



**North Penn**  
LEGAL SERVICES

**NAVIGATING**  
THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

2018 - 2019 ANNUAL REPORT







## North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

# NAVIGATING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The justice system can be complicated and confusing, and often people feel lost. By acting as a guide through information, advice or representation, and by providing education and self-help materials through our community outreaches and on northpennlegal.org, NPLS helps disadvantaged people to find the services and resources they need to keep them on the path to equal justice.

**NPLS is committed to helping those in need to successfully navigate the justice system.**

## WHAT WE DO

As a regional provider of civil legal aid for more than 50 years, North Penn Legal Services helps low-income people throughout 20 counties in Northeast Pennsylvania. NPLS has nine offices with a staff of 75, including 33 attorneys and 19 paralegals.

The staff's 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



For the most vulnerable in our communities, the stakes are high when they are faced with a civil legal problem. Navigating the legal system is daunting, and we worked hard this year to chart a course for our program to most effectively help our clients and advocate for the best possible solutions to their unique circumstances. Whether in court or at an administrative hearing to obtain protection from abuse, avoid eviction or foreclosure, obtain essential health and public benefits, break down barriers to employment caused by criminal records, or deal with a predatory collection practices, North Penn Legal Services staff and pro bono attorneys were there to zealously advocate with and on behalf of our clients.

Over 2 million people live in Northeast Pennsylvania, and almost 17% live in poverty. To address their many legal problems, we have obtained additional funding for staff to be able to provide critical, targeted services and expand access to justice. Our mission is to help solve individual civil legal problems and to empower our clients and communities as they confront new problems. We know our own and national studies show that this work benefits our communities with increased health and well-being of thousands of people. But it also has economic impact because we help reduce housing instability, homelessness, food insecurity, and fear of domestic violence.

And we are looking to the future by developing important new projects which target reducing trauma and increasing economic impact in our most vulnerable communities. We are working on an exciting community development project in Scranton, an expanded domestic violence project in the Lehigh Valley, a new Medical Legal Partnership in Williamsport, and increased housing work throughout the program area. We have helped train new justice advocates by hosting two, two-year legal fellows and six summer law students, in addition to interns and volunteers throughout the year.

All this would not be possible without the dedication and support of our amazing staff, donors, funders, community partners, and volunteers. The NPLS Board of Directors and staff thank you all for your support, engagement, and encouragement in sharing this struggle for justice. Working together, we help those in greatest need to navigate the justice system and find their path to successful outcomes.

*Lori A. Molloy*

Lori A. Molloy  
Executive Director



# NAVIGATING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

## IN UNION, MONTGOMERY, COLUMBIA, SNYDER, & NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTIES

Karen, a client with disabilities, came to NPLS with a Medicaid over-payment of approximately \$1,300. She was receiving Medical Assistance but had earned too much for three months and was ordered to repay her medical coverage for three months of 2018. The NPLS attorney helped her file an appeal and set up a conference with the DHS. The advocate was able to confirm that she would have been eligible for the MAWD program, which is Medical Assistance for the Working Disabled. MAWD has a higher income allowance which covered the three months. As a result, the over-payment was rescinded and the appeal was withdrawn. Karen will now be able to receive ongoing MAWD medical coverage, get the medical care she needs and continue working.

# NAVIGATING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

## IN TIOGA, BRADFORD, CLINTON, LYCOMING, & SULLIVAN COUNTIES

Prior to contact with NPLS, Mary's ex-husband kidnapped their three sons and took them to a distant foreign country. She was able to successfully get her children back. Mary contacted NPLS after her ex-husband started demanding that she return the children to his country. The NPLS advocate reviewed the custody deed from the ex-husband's country and the Custody Stipulation Order from the Pennsylvania County and gave her advice on how to proceed. The attorney also discussed safety planning and follow-up on her earlier case. Using the advice given and the increased understanding of her legal rights, Mary was able to resolve the situation and the children remain in her custody.



# PARTNERSHIPS IN THE COMMUNITY

IN 2018 - 2019, NPLS STRENGTHENED  
ITS PARTNERSHIPS AND OPENED  
DOORS TO JUSTICE.

The NPLS website received **153,500** (estimated) page views. Visitors to northpennlegal.org accessed helpful information such as our Employment Handbook, Self-Help Handbook for Tenants, Family Law Handbook and custody videos.

2019 marked the eighth year of our annual Raise a Glass to Justice event, raising more than **\$12,800** for legal aid.

In the past year, we presented Continuing Legal Education for pro bono attorneys on representing domestic violence survivors seeking protection orders in Lycoming and Lehigh County.

NPLS hosted the 2019 Fair Housing Summit at Northampton Community College, and also presented fair housing information throughout the Lehigh Valley at 18 outreach events, meetings, and brochure locations.

We thank the Northampton and Monroe County Bar Associations for their continued support during the last fiscal year.

NPLS continued our extensive outreaches with Head Start on public benefits and to community organizations on a range of legal issues, from barriers to employment for persons with criminal records, to housing law and conditions, to mortgage foreclosure and trainings for seniors.

NPLS reached more than **6,200** people at community outreach events during the 2018 - 2019 fiscal year.



## THE POWER OF PRO BONO & JUDICARE\*

Total number of attorneys who provided case services:  
**130 PRO BONO & 33 JUDICARE**

Total number of cases accepted:  
**391 PRO BONO & 280 JUDICARE**

Top three main benefits for 671 cases:

- 1. OBTAINED PROTECTIVE ORDERS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**
- 2. PROVIDED INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION.**
- 3. OBTAINED ADVICE, BRIEF SERVICES OR REFERRAL ON A HOUSING MATTER.**

Total number of pro bono hours provided:  
**1,060**

Dollar value of pro bono services provided  
(valued at \$150/hour):  
**\$158,955**

\*Cases referred to private lawyers where staff is not available to help. Lawyers are paid by NPLS.





