIPS

1 PRIVATE INSURANCE COMPANIES MUST NOW COVER DYSLEXIA TESTING IN NEW YORK

On December 1, 2024, Governor Kathy Hochul signed the Dyslexia Diagnosis Access Act into law. This law, the first of its kind in the United States, is designed to increase early diagnosis of dyslexia and other learning differences, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (“A.D.H.D.”). Starting January 1, 2025, private health insurers in New York are required to cover the costs of neuropsychological tests that diagnose dyslexia. The law does *not* require Medicaid-funded insurance plans to cover this testing. To learn more, [please visit our website.](#)

LSLI's Education and Disability Rights Project (EDRP) is a bi-county project that represents students with disabilities between the ages of 5-21 in Special Education matters, including attendance at Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings, Resolution Sessions and Impartial Hearings. In addition, the EDRP assists students in issues pertaining to residency and homelessness and helps adults with developmental disabilities secure eligibility and services through the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Nassau residents can call (516) 292-8100 and Suffolk residents can call (631) 232-2400 to be screened for assistance.

Advocates working with older adults should be aware of two important enrollment periods with a March 31 deadline.

2

1. The Medicare General Enrollment Period (GEP) runs from January 1-March 31. Individuals who wish to enroll in Medicare Part A and/or Part B must enroll during this enrollment period unless they are in their initial enrollment period or enrolled under a Special Enrollment Period.
2. The Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (MA-OEP) runs from January 1-March 31. During this enrollment period, individuals can drop their Medicare Advantage and choose Original Medicare or switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan.

Visit the [Justice in Aging website](#) for more detailed information about Special Enrollment Periods and more details regarding these deadlines, including new changes that went into effect in 2025.

3

The 2024-25 Regular HEAP benefit reopened on January 25, 2025.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) can help eligible New Yorkers heat and cool their homes. If you are eligible, you may receive one regular HEAP benefit per program year and could also be eligible for emergency HEAP benefits if you are in danger of running out of fuel or having your utility service shut off.

Eligibility and benefits are based on:

- income,
- household size,
- the primary heating source, and
- the presence of a household member who is under age 6, age 60 or older, or permanently disabled.

To learn more, please visit the [Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's website](#).

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.

Important changes to replacement for stolen SNAP and Temporary Assistance (TA) benefits

4

Federal authorization to replace stolen SNAP benefits ended on December 20, 2024. Local social services districts are not allowed to issue SNAP replacement benefits for theft that occurs on or after December 21, 2024. You can still file claims to replace stolen SNAP benefits that occurred on or before December 20, 2024. Your claim must be filed within 30 days after you learned the benefits were stolen.

This change does not impact claims for stolen TA (cash) benefits. However, beginning on October 1, 2024, households are limited to ONE Temporary Assistance cash benefit replacement per federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30). All applications filed after October 1, are subject to the “one replacement benefit per year” rule, even if the theft occurred before October 1, 2024.

To learn more, visit the [Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's website](#).

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5 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, [please visit the Long Island Housing Partnership's website](#).

The waitlist for affordable housing in the **Town of Huntington** is open. You must create an account through opengov. To learn more and join the waitlist visit the [Community Development Agency website](#) for the Town of Huntington.

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.

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



**Know your rights:
Tenants**

Legal Services of Long Island (LSLI) is committed to helping people in need assert and secure their rights under the law. Established in 1966, LSLI was one of the first Legal Services Corporation programs in New York State. We provide free legal services in thousands of civil (non-criminal) cases each year, as well as legal support to community advocates to ensure that people with low incomes and disabilities have equal access to the civil justice system on Long Island.

Types of Landlord/Tenant Cases

- **Non-Payment** - This type of case is initiated by a landlord to collect unpaid rent.
- **Holdover** - This case is seen when the tenant remains in the property after the expiration of the lease.
- **Post Foreclosure Holdover** - This refers to a situation in which a tenant remains in a property after it has been foreclosed upon and transferred to a new owner.

Notices you may Receive Before a Case is Scheduled for Court
In a non-payment eviction case, the landlord must send 2 late rent notices before taking the tenant to court. The first notice is a 3-day late rent notice. If the tenant doesn't pay rent after the first notice, they will receive a 30-day rent demand, after which the court case begins, and the notice of petition is served. The holdover eviction process is different as it depends on how long a tenant has lived in the home or the length of the lease. If a tenant has lived in the home less than a year OR leased for less than 1 year, the 30 days written notice is given. If a tenant has lived in the home between 1 and 2 years OR leased for 1 year, the 60 days written notice is given. If a tenant has lived in the home 2 or more years OR leased for 2 years, the 90 days written notice is given. In this case, after the tenant remains in the property after the end of the notice period, the notice of petition is served.

