

Leading The Way
YOU made the difference

*Legal Advocates For
Low-income Families*



Our mission is to provide civil legal
representation to low-income people and
ensure equal access to justice for all.

YOU made the difference.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Staff and volunteers organized two special events in 2012.
- Bar Associations made significant financial contributions to NPLS this year.

PRO BONO SERVICE

- Private attorneys donated their services, time, and talent to provide legal services.
- 394 low-income people received free legal services from pro bono attorneys.

RESULTS

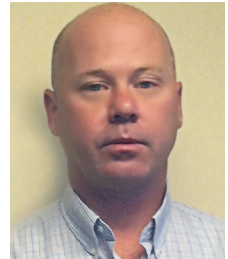
- NPLS' total economic stimulus effect on local economies in our area was \$9,982,065
- The Lehigh Valley Fair Housing Project completed its first full year.



Message from the Executive Director



*Victoria A. Coyle,
Executive Director*



*Eugene C. Kelley, Esq.,
Board President*

When NPLS was founded 48 years ago, its goal was to provide access to justice for everyone. Despite recent cutbacks, we have been able to continue our legal aid services for vulnerable populations. Over the past year, we have accepted 7,363 clients for legal representation and maintained a high quality of service. To the people of Northeast PA, we are truly leading the way—and you made the difference.

With the backing of our supporters, we can continue to keep clients safe, secure, and productive in the community. Our commitment to quality has given our clients the peace of mind they need through our legal services, and it is thanks to our volunteers and donors that the people of Northeast PA are able to turn to us when in need.

Our five-year MF grant from the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network will continue to help sustain our work, saving homes and assisting homeowners, and the Lehigh Valley Fair Housing Project, which began in fiscal year 2011-12, has raised awareness and funds for low-income victims of housing discrimination.

The Domestic Violence Services Center—a local domestic violence organization in Luzerne County—has also made the OVW: A Safe Place Project possible, providing information and assistance for victims of domestic violence and children in need.

Two fundraisers, held by NPLS staff and private attorneys, raised a combined \$15,000, and the efforts of a new client board member raised money to help our Bloomsburg office keep operating.

The work we do for our clients would not be possible without your support. For NPLS and Northeast PA, you do make the difference.

NPLS will continue to post volunteer and donor listings on its website. We value the support of our volunteers and donors and hope that this will continue to improve the accuracy of the listings.

Client Impact Stories

Support for Families

Client Story: Abigail. Abigail struggled with drugs and criminal activity since 2005. She left her child in her mother's care and went in and out of jail and rehab for the next few years, she made great progress. Once she was back at home, she was able to keep her child with her on weekends, but her mother suddenly cut off all contact. Abigail came to NPLS, who helped her file for custody of her child. Right before the hearing, her mother agreed to give the child to Abigail. Thanks to NPLS, Abigail and her mother did not have to go to court, and she is able to take care of her child.

Safety:

Client Story: Maria. Maria was the victim of abuse and assault, as well as a former client of NPLS in a custody matter. She came to NPLS again for help with a restraining order against her abuser. NPLS helped her to obtain a 3-year order of protection, as well as over \$1500 in compensation for the physical abuse and cost of getting pictures from the emergency room that treated her. NPLS also negotiated to avoid a counter-order of protection against Maria by entering into a non-contact stipulation, keeping her safe from her abuser and out of legal trouble.

Economic Stability:

Client Story: Francis. Francis was a 92-year-old woman who signed a renewal of her lease at \$565 a month, right before she was accepted into an elderly subsidized housing project. She tried to get out of the lease, but the landlord wouldn't allow it. Francis and her daughter, who co-signed the lease, couldn't afford to pay for two places of residence for Francis each month, and they contacted NPLS for help.

An NPLS attorney began getting in touch with the landlord to convince him to release Francis from the agreement. During this time, Francis and her daughter made efforts to find a tenant to replace her. When they did, the landlord and Francis were able to resolve the problem, with someone else moving into the apartment and Francis getting back most of her security deposit and moving comfortably into her new home.

