

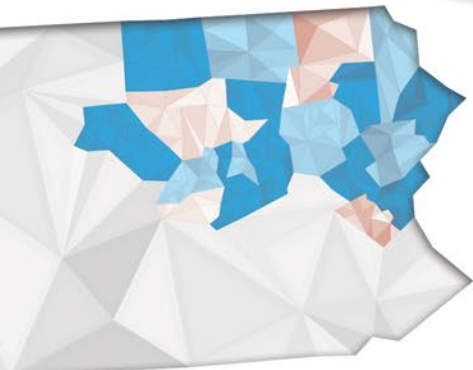


North Penn

LEGAL SERVICES

2015-2016
ANNUAL REPORT

Your Community Resource



HOPE
SERVICE
PARTNERSHIP



North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Sixty-one million Americans – nearly one in five people – qualify for civil legal assistance. This is true in Pennsylvania as well. North Penn Legal Services helps people who live in households with annual incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines. In 2016, that amounts to a mere \$14,856 per year for an individual, or \$30,372 for a family of four.

Our clients come from every ethnicity and age group. They include the working poor, families with children, veterans, homeowners and renters, people with disabilities and the elderly. Some 70% are women with children. Of those who qualify, 50% are turned away due to lack of resources.

In NPLS' service area there are 326,439 people who qualify for low-income legal services. With only 30 lawyers on staff, one out of every two clients is turned away because of inadequate staffing and resources.

Our Mission

The mission of North Penn Legal Services is to provide civil legal representation to low-income people and ensure equal access to justice for all.

What We Do

As a regional provider of civil legal aid for 52 years, North Penn Legal Services helps low-income people throughout 20 counties in Northeast Pennsylvania. NPLS has nine offices with a staff of 69, including 30 attorneys and 13 paralegals. The staff's main goal is to provide access to the justice system. Services include individual representation, information and advice, community legal education, and support for those clients who take direct responsibility for handling some or all aspects of their legal problem.



Message from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

North Penn Legal Services has been a community resource in Northeast PA for the past 52 years. In fact, it's been the only staffed resource for quality civil legal assistance to people living in low-income communities. Our advocates serve at least 17,000 people living at or below the poverty level on an annual basis. From July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, our staff assisted 22,671 people out of the 326,439 people eligible for services. They worked within complex regulations and policies designed to insure services are delivered with quality and dignity. How do we do that? Answer: Hope, Partnership and Service.

Hope – Our staff take the time to listen to clients, to meet them “where they are at,” and develop a legal solution which helps the client focus on their future. I invite you to read the client stories in this annual report. You will see how staff removed legal barriers related to abuse, foreclosure, lack of income and benefits, and created the opportunity to obtain employment.

Partnership – Clients come to us with an average of three distinct legal issues. Staff know that clients need a solid support system to achieve success. Advocates serve on a variety of boards and community task forces in order to understand the local resources available to our clients. They work closely with those resources – local domestic violence safe houses, community action committees, job retraining centers – to help clients directly and to create systems change.

Service – Our staff plays a complex role advocating for our clients, often engaging in a combination of legal strategy and social work. The legal problem is the reason the clients call, but many life issues complicate the effective implementation of a legal solution. At the end of the day, staff have listened, counseled, referred, and engaged community partners to provide non-legal support. This is what we believe is “full service” – drawing together other systems that will empower our clients to create solutions that work for them. Imagine reading the following outcomes as headlines in the newspaper. ‘Family moves into home with safe living conditions.’ ‘Worker receives benefits and avoids foreclosure.’ ‘Person with disability receives SNAP benefits.’ ‘Senior overcomes housing discrimination.’ ‘Mother and daughter escape abusive ex-partner.’ These are the stories that communities in our service area want to hear about every day and we deliver them as a result of our substantial community relationships.

Organizations that are true community resources possess these qualities of hope, partnership and service. We know we can't claim these qualities without an understanding of and dedication to a strong, unifying mission, and a daily commitment to excellence through respect for our client community. At North Penn, we are honored to work for our clients.

I encourage you to support North Penn Legal Services by following us on Facebook, reading the latest news and events on our website, and making a donation to ensure that access to justice is a reality for all.