# North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

## FINANCIAL POSITION

Year ended June 30, 2019

(with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2018)

REVENUE & OTHER SUPPORT	2019	2018
Grants & Contracts	\$6,601,056	\$6,002,818
Contributions: In-Kind	\$152,865	\$101,715
Other	\$68,692	\$73,884
Interest Income	\$4,423	\$923
Other	\$8,542	\$20,033
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Other Support</b>	<b>\$6,835,578</b>	<b>\$6,199,373</b>
EXPENSES	2019	2018
Program Services	\$5,838,967	\$5,362,556
Management & General	\$748,510	\$663,808
Fundraising	\$12,826	\$10,431
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$6,600,303</b>	<b>\$6,036,795</b>

## GETTING RESULTS

**\$3.5 MILLION**

Awarded to our clients, primarily in disability cases

**15,337**

People provided with direct services

**9,898**

Cases handled

**7,037**

Cases closed

**4,112**

Clients provided with counsel  
and advice or limited action

**5,162**

People with housing issues helped by NPLS staff

**1,906**

Cases litigated in court

**652**

Protection from abuse orders obtained

**367**

Custody and visitation orders obtained

**248**

Cases litigated in administrative tribunals

**4,301**

Online intakes received, a more than  
45% increase from the previous year

**153,500**

Online page views of NPLS' resource materials  
(estimated)

**391**

Pro bono cases accepted by 130 private attorneys

**280**

Cases accepted by 33 judicare attorneys



# NAVIGATING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

**IN CARBON, MONROE, PIKE,  
LEHIGH, & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES**

Nicole is 85 years old and was being unfairly targeted by the manager of her property, which is low-income tax credit housing. The manager was attempting to not renew the lease and evict her by claiming unspecified “various circumstances.” When questioned, the manager said that Nicole was physically abusive towards her, but there was no supporting evidence and our client disputed this claim. Nicole’s sister, who has Power of Attorney and was working directly with NPLS, felt that the building manager had a “vendetta” for no legitimate reason. The NPLS attorney was able to argue that the eviction was without good cause and prevent the eviction. We also negotiated a reasonable accommodation of her disability, and in future the manager will not enter Nicole’s home without a third party present and will direct any non-emergency issues to Nicole’s sister.



# NAVIGATING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

**IN SUSQUEHANNA, WAYNE, WYOMING,  
LUZERNE, & LACKAWANNA COUNTIES**

Sophie and Mark are a married couple in their mid-thirties who were struggling to make their mortgage payments. They were sued by their bank after failing to meet their monthly mortgage obligations. Both clients were working, but Mark had to take a leave from work because he was injured. We helped Sophie and Mark apply for the Diversion Program in Lackawanna County, and represented them at all of their hearings. We also had a thorough discussion on prioritizing bills and increasing their income to help get them back on track. We submitted a loss mitigation packet and they were approved for a trial modification. As part of the modification, Sophie and Mark now pay into an escrow account in addition to making their monthly mortgage payments. Even with the added escrow account their overall payments increased by only \$95, an amount they were more than able to meet after working to better budget their money. Sophie and Mark have successfully saved their home from foreclosure.



# NORTH PENN LEGAL SERVICES LOCATIONS

## BRADFORD & SUSQUEHANNA COUNTIES

**Towanda Office** 213 Main Street, Ste. 1, Towanda, PA 18848  
P: 877-515-7732 ♦ F: 570-534-0976

## CARBON & LUZERNE COUNTIES

**Hazleton Office** 101 W. Broad St., Ste. 713, Hazleton, PA 18201  
P: 570-455-9512 ♦ Toll Free: 877-515-7628 ♦ F: 570-455-3625

## CLINTON, LYCOMING & TIOGA COUNTIES

**Williamsport Office** 25 W. 3rd St., Ste. 400, Williamsport, PA 17701  
P: 570-323-8741 ♦ Toll Free: 800-326-7436 ♦ F: 570-323-5256

## COLUMBIA & MONTOUR COUNTIES

**Bloomsburg Office** 168 E. 5th St., Bloomsburg, PA 17815  
P: 570-784-8760 ♦ Toll Free: 877-515-7079 ♦ F: 570-784-4840

## LACKAWANNA, LUZERNE, SULLIVAN & WYOMING COUNTIES

**Pittston Office** 33 N. Main St., Ste. 200, Pittston, PA 18640  
P: 570-299-4100 ♦ Toll Free: 855-236-6405 ♦ F: 570-824-0001

## LEHIGH & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

**Bethlehem Office** 559 Main St., Ste. 200, Bethlehem, PA 18018  
P: 610-317-8757 ♦ F: 610-317-8778

## MONROE & PIKE COUNTIES

**Stroudsburg Office** 10 N. 10th St., Stroudsburg, PA 18360  
P: 570-424-5338 ♦ Toll Free: 800-532-8282 ♦ F: 570-754-8508

## NORTHUMBERLAND, SNYDER & UNION COUNTIES

**Sunbury Office** 133 N. 2nd St., 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 St., Honesdale, PA 18431  
P: 877-515-7465 ♦ F: 570-754-8510



## North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

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# SERVING 20 COUNTIES IN NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

Bradford ♦ Carbon ♦ Clinton ♦ Columbia ♦ Lackawanna  
Lehigh ♦ Luzerne ♦ Lycoming ♦ Monroe ♦ Montour  
Northampton ♦ Northumberland ♦ Pike ♦ Snyder ♦ Sullivan  
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## North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

**877-953-4250**  
NORTHPENNLEGAL.ORG



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