Client Story: Rosa. Rosa came into financial difficulty when she was billed for a medical procedure costing over \$14,000. At the time, she had given the hospital her ACCESS card, and was given the services she needed. Later, she was told that she was not covered for her procedure. The Welfare Office had terminated her benefits, but failed to let her know.

Rosa contacted NPLS, and an attorney began negotiating with the hospital. The attorney pointed out that under welfare regulations, if the hospital is a participant in Medicare, they have an obligation to confirm that ACCESS cards are active, something they neglected to do. Because of this, they had no leg to stand on, and agreed to withdraw their claim for the \$14,000. Rosa was able to rest easy, knowing that she had no debt.



Populations with Special Vulnerabilities:

Client Story: Jane. Jane's husband was admitted to a nursing home, and she needed assistance paying the fees for his stay there. However, the local Community Assistance Office denied Jane's application for medical assistance, because they believed that Jane and her husband had given a great deal of money away. In truth, they were victimized by a scam artist and lost tens of thousands of dollars, making it difficult to get by and almost impossible to get assistance.

NPLS received a referral to help Jane, who was being forced to pay the nursing home fees after her husband's death. An NPLS attorney underwent several months of negotiations with the Community Assistance Office. Finally, they agreed to grant a hardship waiver to pay the nursing home for their time and care, allowing Jane some peace of mind.

Client Story: Luis. Luis is a deaf man who communicates entirely through sign language, and has limited written English literacy. His sister came to NPLS to ask for help when the Housing Authority tried to evict him from his apartment, based on accusations that he had allowed his friend or partner to live with him. The Housing Authority met with Luis to tell him their accusations, but did not provide an ASL interpreter, instead communicating through Luis' sister, who can only sign the alphabet. They never used an interpreter to explain the lease or Housing Authority rules. The NPLS attorney requested reasonable accommodations in order to allow Luis to stay in his apartment and to help him understand the rules. The Housing Authority decided not to evict him, explained the rules and lease through an interpreter, and made sure Luis would bring an advocate to future Housing Authority meetings. Luis now has an advocate through the Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, and was able to stay in public housing.

Preserving Your Home

Client Story: Smith Family. When the Smith family began the process of foreclosure, deciding to give up their house and move, they came to NPLS for advice each step of the way. One morning, they called their NPLS attorney, frantic. They had purchased a new home and were ready to move out, but there was a problem with the closing on their new house. The bank was to take their home that day, but they couldn't make the move yet. With the bank waiting to take their house and the new house not yet ready, the Smiths had nowhere to go with their child, two dogs, and three cats.

The NPLS attorney requested an extension, and even though they were opposed by the bank, the judge allowed it, delaying the bank by one week and giving the Smiths the time they needed for the closing to finish. Soon, they were able to make the move peacefully and got settled in their new home.



Client Story: Rob. Rob lived in a mobile home park, where he owned his trailer outright but had to pay rent for the land where he was staying. After he became disabled and lost his job, he fell behind on the rent, and the park threatened to evict him. Rob came to NPLS to ask for help. He had no income, so he had applied for disability, but was not yet receiving any money from Social Security. An NPLS attorney began negotiating with the park, keeping him from being evicted and creating a plan for Rob to begin paying when his disability began. He was able to pay his taxes and rent in full, and remain in his home.

7

\$302,016

Saved in support for families.

7

\$45,000

Created in savings for populations with special vulnerabilities.

7

\$622,836

Saved in domestic violence abuse costs.

7

\$1,952,500

Saved in domestic violence abuse costs.

7

\$5,366,702

Brought into the state of Pennsylvania in federal funds.