Victoria A. Coyle
Executive Director



Legal Aid Works

IN NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSING

Jennifer's Story

Jennifer – a single woman in her 40's contacted NPLS' Hazleton Office after she received an eviction notice from her landlord. Our client did not pay her rent because the landlord had not remedied a serious mold problem in her apartment.

After meeting with Jennifer, a NPLS advocate discovered that code enforcement confirmed the mold issue in her apartment. NPLS educated Jennifer about her rights as a tenant. Despite the eviction notice, our client was entitled to some compensation for mold damage to her furniture. NPLS helped the client to prepare letters and obtain a favorable judgment for her furniture.

Jennifer moved out of her unhealthy apartment and received a judgment for \$800 to replace the furniture that was affected with mold. Our client and her fiancé were made aware of their tenant's rights and took action toward habitable housing. Quick action by NPLS' advocate eliminated any health issues that may have risen from the severe mold.

EMPLOYMENT

Robert's Story

Robert – a truck driver in his early 50's who worked for a company disposing of fracking water contacted NPLS' Sunbury Office after he was laid off from his job due to lack of work and then denied unemployment compensation benefits because he was supposedly determined to be self-employed. As a NPLS' advocate discovered during the initial client meeting, Robert contacted the Environmental Protection Agency and blew the whistle on illegal dumping. We won the hearing, and as a result, the client avoided foreclosure on his house.

A NPLS Staff Attorney represented Robert at the unemployment compensation hearing and advocated for benefits. The client won the hearing as a result of NPLS serving as his legal representation.

Robert avoided foreclosure on his house because he was able to obtain unemployment compensation benefits. He has since opened his own business and maintained homeownership.





EMPLOYMENT

John's Story

John – our client in his mid-60's reached out to NPLS after he was denied housing due to his criminal record history.

An advocate from NPLS' Bethlehem Office investigated John's claim that he was discriminated against by a private apartment complex. During the initial phone meeting with the private apartment complex manager, it was made clear that the electronic application system used by prospective tenants automatically rejects applicants if they disclose any criminal history on their application. The apartment complex manager agreed to allow John to reapply for housing after NPLS' advocate explained the convictions on John's record. An apartment became available quickly and our client accepted the unit and signed the lease agreement.

NPLS successfully advocated for John to obtain access to housing despite his criminal record. For the first time, John can make plans for the future without fear that his criminal history will impact his goals.

INCOME MAINTENANCE

William's Story

William – our client in his mid-50's reached out to NPLS when he received a notice that his food stamps were going to be reduced from \$128/month to \$77/month. His total annual income is \$11,448.

Once a NPLS advocate contacted the Department of Human Services to explain that our client's income had not changed, the Department realized an electronic glitch existed in their system on a statewide level.

NPLS successfully advocated for our client to maintain his food stamp benefits at the \$128/monthly level. NPLS' advocate eliminated one barrier for Williams so that he would not have to struggle each month to pay for his food.

H O P E





Partnerships in the Community

CLOSE THE JUSTICE GAP

IN 2016, NPLS STRENGTHENED ITS PARTNERSHIPS TO CLOSE THE JUSTICE GAP.

Partnering with other organizations like local domestic violence agencies to offer legal services through special grants.

Connecting with funders to offer innovative services through projects such as the Lehigh Valley Fair Housing project, housing helpline, and services to domestic violence victims.

Offering online intake for people to apply for services at their convenience – **1,189 people applied online last year.**

Over 122,000 people visited NPLS' website last year.

Visitors to northpennlegal.org accessed helpful information such as our Family Law Handbook, Landlord-Tenant Handbook, and custody videos.

Outreach events at area assisted living centers and nursing homes gave seniors some peace of mind as our advocates created living wills and power of attorney documents.

One of our attorneys in Williamsport served as the liaison to Lycoming County's Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion project.

176 private attorneys accepted 246 pro bono cases.

The value of their time is \$272,145.

