

November 25th, 2025



Where Dignity Meets Justice



Happy Thanksgiving!

We are grateful for your partnership in creating civil legal justice within our Long Island community.



NOVEMBER ADVOCACY TIPS

1

Expanded Access to Compensation for Victims and Survivors of Crime

As of November 5th, 2025, new laws expanded access to compensation for individuals who have been impacted by homicide and other crimes and victimized by financial scams. The state Office of Victim Services (OVS) provides a financial safety net for individuals facing out-of-pocket, crime-related expenses without any other means to pay for them. The cap on funeral and burial expenses has been doubled from \$6,000 to \$12,000, and also, the state law has been amended to eliminate contributory conduct in homicide cases. This change recognizes that individuals who lose someone to a

violent, sudden act shouldn't face financial hardship or lack support as they grieve. Previously, state law allowed the Office of Victim Services to reduce reimbursement for funeral and burial costs and other crime-related expenses up to 50 percent if the agency determined that an individual's actions contributed to their death. Changes also include:

- Expanded access to crime scene cleanup costs. Previously, an individual could only receive reimbursement (up to \$2,500) if they lived where the crime occurred. Now, anyone who pays out-of-pocket for those expenses is eligible to seek OVS assistance.
- Increased support for victims of financial scams. Individuals younger than 18, older than 60, and/or those disabled, physically injured or meet other eligibility criteria may now receive up to \$2,500 if they have been victims of financial scams. The cap on reimbursement had been \$100.

These changes in compensation occur as OVS continues working [to implement the state's Fair Access to Victim Compensation Act](#), which takes effect Dec. 31, 2025, and eliminates the need for individuals to report a crime to law enforcement. Instead, OVS will accept documentation from a victim service provider, mental health provider, or medical provider attesting that the person was a victim of a crime. This law, which also extends the timeframe for filing a compensation claim, recognizes that individuals may be reluctant to involve the criminal justice system because of fear of further harm to them or their family, prior experiences with police, or their immigration status, for example.

To learn more or to file a claim with OVS, [please visit the OVS website](#).

2

HEAP Application Opening Delayed

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes. The opening date for the ability to apply for this upcoming HEAP season has been delayed until further notice, as the necessary federal funds have not been released yet. New York Attorney General James is reminding consumers of their home utilities rights, including:

- New York state requires utilities to make extra efforts to reach out to households before a shutoff occurs during the cold weather period, from November 1 through April 15.
- Utilities must wait at least 35 days from when notices are past due to pursue termination of service and must provide at least 15 days' notice before doing so.
- Utilities cannot shut off service to residential consumers during the two-week period that includes Christmas and New Year's Day.
- Utilities must have trained personnel evaluate a consumer's circumstances to determine whether there is a risk of serious impairment to a resident's health or safety before shutting off service. When there is such a risk, utilities must also notify social services to evaluate the situation before shutting off service.

Any New Yorker who experiences an unauthorized shutoff or believes they were taken advantage of can [file a complaint online](#) or call 1-800-771-7755.

To learn more or to apply (when open), 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.

3

Housing Insecurity Prevention Assistance Programs Open

New Suffolk County's Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program is now open. The Program will supplement rental housing costs for families of low-to-moderate income for up to 24 months (based on funding availability and lease dates). Please note this is not for rental arrears but for a security deposit or rental assistance going forward. [Please visit Suffolk County's website for program guidelines and to download a copy of the application.](#)

***New* Town of Brookhaven** Home ARP Rental Arrears Assistance Program opened on October 1, 2025. This program provides assistance for eligible residents on a first-come, first-served basis until all funds are exhausted. For more information and to apply, [please visit](#) Long Island Housing Partnership's website.

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.

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.

Download Our Fact Sheets

Know Your Rights Tenant fact sheets in English, Spanish, and Creole.



**LEGAL SERVICES
OF LONG ISLAND**

Know your rights: Tenants

Legal Services of Long Island (LSLI) is committed to helping people in need assert their rights under the law. Established in 1965, 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 advocacy groups that serve low-income and disabled people. We also give access to the civil justice system through Hand

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 Housing:** 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 notice notices before taking the case to court. If the tenant does not pay rent after the first notice, they will receive a 14-day rent demand, after which they will receive a 30-day notice to leave. If the tenant does not pay rent after the 14-day notice, the 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, the landlord must give the tenant a 30-day notice to leave. If a tenant has lived in the home between 1 and 2 years, the 90-day notice is given. If a tenant has lived in the home for more than 2 years, the 90-day written notice is given. In this case, after the 90-day notice, if the tenant remains in the property after the date of notice, the date of petition is served.

Documents to Bring to Court

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

www.lsliservices.org
 www.lsliservices.org/legiserv
 www.facebook.com/lsliservices


The information contained in this material is not legal advice. Please consult with an attorney for legal advice. This publication is not a substitute for a legal opinion. Any use of very old information, as some information from your state, may not be correct for your jurisdiction. Finally, the information in this publication is not a substitute for a competent legal counsel in your state.

