

March 31st, 2026



Where Dignity Meets Justice

## MARCH ADVOCACY TIPS

1

### Important Announcement on SAVE Plan and Repayment

Starting on July 1, federal loan servicers will begin issuing notices to borrowers, instructing them to exit the SAVE Plan and enroll in a different repayment plan within 90 days. Borrowers who do not transition plans within the 90 days communicated by their servicer will be automatically enrolled into either the Standard Repayment Plan or the new Tiered Standard Plan that will be available beginning July 1. Servicers will notify borrowers of their specific 90-day deadline.

The 90-day period provides borrowers time to explore repayment options that best suit their needs and plan accordingly. A borrower who wishes to transition before their loan servicer communicates a specific 90-day deadline may contact their servicer at any time to enroll in a lawful repayment plan.

For more information, please see [the U.S. Department of Education's press release](#).

If you have questions about your student loans, please contact us at [516-292-8100](tel:516-292-8100) Ext. 3344 or via email at [EDCAP@legalservicesli.org](mailto:EDCAP@legalservicesli.org).

*The Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) provides legal assistance to people who are experiencing student debt problems, including unpaid tuition bills, collection actions, and managing federal and private student loans. Assistance is available to student borrowers, parents, and other family members regardless of income. Legal Services of Long Island is a partner in the EDCAP network, a program of the Community Service Society of New York.*

*Services may include student loan counseling, litigation defense and representation, and phone advice.*

*Suffolk and Nassau residents, please call [516-292-8100](tel:516-292-8100) to be screened for services. Feel free to download and share our [English](#) and [Spanish](#) Flyer.*

**Reminders for New Yorkers with SNAP Work Requirements**

# 2

New federal SNAP requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) took effect in New York on March 1, after the expiration of a longstanding statewide waiver. Under the new rules, certain New Yorkers aged 18 to 64 without a child under 14 – who are not pregnant or caring for a person who cannot care for themselves, and who do not have a disability that prevents them from working – are now required to meet work or activity requirements to continue receiving SNAP benefits beyond three months in a three-year period.

## Tips for Impacted New Yorkers

- **Notify Your Local SNAP District Office of Work Activities:** To remain eligible for SNAP, you may need to complete at least 80 hours per month of paid work, volunteer service, or other approved training activities.
- **Explore Possible Exemptions:** If you earn at least a certain income level (for example, over \$217.50 per week), you may be exempt from the ABAWD rules without 80 hours of work. You may also be eligible to claim an exemption if you have health barriers, caregiving responsibilities, or other circumstances that affect your ability to meet the work requirement. Contact your local district to discuss your situation and provide any required documentation.
- **Use Available Resources:** SNAP Employment & Training programs, job centers, and community organizations can help you find work, training, or volunteer opportunities that count toward your hours.

For assistance and more information, New Yorkers can contact their local SNAP district office or visit the [New York State 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.*

# 3

## Rental Arrears Assistance Programs Available

**\*Updated\*** Suffolk County's Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program is **currently at capacity**, and no new applications are being reviewed at this time. **However, any new applications will go on a waitlist.** 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.](#)

**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.*

## Save the Date: Cooling Assistance Opens April 25, 2026

# 4

The 2025-2026 HEAP Cooling Assistance Benefit is scheduled to open on April 15, 2026. If you are eligible, you may receive one HEAP Cooling Assistance benefit per applicant household for the purchase and installation of an air conditioner or a fan to help your home stay cool. In circumstances where an air conditioner cannot be safely installed, a fan will be provided. Only one air conditioner or fan, not to exceed \$800 with installation for a window, portable air conditioner, or fan and not to exceed \$1,000 for an existing wall sleeve unit, will be provided per applicant household. No additional HEAP cash benefits are available. For more information and to apply, please visit [OTDA's website](#) or your [local Department of Social Services](#).