Raise A Glass To Justice, an annual event to raise funds for legal aid, linked attorneys and members of the community to crown the "Lawyer Idol" in 2015 and **raise \$17,000.**



THE POWER OF
*Pro Bono & Judicare**

Total number of attorneys who provided case services:
176 PRO BONO AND 26 JUDICARE

Total number of cases accepted:
246 PRO BONO AND 97 JUDICARE

Top three main benefits for 343 cases:
**PROVIDED INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION, OBTAINED
PROTECTIVE ORDERS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
AND OBTAINED ASSISTANCE ON A FAMILY MATTER**

Total number of hours of services provided:
975 PRO BONO AND 500 JUDICARE

Dollar value of pro bono services provided (valued at \$150/hour):
\$226,470

Dollar value of Judicare services provided (valued at \$75/hour):
\$45,675

**Cases referred to private lawyers where conflicts of interest with NPLS exist,
or additional help is needed. Lawyers are paid by NPLS.*





Financial Position

Year ended June 30, 2016 (with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2015)

	2016	2015
ASSETS		
Cash & cash equivalents	\$1,204,825	\$956,903
Client escrow funds	915	699
Accounts receivable:		
PLAN	193,547	119,195
Other	256,596	360,671
Prepaid expenses	95,361	91,778
Property & equipment, net	85,894	132,499
Total Assets	\$1,837,138	\$1,661,745
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable & accrued expenses	\$164,432	\$92,717
Bank overdraft	140,169	—
Accrued compensated absences	110,084	109,922
Client trust deposits	915	699
Total Liabilities	415,600	203,338
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	1,033,501	926,801
Temporarily	388,037	531,606
Total Net Assets	1,421,538	1,458,407
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$1,837,138	\$1,661,745

	Unrestricted 2016	Temporarily Restricted 2016	TOTAL 2016	TOTAL 2015
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES				
<i>Revenues & Other Support:</i>				
Contracts & grants	\$5,366,437	\$2,690	\$5,369,127	\$5,505,233
Contributions:				
In-kind	294,770	—	294,770	187,830
Other	108,567	—	108,567	42,830
Interest income	686	—	686	1,245
Other income	5,550	—	5,550	19,510
Net assets released from restrictions	146,259	(146,259)	—	—
Total revenues & other support	5,922,269	(143,569)	5,778,700	5,756,619
<i>Expenses:</i>				
Program services	5,149,587	—	5,149,587	5,423,753
Management & general	648,666	—	648,666	643,466
Fundraising	17,316	—	17,316	21,281
Total expenses	5,815,569	—	5,815,569	6,088,500
Change in Net Assets	106,700	(143,569)	(36,869)	(331,881)
<i>Net Assets:</i>				
Beginning of year	926,801	531,606	1,458,407	1,790,288
End of year	\$1,033,501	\$388,037	\$1,421,538	\$1,458,407

	2016	2015
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS		
<i>Cash Flows From Operating Activities:</i>		
Change in net assets	(\$36,869)	(\$331,881)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash and cash equivalents provided by (used in) operating activities:		
Depreciation	46,605	90,953
(Increase) decrease in:		
Accounts receivable	29,723	58,432
Prepaid expenses	(3,583)	26,337
(Increase) decrease in:		
Accounts payable & accrued expenses	71,715	(217,704)
Accrued compensated absences	162	(1,359)
Net cash & cash equivalents provided by (used in) operating activities	107,753	(375,222)
<i>Cash Flows From Investing Activities:</i>		
Purchases of equipment	—	(88,113)
Net cash & cash equivalents used in investing activities	—	(88,113)
<i>Cash Flows From Financing Activities:</i>		
Bank overdrafts	140,169	—
Net cash & cash equivalents used in financing activities	140,169	—
Net increase (Decrease) in cash & cash equivalents	247,922	(463,335)
<i>Cash & cash equivalents:</i>		
Beginning of year	956,903	1,420,238
End of year	\$1,204,825	\$956,903

	Program Services 2016	Management & General & General 2016	Fundraising 2016	TOTAL 2016	TOTAL 2015
STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES					
Salaries	\$3,131,818	\$401,778	\$8,164	\$3,541,760	\$3,439,358
Fringe benefits	984,854	136,333	1,020	1,122,207	1,386,780
Consultants & contractors	78,769	9,421	17	88,207	143,616
Travel	42,662	16,876	27	59,565	59,037
Space costs	361,301	27,208	177	388,686	406,500
Consumable supplies	45,365	18,161	29	63,555	123,785
Equipment repairs & maintenance	66,265	14,089	36	80,390	77,034
Donated services contract	68,300	—	—	68,300	—
Other	325,386	23,062	7,846	356,294	361,437
Depreciation	44,867	1,738	—	46,605	90,953
Total expenses	\$5,149,587	\$ 648,666	\$ 17,316	\$ 5,815,569	\$6,088,500



Getting Results

NPLS staff organized **49 clinics** on topics including custody, consumer, and housing issues. **122 people** attended these clinics.

