Overview of Achievements, 2018-2019

LASNNY staff and volunteers closed 10,431 cases and had 4,806 pending at the end of the fiscal year. During the reporting period, LASNNY staff provided legal services, information, referrals, community legal education and other outreach to more than 53,765 people. Additionally, LASNNY’s website, www.lasnny.org, had 169,879 unique page views. LASNNY staff also provided support to legal and social services colleagues locally, statewide, and nationally. During the reporting period, LASNNY staff were directly involved in doing intake, outreach, and referrals with over 75 local agencies.

In May, LASNNY held a grand opening for the Center for Civil Legal Services at 95 Central Avenue. Located in the heart of West Hill, one of Albany’s poorest communities, we hosted over 100 donors, volunteers, community members, elected officials, and funders to tour the premises and speak with staff. Since moving to the Center, we have seen a dramatic increase in our walk-in traffic as we are more available to low income people in West Hill. We estimate that walk-in traffic has quadrupled since moving to the Center. We launched a series of place-based legal clinics and developed an excellent menu for our clients; unfortunately, we need to get more people into the room. Our kiosks in the Central Avenue lobby are fairly successful; low income people used them to search for legal information about 11.75 hours per month. SharePoint online was launched with substantive law sites being built out. Our training program remains robust. In the last fiscal year, LASNNY sent a total of 128 staff to trainings in New York State and 15 staff to National training events such as the Equal Justice Conference, the ITC Conference, development training, the NLADA Annual Conference, and domestic violence training events. 97 staff also attended webinars on various subject matters. We promoted a senior attorney from within the program and now have a total of 9 senior attorneys. Our Advocacy Coordinator organized the Rest of Stats litigation directors to formulate and offer a statewide new lawyer training program. Most significantly, we completed a staff Board management strategic planning process, culminating in the Board’s adoption of a new Strategic Plan at its December 2018 meeting. The plan outlines action steps for the next 3 – 4 years in our priority areas: succession planning, exploring a race equity priority, and fostering more systemic impact.

Population Served: General Low Income Population
Area Served: Northeastern Region of New York State
Total Funding: $11,059,053
Total IOLA Grant: $1,050
Staffing - Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 106.00
- Lawyers: 64.00
- Paralegals: 17.00
- Others: 25.00
Direct Legal Services
22,000 people benefitted
10,431 legal cases closed

Breakdown of Cases by Legal Problem Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Cases Closed</th>
<th>People Benefitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,431 cases</td>
<td>22,000 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income Maintenance**

We represented Lillian after referral by the local Department of Social Services. Lillian had worked as a Sales Executive in the hotel industry for 10 years. At the age of 34, unfortunately, her health began a steep and steady decline. Lillian was diagnosed with a vascular necrosis (“bone death”) of her hips. Shortly thereafter she was diagnosed with cervical cancer and eventually had numerous surgeries. Her mental health declined, and she was diagnosed with anxiety and major depression. She stopped working in the hotel industry and was trying to work for herself from home. In 2014 she was hit by a car running a red light and suffered extensive injuries to her spine, exacerbation of preexisting hip pain and post-concussion syndrome. She gave up all hope of returning to full time work and moved in with her parents. She applied for Social Security Disability benefits and was denied. LASNNY spent a year developing evidence in support of her claim and at her hearing, Lillian was finally found disabled and approved for benefits. She received retroactive benefits of $100,000, and the county where she is from was repaid entirely for the interim assistance they provided to her.

**Housing**

Our client Elliot had Stage IV cancer. He was diagnosed and applied for Social Security Disability, but he had to wait several months. He was sued for non-payment of rent and LASNNY negotiated a payment plan for the arrears and secured funding from the local DSS to assist. Because of the arrears owed, he fell behind again. We again worked out a payment plan. When one of the plan payments was a day late and a very, very small amount short, a warrant was issued. When Elliot was served a warrant of eviction, LASNNY enforced a provision in the payment stipulation requiring written notice before seeking a warrant. The judge ordered the landlord to accept the payment and Elliot is still in the same apartment. He recently signed a new lease for 2019.
Other Services...

**Number of People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>People Benefitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98,664 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>31,769 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Assistance</td>
<td>66,895 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Legal Related Services: Overview**

LASNNY also provides other legal related services to our target population of low income people, including referrals, pro se assistance, community legal education and outreach in order to supplement our program of direct legal services and to provide the community with preventative legal education so that they might make better decisions in the future. We held a regular half hour clinic at the Center for Civil Legal Services on a variety of civil topics but need to get more people to attend. We also informed community partners about our work and our clients’ rights.

During the 12-month reporting period, an estimated 2,315 referrals to non-legal providers and other legal services providers, including public defenders and local courts, were made by support staff from our front desks. We launched a program of community legal education clinics at the Center for Civil Legal Services but are currently examining how to increase community participation. We also continuously informed community partners about our work and our clients’ rights. Our goal is to efficiently provide as much information and education as possible to our client community and to agencies who serve our client community. Our hope is that preventative legal education and information will help low income people make better decisions in the future. Our case handlers also referred clients to social and legal services providers.

Other legal related services provided to individuals include limited participation in the Albany County Family Court Help Center (along with the Albany County Bar Association). Many individual cases also involved helping clients prepare to appear pro se.

LASNNY also operates a substantial program of training, outreach and education. We regularly publicize our own services, including our telephone intake system and various special projects. We also provided extensive outreach and positive images of federally funded SNAP benefits in Albany, Clinton, Fulton, Montgomery, Saratoga and Washington Counties.

During the reporting period an estimated 31,769 people attended community group presentations and received legal education brochures and information. We had 66,827 unique views to our Lifeline online brochures on our website, and 169,879 unique views to www.lasnny.org.
Other Legal Related Services: Examples

**CLE presentations and outreach**

In the past 12 months LASNNY reached 16,561 people through in-person educational programming, 15,208 educational brochures, and 66,827 unique visits to legal education on our website. Presentations and trainings included an aggressive outreach campaign publicizing the services of our Nutrition Outreach and Education Project which had a total of 9,752 face to face contacts at such events. Our ICAN project participated in 148 community events, distributed 4,499 legal education brochures and fliers and interacted with about 2,327 people (off Muriel Miller’s spreadsheet). LASNNY also held CLEs to recruit and train 90 attorney volunteers. Our lunchtime clinics at the Center for Civil Legal Services developed an excellent menu of basic preventative legal information topics but suffered from lack of participation. We are currently reviewing how to more effectively hold these clinics.

**Pro Se Assistance**

A limited amount is provided with the Albany County Bar Association, via the Albany County Family Court Help Center. The Help Center provides pro se legal assistance and information to pro se litigants in the Albany County Family Court. LASNNY staff and volunteers provide direct legal assistance to pro se debtors, divorce or tenant litigants.

**Impact Cases**

**S.L.**

S.L., a single mother of two, was one of many clients who requested replacement SNAP benefits after over 11,000 customers in Clinton County lost power for two days. The Department of Social Services initially misinformed all recipients of the procedure to request replacement benefits. They then denied S.L.’s application twice, saying that she had failed to request the replacement benefits within ten days of the outage. We argued successfully that the regulations allow applications for replacement benefits up to ten days after the power is restored. The SNAP supervisor agreed and reversed the denial. 11,659 households in Clinton County lost power during this outage; we estimate that 1,469 of those households receive SNAP.

**Wingate Management Co., LLC v. Glenn James.**

Wingate Management brought an eviction proceeding against our client in Schenectady City Court. The judge granted the eviction on the sole grounds that the presence of bedbugs proved that the client was not maintaining a clean household, as required by the lease. We appealed to County Court, where the judge reversed and held that the mere presence of bedbugs does not prove that the household is not properly maintained. Approximately 42,226 people live in rentals in Schenectady County.

**Homestead Funding Corp. v. Michael O’Brien.**

Our client was in foreclosure in Greene County but hoped to save his home through state assistance. However, the bank’s counsel repeatedly obstructed this goal by failing to meet court deadlines; submitting inaccurate and conflicting information; and appearing without authority to dispose of the case. Finally, we filed a good faith motion, which the Court granted along with $7,331 in attorney fees. Approximately 416 people in Greene County live in homes with pending foreclosures.
Trainings

We provided orientation to 2 new Board members and substantially upgraded our New Employee Orientation to 21 new employees. We trained 90 Pro Bono attorneys on subjects including taxes and divorce. 143 staff attended training within New York State or nationally, and 97 staff attended webinars in various subject matters. LASNNY staff also offered trainings on a local, state, and national basis. At least 300 people were reached in state or national training events last year. Trainings were offered in practical legal skills as well as cultural competence, implicit bias, and microaggressions. Many LASNNY staff attended the New York State Partnership Conference in September 2018. Four staff were trainers and our Advocacy Coordinator served on the Steering Committee.

Technology

In 2018-19, LASNNY continued to contract with Just Tech to provide Chief Information Officer services and Help Desk assistance with ABS Solutions. LASNNY’s Director serves on the New York State Technology Committee. LASNNY continues to operate a virtual private network among five offices, while using two of its offices as Datacenters. We utilize a cloud provider for offsite data backup. We continue to regularly update our website (www.lasnny.org) and our Facebook page (http://www.facebook.com/#!/LASNNY). We use CTG to assist rural via video chat and interactive interviews to generate pro se pleadings. The Director spoke at the NYS Technology Conference and LSC’s Innovations in Technology Conference in January.
### Significant Collaborations

In 2018 – 19, Some of our most significant collaborations continue to be our services to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. Our partnership with the Schenectady Action Program (SCAP) remains particularly fruitful. This collaboration has resulted in a variety of funding for homeless prevention work in Schenectady and many referrals for eviction and income maintenance services. Most recently SCAP has added civil legal services to its menu of re-entry services for returning ex-offenders. We are leaders in four local continuums of care which bring millions of dollars to our communities to serve the homeless.

Our Domestic Violence Legal Assistance Project is a partnership with 10 domestic violence service partners with a focus on serving rural victims including the disabled and hard of hearing, in particular. These partnerships led to six new OVS-funded attorneys through our DV partners. We also continue to collaborate closely with the Albany Law School, which funds our HIV Law Consortium to provide legal services to singles and families living with HIV and AIDS in 15 counties. With IOLA funds we also continued our Medical and Legal Partnership (MLP) between St. Peter’s Health Partners, the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, and the Albany Law School. The MLP provides a holistic approach to patient care: St. Peter’s meets our patient’s medical needs and LASNNY and Albany Law School help the patient with health harming legal needs. Among our other significant collaborations is our Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN) which supports many collaborations with providers who serve the long term care population, including Offices for the Aging, Independent Living Centers and interagency collaboration in a variety of counties. During the reporting period, our senior legal services program served six counties and the St Regent/Mohawk reservation. Our Nutrition Education and Outreach Program (NOEP) and a new WIC project cemented collaborations with Social Service agencies, health care navigators, local schools, food pantries, and other sites serving those at risk of hunger in six counties.

Among our other significant collaborations is our Upstate New York Immigration Law Project, which works with legal and social services providers throughout the region.

Closing The Gap (CTG), a collaboration between LASNNY and Pro Bono Net, provides remote virtual assistance to rural housing and consumer law clients by urban lawyers. CTG uses LawHelp Interactive to assist pro bono volunteers and staff in generating pro se answers for these clients. LASNNY’s Executive Director is involved in ALERT (Albany Law Enforcement Resolution Team) and our re-entry staff participate in local re-entry task forces. We also work closely with the Albany Housing Authority on a number of projects including the Affordable Housing Task Force and funding for our Civil Legal Services Center. Our PAI Advisory Committee includes the administrative judges for the Third and Fourth Judicial Districts, as well as rural pro bono leaders, and the current president of the Albany County Bar Association, James E Hacker.

LASNNY’s collaborations on statewide and national legal services initiatives include LASNNY’s Advocacy Coordinator leading her peers in providing training for new lawyers throughout the rest of state, staff leading or participating in statewide coalitions on special education and DAP, and LASNNY’s Director serving on the Permanent Commission to Expand Access to Justice, the New York State Tech Group, the Diversity Coalition, the ABA Coalition on Racial and Ethnic Justice as well as various NYSBA’s committees. LASNNY participates in local strategic justice action planning in both the Third and Fourth Judicial Districts. Taken together, these collaborations help LASNNY leverage its funding and services to clients.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

The Legal Aid Society operates a vibrant pro bono referral program, our Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) Program in all 16 counties. This includes our recently expanded Attorney for the Day in Albany, Glens Falls, and Troy city courts. In 2018 – 19 we trained 90 PAI attorneys through a variety of trainings and Attorney for the Day trainings in 3 cities on various subjects including taxes and divorce. LASNNY provides supports to its volunteers, including reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, office space and professional liability insurance.

Our PAI Program operated Closing the Gap (CTG) which links urban volunteers with rural clients in northeastern New York. During the reporting period, CTG volunteers handled housing and consumer cases for 357 rural clients. We supported the Third Judicial District’s Clergy Day by advertising our Pro Bono and other services.

436 pro bono assignments were given during the reporting period and 621 cases handled. In May 2018, two PAI volunteers, G. Kimball Williams and Alexander Dunshee, were recognized with NYSBA’s Presidential Pro Bono Awards. LASNNY was recently notified that our PAI volunteer Marc Ehrlich will win the 2019 ABA Pro Bono Publico Award in August.

During the reporting period, we hosted 851 volunteers including law students, law graduates, and attorneys. More than 42,00 hours of service were provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pro Bono Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorneys: 851 Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Students: 10 Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: 2 Volunteers</td>
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Sources Of Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources Of Funding</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iola Grant:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising:</td>
<td>$610,686</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Funding:</td>
<td>$5,914,863</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>$4,532,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>$11,059,053</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Iola Grant: 41%
- Fundraising: 5%
- State Funding: 53%