 **Conozca sus derechos:**
Arrendatario

Tipo de Arrendador / Caso de Alquiler

- Falta de pago: este tipo puede ser iniciado por un propietario para cobrar el alquiler impagado.
- Requerimiento de pago: si el inquilino se queda en la propiedad después de la expiración del contrato de alquiler.
- Post Surprise Holdover: Esto se refiere a una situación en la que un inquilino vive en un apartamento después de que ha sido cerrado y se le ha prohibido entrar.

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 que el inquilino debe pagar el alquiler que paga el alquilador después del primer aviso, se recibirá una solicitud de alquiler que se le da a la persona que vive en la casa. Si el inquilino entrega el aviso de solicitud de la persona. El proceso de desalojo por rentamiento es diferente, ya que depende de cuánto tiempo ha vivido el inquilino en la casa. Si el inquilino vive en la casa menos de un año, el inquilino debe ser notificado de que el inquilino debe pagar el alquiler de arrendamiento. Si un inquilino vive en la casa más de un año o más, el inquilino debe ser notificado de que el inquilino debe pagar el alquiler de arrendamiento. Si un inquilino vive en la casa entre 1 y 2 años o menos durante 1 año, se notifica al inquilino de que el inquilino debe pagar el alquiler de arrendamiento. Si un inquilino vive en la casa con 2 o más años de antigüedad, el aviso de 90 días se emite por el inquilino. En este caso, después de que el inquilino permanece en la propiedad más allá del final del plazo de notificación, se notifica la petición.

Documentos para llevar a la corte

- Avisos de Petición / Peticiones
- Documentos de pago
- Problemas de imagen Hábitos
- Ampliamente

www.legalservicesoflongisland.org  

The information contained in this material is not legal advice. It is intended to provide general information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Always seek the advice of an attorney if you have a legal problem. Also, the law may vary from state to state, so some information from our website may not be correct for your jurisdiction. Finally, the information contained in this material is not a substitute for a complete legal document, which you should receive from an attorney.

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



ILLEGAL EVICTIONS IN SUFFOLK COUNTY AND HOW TO STOP THEM

Sometimes, Suffolk County landlords will try to make a tenant move by doing things that are illegal. For instance:

- 1. Throw furniture and belongings in the street
- 2. Remove the doors
- 3. Padlock the doors
- 4. Change the locks
- 5. Turn off the water and electricity
- 6. Turn off the water
- 7. Keep your belongings
- 8. Threaten to sue or actually use violence

WHAT TO DO

If the landlord tries to illegally evict you, you must immediately call or go to the police. Report the violation to the Suffolk County Police or Order Number 90-7. As this order distinguishes between those with "written evidence" of their tenancy and those without, you should keep a copy of your lease and any correspondence with them at all times copies of rent receipts and a copy of their lease, the lease agent's identification card, and any correspondence with the landlord.

Unfortunately, there are still police officers who continue to believe that illegal evictions are "civil" and not "criminal" and will not take action. If this is the case, you should file a police report, get the name, and badge number of the responding officers, and provide them with a copy of the Order Number 90-7. If the police do not take action, you should make a police report to the Suffolk County Police or Sheriff's Office. This is a civil matter making an unlawful eviction a potential class A misdemeanor and the police directive and move to the county's district attorney's office.

Naturally, the tenant should also call Legal Services of Long Island if they live west of Route 10 (83-232-2400), or east of 10 (63-369-1172) or arrange for emergency housing and storage through the Suffolk County Department of Social Services.

In the case of a utility shut off by the landlord, the tenant should call the Suffolk County Department of Social Services or the Suffolk County Building Department and ask them to intervene.

AFTERWARDS

If the landlord pulls off an illegal eviction, the tenant can file an Order to Show Cause in their local court. This is a civil matter and the tenant can file an Order to Show Cause in their local court. The tenant can sue for three times the damages he suffers (IPAPI, 853). Despite the crisis situation he's in, the tenant should be careful to keep proof of his damages and file the Order to Show Cause as soon as possible. This is a civil matter and the tenant should file the Order to Show Cause as soon as possible.

If the damages are less than \$2,000, the tenant can sue the former landlord in small claims court. If the damages are more than \$2,000, the tenant will have to get a private attorney to file the case. The tenant should sue for three times the damages he suffered, plus his attorney's fees, money down, but will take one-third of what is won. For guidance with your Small Claims Court case, see the Small Claims section of this website.

Furthermore, under the recently enacted Statewide Housing Security and Tenant Protection Act of 2019, if the landlord has been convicted of a felony (not a simple assault or disorderly conduct or a misdemeanor), and/or sues your landlord for damages ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000, the tenant can sue the landlord in small claims court for three times the income for the year.

Employee: Any individual employed by an employer.

Employ: To suffer or permit to work.