Documents to Bring to Court

- Notice of Petition / Petition
- Receipts of Rent Paid
- Pictures of Habitability Issues
- Lease

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The information contained in this material is not legal advice. Legal advice depends upon the specific facts of each situation. Also, the information herein does not constitute an offer of legal services. If you are seeking legal services, you should contact a competent legal counsel licensed in your state.

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**Conozca sus derechos:
Arrendatario**

Legal Services of Long Island (LSLI) is committed to helping people in need assert and secure their rights under the law. Established in 1966, LSLI was one of the first Legal Services Corporation programs in New York State. We provide free legal services in thousands of civil (non-criminal) cases each year, as well as legal support to community advocates to ensure that people with low incomes and disabilities have equal access to the civil justice system on Long Island.

Tipos de Arrendador / Caso de Alquiler

- **Falta de pago**: este tipo puede ser iniciado por un propietario para cobrar el alquiler impagado.
- **Remanente**: este caso se ve cuando el inquilino se queda en la propiedad después de la expiración del contrato de arrendamiento.
- **Post Surprise Holdover** - Esto se refiere a una situación en la que un inquilino vive en una propiedad después de que ha sido cerrada y transferida a un nuevo propietario.

Avisos que puede recibir antes de un caso programado para la corte
En un caso de desalojo por falta de pago, el propietario debe enviar 2 avisos tarde antes de que el inquilino sea llevado a la corte. El primer aviso es un aviso de alquiler con 3 días de retraso. Si el inquilino no paga el alquiler después del primer aviso, se recibirá una solicitud de alquiler. La segunda solicitud es diferente, ya que depende de cuánto tiempo haya vivido el inquilino en la casa o la duración del contrato de arrendamiento. Si un inquilino vive en la casa menos de un año o menos de 1 año, se notifica por escrito con 30 días de anticipación. Si un inquilino vive en la casa entre 1 y 2 años o menos durante 1 año, se notifica por escrito con 60 días de anticipación. Si un inquilino vive en la casa con 2 o más años de antigüedad, el aviso de 90 días se emite por escrito. En este caso, después de que el inquilino permanezca en la propiedad después del final del período de notificación, se notifica la petición.


Documentos para llevar a la corte

- Avisos de Petición / Peticiones
- Recibos de alquiler pagados
- Problemas de imagen Hábitos
- Arrendamiento

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**Konnen dwa ou yo: lokatè
(moun ki lwe kay)**

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Kalite Mèt kay / Ka Lokasyon

- **Peman Pa-Peyè** - Kalite ka sa inisyè pa yon mèt kay pou kolekte lòt lòt lwaye ki pa peye.
- **Holdover** - Ka sa sèlè lokatè a rete nan pwopriyete a apre lwaye a apre peman an, si yo resevwa yon avè lè pou desann lòt lwaye, apre sa ka tribinal la konmanse, epi avè rekèt pètisyon an sèvi.
- **Aprè Sezi Holdover** - Sa a refere a yon sitiyasyon kote yon lokatè rete nan yon pwopriyete apre yo sezi li sou li epi ki transfere ak yon nouvo pwopriyete.

Avi ou ka resevwa anvan yon ka pwogram pou Tribinal la
Nan yon ka mete lokatè deyò ki pa peye-perman (eviksyon), mèt kay la dwe voye 2 avi peman an rete anvan yo menmen lokatè a nan tribinal. Premye avi a se yon avi lwaye peman 5 jou an reta, si lokatè a pa peye lwaye a apre peman an, si yo resevwa yon avè lè pou desann lòt lwaye, apre sa ka tribinal la konmanse, epi avè rekèt pètisyon an sèvi. Prosedis eviksyon holdover a diferan paske li depandan de konbyen tan yon lokatè te viv nan kay la. Ovan lwaye kontra-lwaye a. Si yon lokatè ap viv nan kay la mwenndan yon ane oubyen mwenndan gen kontra lwaye pou 1 ane, yo bay avi 30 jou alèti; si yon lokatè ap viv nan kay la an 1 an, 2 ane oubyen pa pli pandan lènt, yo bay avi 60 jou alèti; si yon lokatè ap viv nan kay la 2 oubyen plis pase 2 ane, yo bay avi 90 jou alèti a. Nan ka sa a, apre lokatè a rete nan pwopriyete apre lèman pròvòdi avi a, yo sèvi li avè pètisyon an.

