



Statewide Legal Services of CT, Inc. Newsletter

Summer, 2019

In the News

LSC receives \$135 million spending boost from Congress.

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EndHungerCT launches free summer meals program for kids and teens under 18.

[**Read More**](#)

Plastic bag tax now in effect throughout Connecticut.

[**Read More**](#)

Everything you need to know about CT's tax-free week 2019, which runs 8/18-8/24.

[**Read More**](#)



The Impact of Your Donations Client Stories

When the Visiting Nurses Association of East Haven contacted SLS, they told the attorney that their client, Roberto, needed immediate help. Roberto was an 81 year-old widower with limited English skills who was apparently living in the dark. His utilities had been shut off for non-payment. He was all alone with no close relatives or many contacts to the outside world. Robert had tried, but failed, to stretch his meager monthly disability payment to meet all his expenses including rent, but the rent alone exceeded nearly 3/4 of his monthly income. For over two weeks he had no lights, heat, refrigeration or cooking surfaces. Although still capable of living alone, he was completely unaware of his rights.

With Roberto's permission, an SLS attorney, who is bilingual in Spanish and English, began swiftly to take steps to restore his utilities. She gathered the necessary facts pertaining to his personal and medical situation as provided by his health-care providers and Roberto himself. As an expert in utility law, the attorney could see right away that the shut off was illegal given her client's advanced age and bad health. Someone like Roberto is entitled by law to avoid a shut off owing to circumstances such as age, medical condition, use of medical equipment and the simple fact that a loss of electricity would prove life-threatening, not merely inconvenient. The attorney provided the utility company with Roberto's critical medical documentation proving his case. This emergency response was effectively rendered by

telephone – neither Roberto nor his attorney needed to leave their places.

Thanks to his SLS attorney, and caring health professionals, Roberto had his utilities restored in less than 24 hours from the initial contact with SLS.

SLS Online Application Now Available on Mobile Devices!

With the help of our incredible IT team, we have improved our online application to make it easier for clients to take the first step in getting the legal help they need. Perhaps the most significant change was the removal of the Adobe Flash requirement, which previously prevented applicants from accessing the application from their mobile phones and tablets. After extensive research, we found that most of our potential clients were accessing our website via their mobile devices. Therefore, with these new improvements, we now have the ability to reach more low-income clients than ever before!



[Access the New Application Here!](#)

SLS Pro Bono Attorney Spotlight



SLS Pro Bono Attorney helps client win damages in housing code violation case!

Congratulations and a big thank you to Attorney Nicolas Ouellette for recently helping one of our pro bono clients get the justice they deserve in their housing code violation case. The client's home was infested with bed bugs and contained faulty appliances which caused smoke to accumulate throughout the home, causing the client to experience health complications. Attorney

Ouellette helped the client take the matter to court where it was determined the premises were in fact rendered unfit. The client was awarded the amount of rent paid into court as well as damages for furniture lost and medial treatment incurred.

Way to go Attorney Ouellette!

In Memoriam

SLS would like to pay tribute to a dear friend and exceptional volunteer attorney who sadly passed away earlier this year. Attorney Michael Smiley had an extensive legal career as an attorney at Traveler's Insurance Company, as an entrepreneur, and in solo legal practice. He

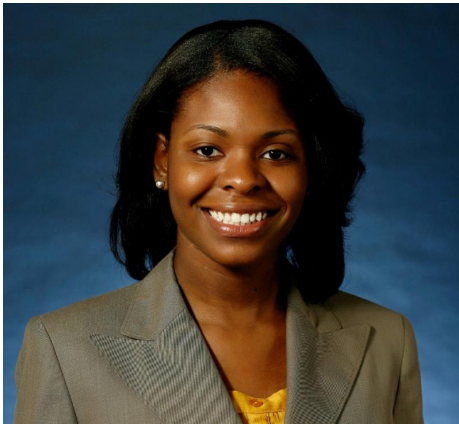
spent much of his time on charitable legal work, and quickly became a fixture in the pro bono legal community.

In 2015, he was awarded The Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo Pro Bono Award by the Connecticut Bar Association. He was also a pioneer and committed volunteer for our Call4Law program and a true mentor to so many of our low-income clients. We will never forget the hard work and dedication he showed to our program and to our community. He will be greatly missed.



SLS Board of Directors Spotlight

SLS Board Member Recognized Among CT Law Tribune's Young Leaders in Law!



Congratulations to SLS Board Member, Attorney Latonia Williams, for being named among this year's New Leaders in Law by the CT Law Tribune! A partner at Shipman & Goodwin, LLP and a member of the SLS Board of Directors since 2015, Latonia provides valuable guidance to our program and is an avid participant in our security deposit and family matter clinics, providing much needed assistance and support to our many low-income clients. Way to go Latonia!

[Read More](#)

Community Board Member Needed!