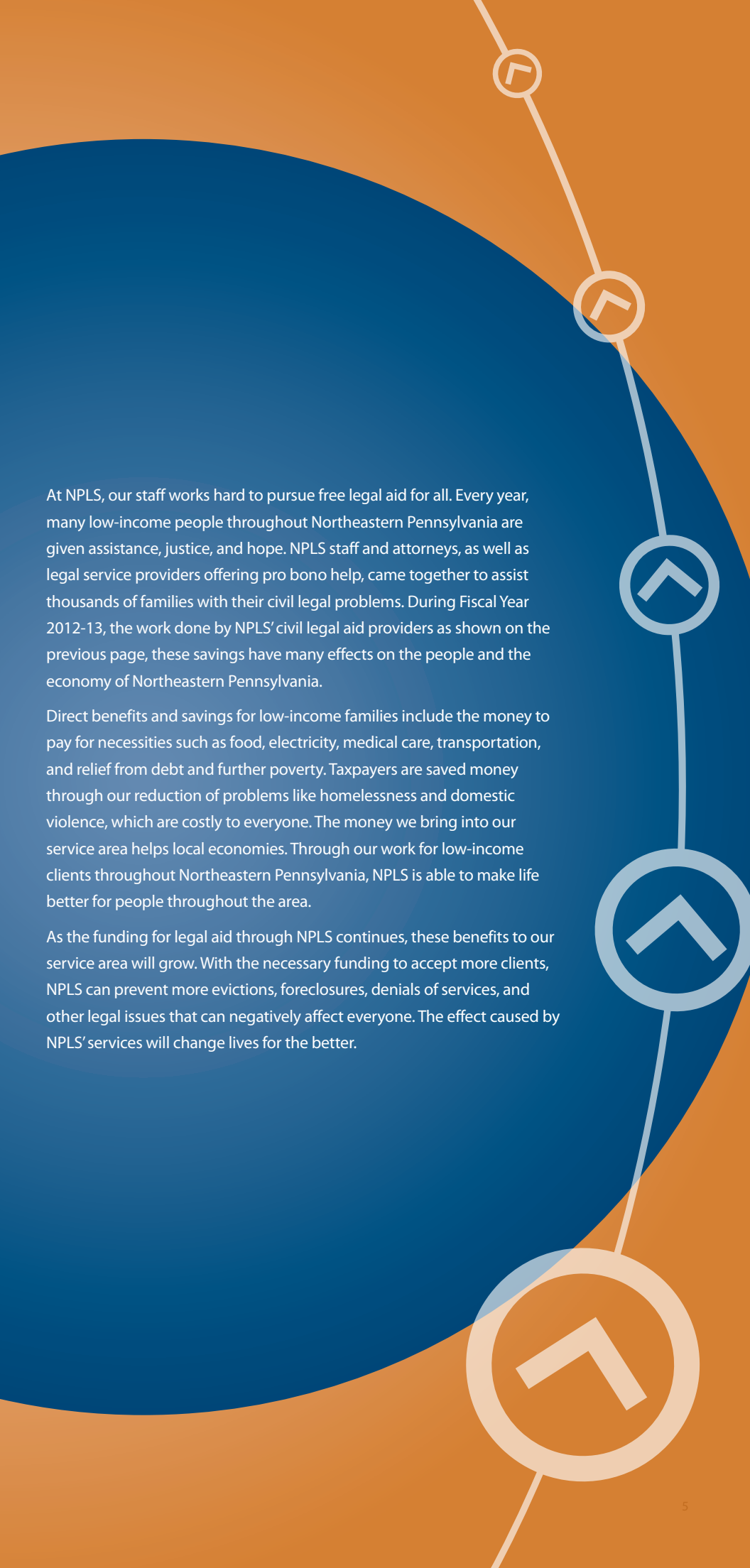
7

\$9,982,065

Total effect on local economies in our service area when using the PA community development economic multiplier of 1.86

Economic Impacts

By providing civil legal aid, we have a strong and direct impact on segments of our communities.



At NPLS, our staff works hard to pursue free legal aid for all. Every year, many low-income people throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania are given assistance, justice, and hope. NPLS staff and attorneys, as well as legal service providers offering pro bono help, came together to assist thousands of families with their civil legal problems. During Fiscal Year 2012-13, the work done by NPLS' civil legal aid providers as shown on the previous page, these savings have many effects on the people and the economy of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Direct benefits and savings for low-income families include the money to pay for necessities such as food, electricity, medical care, transportation, and relief from debt and further poverty. Taxpayers are saved money through our reduction of problems like homelessness and domestic violence, which are costly to everyone. The money we bring into our service area helps local economies. Through our work for low-income clients throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania, NPLS is able to make life better for people throughout the area.