Dokiman pou pote nan Tribinal

- Avi Pètisyon / Pètisyon
- Resi peman lwaye
- Foto ki montre pwoblèm
- Kontra lwaye

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Housing Assistance on Long Island. We spoke about the Department of Social Services services and procedures, as well as resources when assisting a client in need of emergency housing assistance. [Slides are available on our website. View the recording on our YouTube Channel.](#)

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.](#)

[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!](#)

Read our [Annual Report](#) highlighting our accomplishments and programs throughout 2023. Your support benefited **13,818** Long Islanders by providing access to the legal help they needed to resolve issues threatening their housing, financial stability, health and safety, or limiting their access to opportunities to enrich their lives and communities.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Married and Managing Student Loans? Join the Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) on February 18th at 6 pm and Learn How to Optimize Your Tax Filing Status.

Choosing the correct tax filing status is one of the most important decisions married student loan borrowers must make. This webinar will guide you through the process and explain the financial and tax implications of this key decision. We'll also hold time at the end to answer any questions you might have! [Register to join the virtual presentation.](#)

Join us on **March 1st** for a **Foreclosure and Deed Theft Resource Fair and Forum**. Collect homeowner resources and get information from housing counseling and legal services organizations that offer free help, counseling, and support for homeowners. Hear from a panel of housing and legal experts, discussing deed theft and foreclosure issues, and acquire tips on protecting your home. Download the flyers below.

Deed Theft and Foreclosure Prevention
Educational Panel and Resource Fair
 with Office of the New York State Attorney General

JOIN US!
Saturday
March 1
12 – 3 p.m.
 Nassau County Bar Association
 133 15th Street, Mineola, NY 11501

Join us for a Foreclosure and Deed Theft Resource Fair and Forum. Collect Homeowner Resources and get information from housing counseling and legal services organizations that offer free help, counseling, and support for homeowners. Hear from a panel of housing and legal experts, discussing deed theft and foreclosure issues and learn tips on how to protect your home.

BSPV
ag.ny.gov/deed-theft-nassau

Spanish and ASL will be available. If you require an accommodation to participate in a program, service, or activity at our office, please contact our ADA Administrator at ADA.Administrator@ag.ny.gov, preferably 48 hours before the event.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:

Our office developed the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) to help homeowners protect their homes. **Free HOPP services include:**

- legal court representation
- home-ownership counseling
- loan-modification help

1-855-466-3456 | homeownerhelpny.com

Download Flyer in English

Panel educativo de prevención de desalojos
y robo de escrituras y Feria de recursos
 con la oficina de la Fiscalía General del Estado de Nueva York

PARTICIPE!
Sábado
1 de marzo
12. – 3 p.m.
 Nassau County Bar Association
 133 15th Street, Mineola, NY 11501

Participe en el Foro y la Feria de recursos de desalojo y robo de escrituras. Recopile recursos de propietarios y obtenga información de organizaciones de servicios legales y asistencia en vivienda que ofrecen ayuda, orientación y asistencia sin costo para los propietarios. Escuche a un panel de expertos en vivienda y leyes hablar sobre robo de escrituras y desalojos, y aprenda consejos sobre cómo proteger su casa.

BSPV
ag.ny.gov/deed-theft-nassau

Disponible en español y ASL. Si necesita alguna adaptación para participar en un programa, servicio o actividad en nuestra oficina, contacte a nuestro administrador de ADA en ADA.Administrator@ag.ny.gov, preferentemente 48 horas antes del evento.

ORGANIZACIONES PARTICIPANTES:

Nuestra oficina desarrolló el Programa de Protección para Propietarios de Vivienda (HOPP) para ayudar a los propietarios a proteger sus casas. **Los servicios gratis del HOPP incluyen:**

- representación legal ante el tribunal
- asesoría sobre propiedad de vivienda
- ayuda para modificación de préstamos

1-855-466-3456 | homeownerhelpny.com

Download Flyer in Spanish

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH A LEGAL PROBLEM?

Upcoming Community Legal Help Project locations, dates, and times for Nassau and Suffolk County can be found on our website. CLHP will be at the Riverhead Library every 4th Wednesday of the month starting January 2025!

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](tel: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](tel: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](tel:516-292-8100) ext. 3115, rscoll@legalservicesli.org

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 needs 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: Kiersten Bartolotta, Esq., [631-232-2400](tel: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!

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](tel:631-232-2400) ext. 3391, rhettiarachchi@legalservicesli.org

Did you hear our exciting news? **Nassau Suffolk Law Services is now Legal Services of Long Island**, highlighting our role as the region's largest non-profit provider of free civil legal assistance, fighting for our most vulnerable neighbors in our local justice systems, and advocating where you need us most. While our name has evolved, our mission remains the same: to provide unwavering legal support.



[LEGALSERVICESLI.ORG](https://legalservicesli.org)

WHERE DIGNITY MEETS JUSTICE



LEGAL SERVICES
OF LONG ISLAND

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

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.

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