Wage and Hour Information

Definitions

Waived: To waive is to voluntarily relinquish or give up a right, claim, or privilege
Credit: the right granted by a creditor to an applicant to defer payment of a debt, incur debt and defer its payment, or purchase property or services and defer payment.

Deductions: A deduction is an expense that can be subtracted from a taxpayer's gross income in order to reduce the amount of income that is subject to taxation. Deductions are not the same as tax credits.

Employee: Any individual employed by an employer.

Employ: To suffer or permit to work.

Brief Overview

Employee rights are found throughout federal, state, and local laws. This fact sheet will only cover basic New York State Wage and Hour Violations. For more information on employee rights feel free to visit the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour section.

These rights are covered by many different government agencies at many different levels. This fact sheet will discuss how to specifically request the help of the New York State Department of Labor.

Who qualifies for these rights?

These rights specifically cover employees, not independent contractors. While some of these rights may be open to independent contractors, many will not be applicable.

1. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/workers>

Wage and Hour Information

1 of 5

<https://www.legalservicesli.org>

DEGEVÍKSYON ILEGAL NAN KONTE SUFFOLK AK I KJAN YO SISPANN YO

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federal student loan system—and how they'll impact every borrower. From the end of the SAVE Plan to new borrowing limits, repayment structures, and forgiveness options, the rules are shifting fast. [View the recording on our YouTube Channel](#). [Slides are available on our website](#).

On June 25th, 2025, the Legal Support Center for Advocates and the Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) presented "**Big Changes, Big Decisions: Navigating Student Loans in Uncertain Times.**" We gave important updates on student loans and an overview of repayment options, a review of forgiveness programs (including Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)), and tips for managing delinquent and defaulted debt. [View the recording on our YouTube Channel](#). [Slides are available on our website](#).

On April 24th, 2025, the Legal Support Center for Advocates and the Education Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) presented "**Weathering the Storm: Managing Student Loans in Uncertain Times.**" We covered student loan repayment options and forgiveness, discharge programs, and updated you on the latest developments affecting the federal student loan system. [View the recording on our YouTube Channel](#). [Slides are available on our website](#).

The Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "**Introduction to ICAN and Community-Based Managed Long-Term Care**" on Wednesday, April 9th, 2025. Staff Attorney Amanda Davis discussed the introduction to home and community-based long-term care provided by Medicaid that helps elderly and disabled Long Island residents receive home care and other services in their homes, as well as an introduction to the Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN) and how they can help. [Slides are available on our website](#). [View the recording on our YouTube Channel](#).

On March 28th, 2025, the Legal Support Center for Advocates and LSLI Supervising Attorney Sarah Kupferberg presented "**The Basics of Applying for SSI for Children.**" We reviewed the basics of applying for supplemental security income (SSI) for children, including eligibility guidelines, the application process, and how to appeal. [Slides are available on our website](#). [View the recording on our YouTube Channel](#).

On March 21st, 2025, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "**New York State Wage and Hour Basics.**" Supervising Attorney John Batanchiev and Law Graduate Jacob Mortenson reviewed common wage and hour violations for low-income New Yorkers and the steps they can take to protect their rights. [Slides are available on our website](#). [View the recording on our YouTube Channel](#).

On January 22nd, 2025, the Legal Support Center for Advocates and the Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program presented "**Latest Student Loan Updates.**" The presentation provided an overview of student loan repayment options, forgiveness and discharge programs, and updates on the latest developments affecting the federal student loan system. [Slides are available on our website](#). [View the recording on our YouTube Channel](#).

On January 17th, 2025, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "**Rental Arrear Assistance Programs on Long Island.**" Supervising Attorney John Batanchiev and Law Graduate Jacob Mortenson reviewed rental arrear assistance programs on Long Island, from DSS to non-profit agencies: how to apply, eligibility guidelines, and how to challenge a denial. [Slides are available on our website](#). [View the recording on our YouTube Channel](#).

On December 6th, 2024, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented "**Emergency 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.

[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!](#)

Our Latest Newsletter

We are so excited to share with you our Summer/Fall 2025 Newsletter, highlighting the **successes of our staff, volunteer attorneys, and advisory council**. **Read our advocacy tips** and Save the Date for our Commitment to Justice Reception on May 6th, 2025, **celebrating 60 years of service!** Thank you to everyone who contributed to the successful publication of our newsletter, and thank you for reading!

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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! **CLHP Suffolk will be closed from 12/21/25 - 1/4/26.**

Pro Bono Attorneys Needed

A little more about our volunteer needs:

Nassau County

Volunteer Lawyers Project

In partnership with the Nassau County Bar Association, 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 opportunities 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, rbrarfman@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, rbrarfman@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

In partnership with the Suffolk County Bar Association, the Pro Bono Project is an innovative pro bono program that expands the availability of legal services to Suffolk County residents in need. The Project provides opportunities 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, Foreclosure, Health Care Proxies, 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



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