In an attempt to reach the **10,808 applicants** we were otherwise unable to serve, we developed self-help materials, distributed **3,252 pamphlets** and conducted outreach events to **2,354 people**. Materials were also made available on our website and the website itself received **122,050 page views**.

Special projects in 2016 included Homes Affordable Foreclosure Alternatives (HAFA) Program, Special IOLTA Helpline, the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, and the Lehigh Valley Fair Housing Project.





\$2 MILLION

AWARDED TO OUR CLIENTS,
PRIMARILY IN DISABILITY
CASES IN 2015-2016

22,968

PEOPLE PROVIDED
WITH DIRECT SERVICES

11,206

CASES HANDLED

9,204

CASES CLOSED

4,899

CLIENTS PROVIDED
COUNSEL AND ADVICE
OR LIMITED ACTION

3,234

PEOPLE WITH HOUSING ISSUES
HELPED BY NPLS' STAFF

2,667

CASES LITIGATED IN COURT

601

PROTECTION FROM ABUSE
ORDERS OBTAINED

481

CUSTODY AND VISITATION
ORDERS OBTAINED

328

CASES LITIGATED IN
ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS



Legal Aid Works

IN NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA



FORECLOSURE

Michael's Story

Michael – a man in his late 40's received mortgage foreclosure papers from a bank and contacted NPLS for assistance with saving his home.

NPLS' pro bono attorney agreed to represent Michael with his foreclosure case. The pro bono attorney negotiated with the bank's recovery officer and legal counsel to stop Michael's foreclosure. Michael's attorney proposed a plan to pay the arrears and get Michael's loan current. He also assisted Michael in submitting an application for an emergency loan through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. Fortunately, the hearing officer recommend that Michael receive an emergency loan which made the mortgage current and stopped the foreclosure process.

Michael was able to maintain homeownership, take the opportunity for a new beginning to assess future plans, and rebuild his credit history.

PARTNERSHIP

CONSUMER FINANCE

Maria's Story

Maria – a single woman in her early 30's contacted NPLS when she could no longer afford her debt payments on credit cards, student loans, and medical bills. Maria's car was repossessed and she was drowning in debt from a \$30,000 student loan.

A NPLS Advocate contacted a Judicare attorney who specializes in bankruptcy. The Judicare attorney worked with Maria to complete a pre-bankruptcy checklist that included credit counseling, conducting a personal property audit, and disclosure of other income. Maria's Chapter 7 bankruptcy was filed and approved by the trustee.

Bankruptcy was the legal tool that Maria needed to rebuild her credit and provide her the fresh start to evaluate her future plans. Relieving Maria's student loan, medical debt, and other obligations was the first step toward improving her difficult financial situation.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Elizabeth's Story

Elizabeth – a woman in her mid-20's with a two-year-old daughter, contacted NPLS for help with a Protection From Abuse Order and custody issue. She moved to Pennsylvania to escape her ex-partner who lived in Ohio. After the child's father located both Elizabeth and her daughter, she immediately reached out to NPLS to find out how our advocates could help her.

A NPLS Judicare attorney obtained an emergency Protection From Abuse Order for Elizabeth and secured temporary custody of the child through the Protection From Abuse Order. A permanent Protection From Abuse Order was obtained.

The Judicare attorney worked with Elizabeth and her daughter to achieve a legal solution that created a safe environment for this family. Both Elizabeth and her daughter can now live free from violence.