As the funding for legal aid through NPLS continues, these benefits to our service area will grow. With the necessary funding to accept more clients, NPLS can prevent more evictions, foreclosures, denials of services, and other legal issues that can negatively affect everyone. The effect caused by NPLS' services will change lives for the better.

Financial Position

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2013 (with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2012)

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,278,327	\$662,543
Client escrow funds	1,514	40,412
Accounts receivable		
PLAN	210,620	330,624
Other	331,429	314,186
Prepaid expenses	169,717	98,020
Property and equipment - net	<u>149,815</u>	<u>212,124</u>
Total assets	<u>\$2,141,422</u>	<u>\$1,657,909</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$116,997	\$68,282
Accrued compensated absences	106,769	105,970
Client trust deposits	1,514	40,412
Line of credit	<u>100,000</u>	<u>—</u>
Total liabilities	<u>325,280</u>	<u>214,664</u>
Net assets		
Unrestricted	976,349	860,642
Temporarily restricted	<u>839,793</u>	<u>582,603</u>
Total net assets	<u>1,816,142</u>	<u>1,443,245</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$2,141,422</u>	<u>\$1,657,909</u>
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS		
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	\$372,897	\$(5,291)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash and cash equivalents provided by (used in) operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	81,169	83,258
(Increase) decrease in:		
Accounts receivable	102,761	(2,574)
Prepaid expenses	(71,697)	7,093
Increase (decrease) in:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	48,713	(109,104)
Accrued compensated absences	<u>799</u>	<u>(11,277)</u>
Net cash equivalents provided by (used in) operating activities	<u>534,642</u>	<u>(37,895)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchases of equipment	<u>(18,858)</u>	<u>—</u>
Net cash and cash equivalents (used in) investing activities	<u>(18,858)</u>	<u>—</u>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Proceeds from line of credit	<u>100,000</u>	<u>—</u>
Net cash and cash equivalents provided by financing activities	<u>100,000</u>	<u>—</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	615,784	(37,895)
Cash and cash equivalents		
Beginning of year	<u>662,543</u>	<u>700,438</u>
End of year	<u>\$1,278,327</u>	<u>\$662,543</u>

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted 2013	Temporarily Restricted 2013	Total 2013	Total 2012
Revenues and other support				
Contracts and grants	\$5,165,027	\$266,295	\$5,431,322	\$5,425,937
Contributions				
In-kind	194,213	-	194,213	240,833
Other	61,630	-	61,630	39,550
DAP equitable payments	14,554	-	14,554	42,824
Interest income	1,427	-	1,427	1,817
Other income	306	-	306	3,866
Net assets released from restrictions	9,105	(9,105)	-	-
Total revenues and other support	<u>\$5,446,262,400</u>	<u>257,190</u>	<u>5,703,452</u>	<u>5,754,827</u>
Expenses				
Program services	4,648,758	--	4,648,758	5,066,827
Management and general	626,948	--	626,948	632,447
Fundraising	54,849	--	54,849	60,844
Total expenses	<u>5,330,555</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>5,330,555</u>	<u>5,760,118</u>
Change in net assets	115,707	257,190	372,897	(5,291)
Net assets - beginning	<u>860,642</u>	<u>582,603</u>	<u>1,443,245</u>	<u>1,448,536</u>
Net assets - ending	<u><u>\$976,349</u></u>	<u><u>\$839,793</u></u>	<u><u>\$1,443,245</u></u>	<u><u>1,443,245</u></u>

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

	Program Management & Services 2013	General 2013	Fundraising 2013	Total 2013	Total 2012
Salaries	\$2,695,032	\$399,525	\$32,002	\$3,126,559	\$3,505,809
Fringe benefits	982,914	135,964	12,362	1,131,240	1,195,507
Consultants and contractors	72,657	1,365	-	74,322	78,129
Travel	24,853	11,623	-	36,476	44,161
Space costs	402,801	15,036	-	417,837	428,409
Consumable supplies	52,259	13,618	-	65,877	38,562
Equipment repairs and maintenance	27,988	20,415	-	48,403	39,074
Other	314,882	23,305	10,485	348,672	347,209
Depreciation and amortization	75,072	6,097	-	81,169	83,258
Total expenses	<u><u>\$4,648,758</u></u>	<u><u>\$626,948</u></u>	<u><u>\$54,849</u></u>	<u><u>\$5,330,555</u></u>	<u><u>5,760,118</u></u>

Getting Results:

North Penn Legal Services Outcomes for 2012-2013 Program Year

- Handled 10,839 cases.
- Closed 7,363 cases, in which we provided direct services that helped 15,130 people:
 - Litigated 2,429 cases in court, and 381 in administrative tribunals.
 - Enhanced our clients' economic security by obtaining awards totaling \$2.7 million, primarily in disability cases, plus relieving clients of \$5.3 million in debt through bankruptcy, litigation defense, and negotiation.
 - Obtained 657 Protection From Abuse Orders and 400 custody and visitation orders.
 - Provided counsel and advice or limited action to 3,828 clients.
- In an attempt to reach eligible applicants we were otherwise unable to serve, we developed self-help materials, distributed 2,327 pamphlets and conducted outreach events to 1,310 people. Materials were also made available on our website and the website itself received 131,260 page views.
- North Penn Legal Services launched its new online application system, OASYS in 2013. This system provides a way for people in need of legal aid to complete intake at any time. Since January 2013, over 1,000 people applied for services through OASYS. To use OASYS, users go to www.northpennlegal.org and click on the OASYS banner. Individuals are taken to a secure website and asked to fill in information about their problem, the identity of anyone else involved in their legal matter, and their household finances. After completing the application, users' requests are reviewed by North Penn Legal staff in order to give low-income people the help they need.



Pro Bono Success

Helen is an 80-year-old woman who contacted NPLS offices last March to get help for her son, who has Huntington's disease and an alcohol problem. He was previously in an assisted living facility, but no facility would accept him, and his siblings were unwilling to help. Helen wanted to make him a ward of the State, so that he could get the help he wasn't getting. A local attorney who did not have expertise in this area, brought in another pro bono attorney to handle the case directly. He helped out with the case pro bono, and paid the legal fees out of his own pocket, saving Helen almost \$5000 and getting her son the help he needed.

The Power of Pro Bono and Judicare*

	<i>Pro Bono</i>	<i>Judicare</i>
Total number of attorneys who provided case services	217	26
Total number of cases accepted by pro bono attorneys	394	47
Total number of open pro bono cases pending	289	46
Total number of hours of services provided	1,304	239
Dollar value of services provided (valued at \$150.00/hr.)		\$195,675
Dollar value of judicare services provided (valued at \$75.00/hour)		\$17,940

*"Judicare" = compensated representation of NPLS referred clients, but at a very low hourly rate.





Fundraising Events

Last year, North Penn Legal Service held two fundraisers in order to continue supporting low-income families around Northeastern Pennsylvania. As a successful year helping those in need continued, it was great to see two very successful fundraisers, which demonstrated strong NPLS and bar association partnerships.

In August, the “Raise a Glass to Justice” event was held in Northampton County, with food, a complimentary glass of wine, and musical entertainment for donors in attendance. Over \$12,000 was raised at the event, along with awareness of the duties NPLS performs.

“Serving Up Justice For All” was the second event, held in November in Northumberland County. Donors in attendance connected with friends and colleagues and enjoy some wine and cheese. NPLS staff attorney Joe DeChristopher and his band, Lawson & Disorder, provided musical entertainment. Guests were pleased to be part of an event that raised almost \$3,000 for North Penn Legal Services’ continued work.

Neither of these events would have been possible without the motivation and support of local bar associations.