The SLS Board of Directors has an opening for a community board member.

Qualifications:

- Must be income eligible for legal aid services
- Must have a passion for social justice for low-income people
- Must help us bring our mission of access to justice and legal empowerment to your community
- Must be willing to attend 6 Board meetings and serve on a sub-committee to make SLS the best legal aid program it can be.



SLS provides stipends for transportation to and from Board meetings and funding for a Board member to attend a legal aid national conference.

Do you have a client or colleague that meets these qualifications? Nominate them for the SLS Board of Directors!

SLS Staff Spotlight

SLS Project Manager elected President of the CHBA!

Congratulations to our very own Sandra Fair for being elected as the newest President of the CT Hispanic Bar Association! Sandra plays a vital role as SLS' Project Manager Attorney, where she manages several grants enabling access to justice for the low-income community in Connecticut. Prior to joining SLS in 2015, Sandra was an associate at the law firm of Hunt Leibert Jacobson, P.C. and a Temporary Assistant Clerk at the Hartford Superior Court. She is a graduate of the State University of New York at Oswego, where she received her B.A. in Public Justice in 2005. She received her J.D. with a concentration in Real Estate in 2010 from Western New England University, where she was a member of the ABA Negotiation Team. Congrats Sandy!



Pro Bono Corner



SLS PRO BONO PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

SLS is experiencing increasing demand for help from clients seeking help with collections and bankruptcy matters.

The **Pro Bono Call4Law Program** helps low-income clients seeking consumer collections and bankruptcy advice. We are seeking Pro Bono Attorneys willing to assist our consumer collections and bankruptcy Call4Law clients. SLS offers free On-Demand trainings for those attorneys unfamiliar with this area of law. In addition, thanks to a generous grant from the American College of Bankruptcy Foundation, SLS is planning a free training series for Connecticut attorneys who are interested in providing telephonic advice or direct representation to SLS's low-income clients seeking help with debt collection or bankruptcy matters. The "Debt Collection Defense and Bankruptcy Training"

series will be held in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven. Dates, times and locations for the trainings, which we plan to offer during the fall, will be announced soon.

To volunteer, to obtain additional information about the Call4Law program or the Debt Collection Defense and Bankruptcy Training series, please contact: dphilips@slsct.org or cfernandez@slsct.org.

Upcoming Events



September 20, 2019 Veterans Stand Down

SLS Pro Bono Attorneys and Pro Bono Staff will participate in CT Veterans Stand Down 2019 scheduled for September 20, 2019 at the Rocky Hill Campus of the CT Department of Veterans Affairs. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please reach out to Pro Bono Manager Don Philips at dphilips@slsct.org.



October 21-25, 2019 Pro Bono Week

SLS Pro Bono Staff is working with the Connecticut Bar Association to produce two Pro Bono clinics during National Pro Bono Week. Connecticut attorneys interested in additional details about the clinics or interested in volunteering to speak one-on-one with a member of the public at one the clinics are encouraged to contact: dphilips@slsct.org.

Get Involved

Pro Bono Attorneys can help in a variety of ways!



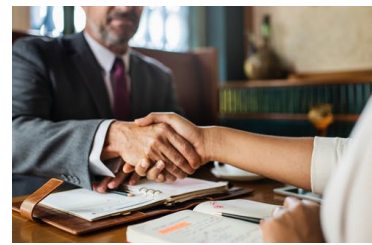
Call4Law

This program allows volunteer attorneys to provide telephonic advice to pre-screened clients from the comfort of their home or office. Little commitment is required as calls usually last approximately 1 hour or less.



Clinics

With this program, attorneys have the opportunity to provide brief service to pre-screened clients via our security deposit and divorce clinics. Here you will help clients complete court forms and answer their legal



Direct Representation

Direct representation is the heart of a pro bono project. With this program, attorneys provide full representation to pre-screened clients, representing those with the biggest legal need. All lawyers are covered under

questions without the obligation of full representation. Minimal commitment required, meetings usually last 2 hours or less.

our malpractice insurance and are provided with full support from our staff.

If you are interested in participating in these programs, contact our Pro Bono Manager Don Philips at dphilips@slsct.org.

The Impact of Your Donations



In 2018, SLS advocates provided legal advice and guidance to over **6,300** low-income CT residents with the help of you donations. We conducted **37** outreach events, over **50** family and security deposit clinics and helped over **700** clients through our pro bono attorney programs. Help us continue to provide these much need legal services to those who need it most.

[Click here for our 2018 Annual Report](#)

Donate Now

Financial support allows SLS to expand its free, civil legal services directly into our low-income communities. Consider giving today to help close the access to justice gap here in Connecticut.

DONATE

Statewide Legal Services of CT, Inc.
1-800-453-3320
www.slsct.org

See what's happening on our social sites:

