Overview of Achievements, 2018-2019

In this period, we handled 47,878 individual cases that benefitted more than 111,435 people. We obtained $16,786,167 in retroactive benefits and $837,715 in monthly benefits ($10,052,580 annualized). Our work saved taxpayers $166,766,835. Our systemic litigation and advocacy helped over 773,613 low-income New Yorkers. A very few highlights include:

Securing Language Access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Public Housing Residents

LSNYC recently secured a systemic change to NYCHA housing policies that will help all low-income LEP tenants living in NYCHA housing. NYCHA had been violating the law by failing to provide interpretation services for LEP tenants contending with eviction and housing emergencies. We sued on behalf of elderly Chinese-speaking residents who faced eviction because they could not report income changes. We settled the case with language access policy reforms that will enable the approximately 98,000 LEP residents in NYCHA housing to communicate effectively with their building managers and landlords, avoiding unnecessary and unlawful evictions, illegally high rent charges, and other problems. This settlement builds on our prior successful language justice cases with HRA and the NYPD, and our report *Interpreting Justice*, which helped to secure improved interpretation and translation services in the NY Court system.

A Victory for Workers: LSNYC won a major victory for low-income workers in a case against Uber, which had been classifying its drivers as independent contractors rather than employees to avoid the cost of providing benefits. In July 2018, the New York State Unemployment Insurance Appeal Board, which decides unemployment insurance issues, held that the three former Uber drivers named in our suit, and all similarly situated drivers, are considered employees in New York State for the purposes of unemployment insurance benefits. This spring, Uber appealed the Board’s ruling, but then withdrew its appeal. The ruling that now stands is a final decision. The impact could be extremely far-reaching, including benefiting the 21,000 members of the New York City Taxi Worker’s Alliance.

Population Served: General Low Income Population

Area Served: New York City Metropolitan Area

Total Funding: $84,270,252

Total IOLA Grant: $3,640,000

Staffing - Full Time Equivalents:

- Total Staff: 543.78
- Lawyers: 310.47
- Paralegals: 121.80
- Others: 111.51
Direct Legal Services
58,995 people benefitted
26,040 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>26,040 cases</td>
<td>58,995 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consumer/Finance Case

LSNYC helped Ms. J, a 44-year-old Army veteran with three children who lives in Queens. Ms. J is currently taking classes at York College, but has limited time to devote to school work because her teenage daughter—who is blind, deaf, and uses a wheelchair—requires constant care. Ms. J is still married, but her husband is a liability rather than a help. Ms. J currently has an order of protection against him for violence, and he failed to report all his income to the IRS, leaving her with a tax balance, penalties, and interest charges. Her tax debt was compounded because the monthly benefit that Ms. J receives to care for her disabled daughter was mistakenly reported as earned income for years. By the time she came to LSNYC for help, Ms. J had three years of debt totaling more than $8,500. We submitted an audit reconsideration request to the IRS, eliminated all the debt Ms. J owed the government, and secured her a refund of almost $2,000. Now she can focus her attention on her future and her family’s wellbeing, instead of how to pay thousands of dollars in tax debts mistakenly assessed against her.

Immigration Case

Ms. A grew up in South Sudan and began taking photographs for charities when she was only 13 years old. Now in her 40s, Ms. A has worked as a journalist and communications professional for news and humanitarian organizations, including work with the United Nations (UN) on human rights issues. At the beginning of the South Sudanese Civil War in 2013, reporters and humanitarian aid workers were being targeted for their coverage of the civil unrest. Ms. A’s colleagues at the UN evacuated, but as a South Sudanese citizen, she was unable to join them. Knowing that she was a target because of her ethnicity (Ms. A’s parents were from rival tribes) as well as her work, the UN helped Ms. A relocate to another part of South Sudan. But the military followed her and found her in her mother’s home. Seven soldiers broke into the bamboo hut and raped and tortured Ms. A. It is a testament to her courage and dedication that Ms. A continued to work in media and as an activist, interviewing government officials and rebel leaders. In 2016, her husband, a leader in the rebel army, disappeared, and government officials began to harass Ms. A and interrogate her about her husbands’ activities. Meanwhile, Ms. A discovered that she was pregnant. She knew that this time she needed to flee from her country. She came to the U.S. in April 2017, leaving her older son in South Sudan with her mother. She had little money, and without legal status, no way to earn any. Ms. A came to LSNYC for help, and we represented her in her application for affirmative asylum. The case required thorough research, review of evidence, and relentless advocacy. An LSNYC attorney helped with her affidavit, met with Ms. A numerous times, and discussed her strategy for telling her story in her interview with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. She was granted asylum in October 2018, and LSNYC is now advocating so that her older child can join her in the U.S.
Other Services...

Number of People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>56,249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>8,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Assistance</td>
<td>44,540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Legal Related Services: Overview

LSNYC conducts hundreds of community education presentations, workshops and clinics annually, on a wide array of legal issues. We reach deeply into the low-income communities of all five boroughs in New York City and estimate that over 56,000 low-income New Yorkers were served by these programs during the reporting period. Sometimes, on-site presentations are immediately followed by case intake and advice at the same location. We also distribute “Know Your Rights” materials as widely as possible, especially through easy-to-access online videos, presentations, and toolkits.

Other Legal Related Services: Examples

Community Education on Immigration

Within days of the publication of the proposed changes to federal regulations regarding “Public Charge” on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s website, LSNYC created a comprehensive training program, developed Know Your Rights flyers in English and Spanish, and created a referral system that allows clients to be scheduled for individualized information sessions. We partnered with the Bronx Immigration Partnership (BIP), a coalition of 18 organizations serving noncitizens, to provide consultations for noncitizen clients and training to BIP staff members. Since October 2018, we have trained more than 600 people in the Bronx on the proposed changes to the public charge rules, and we continue to provide individual advice to clients who are afraid that receiving benefits will cause them to be deported.

During the reporting period, we also conducted 12 multilingual Know Your Rights trainings for the Manhattan immigrant community. Topics have included services available through LSNYC, what to do if ICE comes to your home, safety planning for students and parents, forms of relief available to immigrants who are unaccompanied minors, who are potentially eligible for asylum, VAWA relief, U and T visas. Trainings were held in the other boroughs as well.

Legal Hand Community Education Centers

LSNYC operates the Legal Hand program in Bronx and Queens. Legal Hand consists of easily accessed neighborhood storefront centers where community members can get help with problems to prevent them from turning into legal actions. LSNYC trains community volunteers to provide legal information to visitors. We have assisted over 700 people over the last year through Legal Hand.
Fighting Housing Discrimination

We recently sued a large landlord on Staten Island that was discriminating against low-income African-American tenants. In November of 2018, we settled the lawsuit and, along with individual awards for the named plaintiffs, obtained building complex policy changes including an updated fair housing non-discrimination policy; annual fair housing trainings for the company’s staff; and contact information for free legal services organizations on all eviction notices. One of the plaintiffs in the case was Ms. A, who had previously been living in a homeless shelter and was unable to find affordable housing despite the fact that she was working three jobs. Eventually her caseworker at the shelter found her an affordable apartment. However, she was soon uncomfortable with her new living situation due to the shockingly racist comments and dismissive attitude she and other people of color were subjected to. She contacted the management, but could not get help. When Ms. A finally sent the management an angry email, the landlord tried to evict her. In July of 2018, LSNYC commenced litigation in the Eastern District of New York alleging violations of the federal Fair Housing Act, the New York State Human Rights Law, and the New York City Human Rights Law. The results we obtained in the settlement agreement will benefit the residents of 104 apartments in the building complex.

Protecting Workers’ Rights

We recently settled a suit that includes policy changes that will benefit hundreds of thousands of employees of a multinational shipping company. In this suit, we represented Mr. C, a package handler who had dedicated 17 years of work to the company. In June 2016, he took approved FMLA leave to have shoulder surgery. After three months of leave, he let the company know that he could come back to work, and while he still had some physical restrictions, he could drive a truck and he could type. The company said that there were no positions available to meet his restrictions and that he was terminated. LSNYC filed a charge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which agreed that the employer had discriminated and retaliated against Mr. C on the basis of disability. The EEOC recommended $155,944 in damages for our client. Furthermore, the company agreed to no longer discriminate in employment policies when an accommodation is requested; to not retaliate against anyone opposing practices that are unlawful under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); to provide training to management and human resources staff regarding provision of leave and accommodations for people who are disabled; post EEOC’s poster for employees; post a notice to employees drafted by the EEOC; inform employees of their ability to request accommodation under the ADA; and to monitoring of its policies and practices by the EEOC.
Trainings

LSNYC operates the Justice Learning Center, the largest and most comprehensive CLE poverty law education program in the country. We present over 145 in-person classes annually, which are attended by about 3,000 participants, including LSNYC staff, public interest attorneys and pro bono attorneys. We offer about 75 pro bono-specific trainings annually.

Our course curriculum includes substantive law, intake and practice skills, ethics, management and diversity, inclusion and equity courses. In the last year, we developed and launched our first eLearning offerings. Two of these, on language justice and implicit bias, are easily-accessible to support the learning of advocates throughout the state. They also satisfy the New York State CLE Board’s new diversity, inclusion and equity requirement. We have also expanded our web and recorded on-demand offerings in the last year to give our growing number of advocates the opportunity to attend more courses or view courses at their own pace.

As LSNYC’s housing practice has continued to grow, the Justice Learning Center has worked with our faculty subject matter experts to develop and tailor courses to meet the needs of our new attorneys, advocates and managers. We have also increased our focus on practice-based collaborative learning.

Many of our staff members also present and attend trainings around the country, including at the Partnership Conference, NLADA’s Annual Conference, the Equal Justice Conference, LSC’s Innovations in Technology Conference, NCLC’s Consumer Rights Litigation Conference and PLI. Examples of the topics include “Statute of Limitations Defenses and Affirmative Claims in New York”; “Winning Right to Counsel in Housing Cases: Practical Skills & Advocacy”; “Enhancing the Cultural Competence of a Legal Aid Program;” and many more.

Technology

We continue to use technology to improve service delivery and efficiency.

Outdated phone system replacement – Our new cloud-based system enables collaboration between teams using text messaging, video conferencing, and screen sharing. The new system also removes the possible risk of our business operations being interrupted due to an outdated system that was previously managed by a single individual, since it is now being managed by an outside partner firm.

Software defined WANS (SD-WANS) expanded to 10 offices – This permits our critical systems to be accessed more reliably by providing redundant internet connections at each office. It is critical to our operations; most of our applications are delivered over the internet so that we do not need to manage our own internal data centers.

A new payroll system – The new system can be run by multiple people within our Finance team, thereby eliminating our reliance on a sole Payroll Specialist. It has an employee portal for many self-service functions. This portal can be accessed by employees on their desktops as well as on a mobile app. The system is currently in the design phase and expected to be rolled out in late 2019.
Significant Collaborations

Across the city and in all of our practice areas, LSNYC has developed hundreds of collaborations with legal services providers, community-based organizations, law schools, elected officials, courts, and virtually every poverty-advocacy group in the City. Collaboration is a core part of our practice model, so even our most significant collaborations are too numerous to list here. A few key examples follow.

Protecting Immigrants
During the reporting period, Legal Services NYC participated in the statewide ICE Out of Courts Coalition, which brought together prosecutors, public defenders, housing attorneys, immigration advocates, anti-violence lawyers, and community-based organizations to conduct a survey, and draft a comprehensive report entitled *Safeguarding the Integrity of Our Courts: The Impact of ICE Courthouse Operations in New York State*. The report documents ICE’s devastating impact on the court system, and a rise in victims afraid to testify or seek help from courts.

Advocating for Victims of Abuse
The NY Presbyterian Peace Program is a new collaboration with the New York-Presbyterian-Hospital (NYPH) and The Family PEACE Trauma Treatment Center (FPTTC), a licensed outpatient clinic dedicated to improving the safety and well-being of children and caregivers who have been exposed to traumatic violence and abuse. LSNYC is partnering with the FPTTC by integrating legal services into the mental health practice to create a holistic, culturally sensitive approach to care. Legal issues that arise as a result of crimes will be addressed by LSNYC attorneys on-site or someone from the FPTTC team. Our attorneys and FPTTC staff will work together to provide legal advice and therapeutic support for all crime victims in need of advocacy and representation.

Community-based Service Delivery
Our community-based partnerships facilitate service delivery in a vast array of sites throughout the City, including Henry Street Settlement, Grand Street Settlement, Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, the Center for Family Life, the Fifth Avenue Committee, Good Shepherd Services, and the Fortune Society. Additionally, we work in several major VA medical facilities, NYC’s Family Justice Centers in all boroughs, CLARO sites, and other locations.

Pro Bono Partnerships
One example of our many pro bono collaborations is our Military Mondays clinic, which takes place the first Monday of every month at the Manhattan VA Hospital. Volunteers from Skadden, BNY Mellon, Marshal and McLennan Companies, Estee Lauder, Starbucks, Barclays, HSBC and Goldman Sachs provide assistance to veterans regarding SSI/SSD benefits, child support, housing law, and life planning. LSNYC attorneys attend and provide their expertise on substantive matters as needed.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

Pro bono volunteers help in at least three ways: (1) co-counseling on large cases; (2) taking on special projects—such as research and brief writing; and (3) direct representation of clients. Significant achievements were made in each of these areas.

Of particular note is our clinical program, which now regularly holds approximately 75 clinics and related trainings each year. The clinics range from limited-scope to full representation “clinic plus” events in which pro bono attorneys fully represent clients for the duration of their cases. The majority of these are focused on immigration—naturalizations, VAWA self-petitions, U-visas, and more. LSNYC placed particular emphasis on our LGBTQ asylum work over the past year, and it has yielded tremendous results, with dozens of pro bono wins that have helped clients to secure a safe new life in this country. We are also proud of our pro bono work on behalf of veterans. LSNYC’s Military Mondays clinic (described above in E.1.), done in partnership with Skadden, Marsh & McLennan, BNY Mellon, Barclays, HSBC, Estee Lauder, and Starbucks, has now helped more than 250 veterans. The clinic is held monthly, and assists veterans on housing, SSI/SSD, child support, and life planning.

During this time period, LSNYC created a new pro bono project assisting transgender clients who are seeking name changes. We have now held six full representation clinics for name change clients, with a range of private partners. Our other initiatives continued to thrive, including an order of protection project; a housing repair initiative; special education hearings; the Bankruptcy Assistance Project, and our SSI/SSD project, among others. For each of these initiatives, volunteers are provided with training and a high-quality manual to facilitate their work. LSNYC advocates also screen the cases, and provide mentorship to the volunteers. LSNYC’s pro bono program now regularly works with approximately 100 law firms and corporations.

Sources Of Funding

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Pro Bono Statistics

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<tr>
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Legal Services NYC.7