*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.*

## Download Our Fact Sheets

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





**[Quick Consumer Resource Guide](#)**



**[Homelessness and Reasonable Accommodations Guide](#)**

## Upcoming Trainings



### LEGAL SUPPORT CENTER FOR ADVOCATES

# TRAINING

Legal Services of Long Island's Legal Support Center for Advocates presents

## "Gimme Shelter Share: How to Challenge a DSS Shelter Share Requirement"

on Thursday, April 16th, 2026, from 1 pm to 2 pm

The Legal Support Center for Advocates presents **"Understanding the Family Law Legal Process involving Victims of Domestic Violence."** Join us on Thursday, April 16th, from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm to learn how the legal process works when victims of domestic violence are seeking orders of protection. In addition, we will review the procedure for child support and child custody. Lastly, we will review the expansion of our Domestic Violence Unit in Nassau County and how you or your clients can receive services.

**[Please register for this Legal Support Center for Advocates virtual training on April 16th, 2026 from 1:00 to 2:00pm.](#)**

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

On Thursday, March 12th, 2026, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented **"Student Loans 2.0: Navigating Changes to the System Under the New Budget Bill."** This informative session is designed to help you navigate upcoming changes to the federal student loan system under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). We covered how changes to borrowing limits and repayment plans will affect current and future borrowers, and we

reviewed important information for those with Parent Plus loans. Whether you're planning ahead or preparing for repayment, this workshop equips you with the tools to make smart, informed decisions. [View the recording on our YouTube Channel.](#) [Slides are available on our website.](#)

On February 26th, 2026, the Legal Support Center for Advocates presented on **"Introduction to Long Term Care Services through Medicaid Managed Care."** LSLI Staff Attorney Kimberly Bolk introduced home and community-based long-term care services provided by Medicaid that help elderly and disabled Long Island residents receive home care and other services in their homes. In addition, she provided information about how the consumer can pick a family member or friend to provide in-home caregiving services paid for by Medicaid (otherwise known as CDPAP). [View the recording on our YouTube Channel.](#) [Slides are available on our website.](#)

On October 23rd, 2025, the Legal Support Center for Advocates and the Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) presented **"Student Loans- The Changing Landscape: What Borrowers Need to Know."** We discussed the big changes coming to the 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.](#)

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

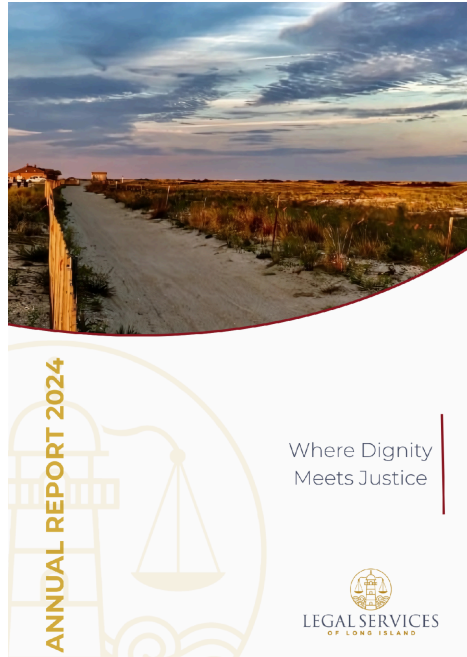
**Did you miss any of our *Programs of Legal Services of Long Island* Presentations? Feel free to watch them on [our YouTube Channel!](#)**

# 2024 Annual Report

We are pleased to share our [2024 Annual Report](#), which summarizes the achievements and progress of Legal Services of Long Island over the last fiscal year.

Your support benefited **13,648** 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.

Thank you for your continued support and thank you to all of our staff who assisted in editing and contributing to the 2024 Annual Report. We hope you enjoy reading our [2024 Annual Report](#) and feel free to share it with your family, friends, and fellow Long Islanders



## Upcoming Happenings



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

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, [rbrafman@legalservicesli.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:rhettiarachchi@legalservicesli.org)



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.

[Contribute Today](#)

[HOME](#)

[OUR TEAM](#)

[TESTIMONIALS](#)

[LOCATIONS](#)

LEGAL SERVICES OF LONG ISLAND  
631 232-2400 | 516 292-8100 | 631 369-1112  
[www.legalservicesli.org](http://www.legalservicesli.org)

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



Legal Services of Long Island  
1757 Veterans Highway, Ste. 50  
Islandia, NY 11749 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!