NORTH PENN LEGAL SERVICES

Locations

BRADFORD & SUSQUEHANNA COUNTIES

Towanda Office 213 Main Street, Suite 1, Towanda, PA 18848
P: 877-515-7732 • F: 570-534-0976

CARBON & LUZERNE COUNTIES

Hazleton Office 101 West Broad Street, Suite 513, Hazleton, PA 18201
P: 570-455-9512 • Toll Free: 877-515-7628 • F: 570-455-3625

CLINTON, LYCOMING & TIOGA COUNTIES

Williamsport Office 25 West Third Street, Suite 400, Williamsport, PA 17701
P: 570-323-8741 • Toll Free: 800-326-7436 • F: 570-323-5256

COLUMBIA & MONTOUR COUNTIES

Bloomsburg Office 168 East Fifth Street, Bloomsburg, PA 17815-2206
P: 570-784-8760 • Toll Free: 877-515-7079 • F: 570-784-4840
To access services, call 1-877-953-4250
Office will close on December 31, 2016

LACKAWANNA, LUZERNE, SULLIVAN & WYOMING COUNTIES

Services Provided by Pittston Office
33 North Main Street, Suite 200, Pittston, PA 18640
P: 570-299-4100 • Toll Free: 855-236-6405 • F: 570-824-0001

LEHIGH & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

Bethlehem Office 559 Main Street, Suite 200, Bethlehem, PA 18018
P: 610-317-8757 • F: 610-317-8778

MONROE & PIKE COUNTIES

Stroudsburg Office 10 North Tenth Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360
P: 570-424-5338 • Toll Free: 800-532-8282 • F: 570-754-8508

NORTHUMBERLAND, SNYDER & UNION COUNTIES

Sunbury Office 133 North Second Street, Sunbury, PA 17801
P: 570-286-5687 • Toll Free: 877-515-7730 • F: 570-286-2203

WAYNE COUNTY

Honesdale Office Wayne County Courthouse, 925 Court Street, Honesdale, PA 18431
P: 877-515-7465 • F: 570-754-8510



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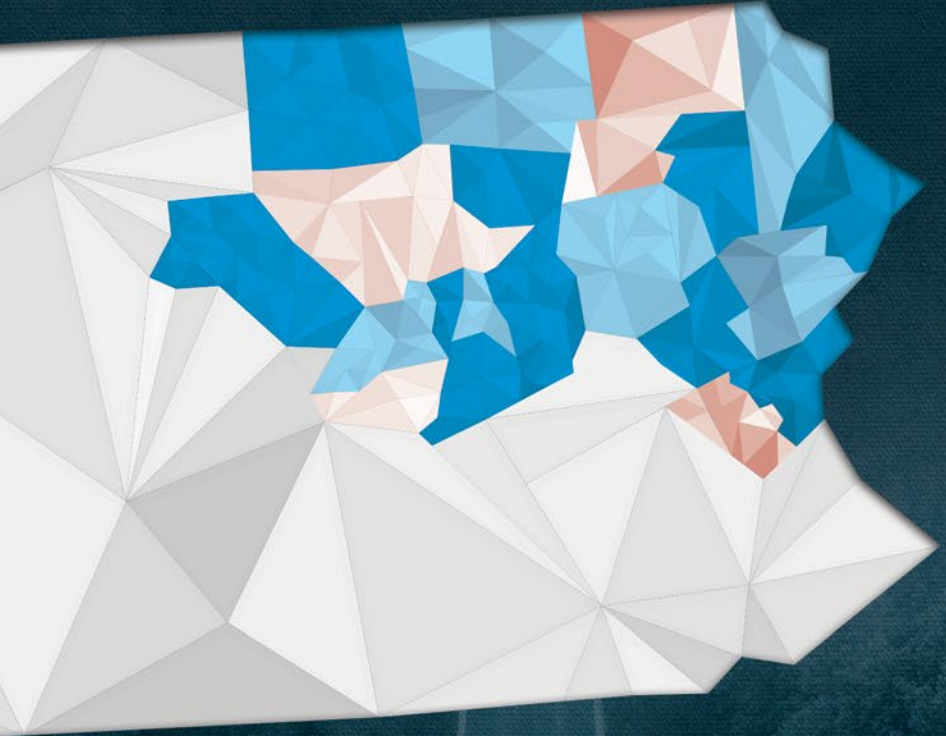
Linda Yarrison

Lycoming County

SERVING 20 COUNTIES

in Northeast Pennsylvania

TIOGA • BRADFORD • SUSQUEHANNA • WAYNE • CLINTON
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North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

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