Special Projects

Homes Affordable Foreclosure Alternatives (HAFA) Program

The HAFA Program was set up in order to represent the legal needs of clients at risk of or defending residential mortgage foreclosure. NPLS staff helped 65 clients before or during filing, when there is a need for legal representation to avoid foreclosure, or when clients are in arrears or defending a foreclosure case in court.

OVW: A Safe Place Project

During the three-year period of October 2012 through September 2015, North Penn Legal Services is acting as a partner of the Domestic Violence Services Center in Luzerne as part of the OVW: A Safe Place Project. This year, NPLS provided information, education, and consultations for project staff and participants, who included victims of domestic violence and dependent children.

Special IOLTA Consumer Project

Since July of last year, under a grant from Pennsylvania’s IOLTA program, qualifying clients in NPLS’ region with consumer issues have been receiving assistance from our central consumer advocate. Clients with issues such as harassment by collectors, fraudulent claims by supposed pay day lenders, disputes with their bank, and debt collection lawsuits filed against them have been advised, assisted or represented.

Many new clients have been able to speak with an attorney the same day they applied for service, which has allowed the Program to quickly address client concerns. Because most new clients with consumer issues speak with one advocate, it has allowed North Penn to quickly identify and respond to trending consumer issues.





Lehigh Valley Fair Housing Project: Building a Fair and Affordable Lehigh Valley

Background

In the fall of 2010, Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton, along with Northampton and Lehigh Counties, came together to form the Lehigh Valley Fair Housing Project. After the Northampton Department of Community and Economic Development contacted NPLS, we became part of the project in order to help Lehigh Valley residents with their fair housing problems. The official start of the project came on January 1, 2012, and since then, we have been providing materials, doing outreach and education programs, and offering legal aid related to fair housing.

Current Activities

The Fair Housing Project has grown this year, with a dedicated staff, TV announcements, and more outreach and legal aid. We have created a new booklet about hoarding and home maintenance issues, and handbooks, posters, and other materials are available to the public.

Outcomes

This year, NPLS has helped 72 people with their fair housing cases. We held outreach events and education sessions, culminating in an outreach event with 80 people in attendance, distributed posters, and released the hoarding and landlord-tenant handbooks. In 2013, our advocates reached a milestone of educating 1,000 people about fair housing.

During Fair Housing Awareness Month in April, we implemented a bus and van awareness campaign. Two local cable providers featured our fair housing advertisement and an opinion piece was published by one of our local newspapers. NPLS advocates attended local housing meetings throughout the Lehigh Valley, and served as the fair housing resource for local community organizations, housing authorities, and county and city governments. NPLS also offered members of the Lehigh Valley Association of Realtors training on fair housing issues six times during the course of last year.

County Offices

Luzerne/Lackawanna Counties
Pittston
855.236.6405 | 570.299.4100

Carbon County
570.455.9512 | 877.515.7628

Monroe/Pike Counties
Stroudsburg
800.532.8282 | 570.424.5338

Lehigh/Northampton Counties
Bethlehem
610.317.8757

Wyoming/Sullivan Counties
Tunkhannock
877.515.7738

Bradford County
Towanda
877.515.7732

Wayne County
Honesdale
877.515.7465

Lycoming/Clinton/Tioga Counties
Williamsport
800.326.7436 | 570.323.8741

Columbia/Montour Counties
Bloomsburg
570.784.8760 | 877.515.7079

Northumberland/Snyder/Union Counties
Sunbury
570.286.5687 | 877.515.7730

To apply for services, call toll free
1-877-9-LEGAL-0
(1-877-953-4250)
northpennlegal.org

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What We Do

As a regional provider of free civil legal aid, NPLS helps low-income people in 20 Pennsylvania counties. A not-for-profit organization, NPLS understands the problems and issues affecting low-income people. NPLS works to protect the poor by providing 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.



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

*Legal Advocates For
Low-income Families*

NPLS

NORTH PENN LEGAL SERVICES



Online intake is now available.
Apply anytime online at northpennlegal.org