

LEGAL AID LINK

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Want to see your news in *Legal Aid Link*? Send it to the person responsible for communications and development at your organization. The next issue will be published in November 2016.

Visit our website to read previous issues.

MLAC

MLAC Welcomes New Staff Member, Summer Intern

Rachel Glanz, a recent graduate of Duke University, joined MLAC in June as executive assistant to MLAC and legislative campaign assistant to the Equal Justice Coalition. Rachel occupies the position formerly held by Sarah Blair, who is now in her first year at Harvard Law School.

This summer, MLAC and the Massachusetts IOLTA Committee again participated in the Boston Bar Association's Summer Jobs Program. Teyauri Thompson, a junior at the Community Academy of Science and Health, joined us in June as a summer intern. Teyauri supported MLAC staff on a wide range of projects and was an excellent addition to our office. Her position was generously funded by the law firm of Hemenway & Barnes.

Equal Justice Coalition

Equal Justice Coalition Welcomes New Director

The EJC announces the appointment of Laura Booth as its director effective September 14. Laura brings nearly two decades of experience in human services and public policy, most recently serving as campaign manager of the Committee to re-elect State Representative Marjorie Decker, who was the first director of the EJC. Laura replaces Deborah Silva, who left the EJC in July to become executive director of the Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice. [Read more...](#)

Save the Date for Walk to the Hill 2017!

The 18th Annual Walk to the Hill will be held Thursday, January 26, 2017 at the State House. We look forward to seeing you there.

Get Involved

Looking for other ways to get involved in the budget campaign? Follow the EJC on [Twitter](#), like the EJC [Facebook page](#) and sign up for action alerts at www.equaljusticecoalition.org.

Save the Date

September 15: From 2-3:30 pm, the National Consumer Law Center is hosting a webinar, *ŌToxic Transactions: How Land Installment Contracts Once Again Threaten Communities of Color.* NCLC attorneys will discuss the organization's recent report documenting this abusive rent-to-own housing scheme, highlight possible defenses to these predatory contracts, and give the framework for a proposed regulation that would stop the abuses of this shadow housing market that is draining equity from communities of color. [Register now; space is limited.](#) You can [sign up](#) to be notified of other free upcoming webinars and watch previous webinars [here](#). Recent topics include addressing financial fraud and scams against elders; student loan debt collection and seniors; and capacity and vulnerability to elder abuse.

October 19: Massachusetts Advocates for Children will hold its annual [Celebrating Voices gala](#) from 5:30-9 pm at Harvard Law School's Wasserstein Hall. MAC will honor Michael Curry, the president of Boston's NAACP, and spotlight MAC's long-standing advocacy in Boston as well as the 20th anniversary of the Boston School Reform Project.

October 19: MetroWest Legal Services holds its 40th Anniversary Celebration from 5-8 pm at the Hopkinton Country Club. Congressman Joseph Kennedy III is the featured speaker. Learn more on MetroWest's [website](#).

October 20-23: NCLC hosts its annual Consumer Rights Litigation Conference in Anaheim, California. Earn valuable CLE credits while meeting, connecting with, and learning from other legal aid and consumer attorneys from around the nation who share your commitment to justice and consumer rights. Learn more and register [here](#).

Money-Saving Deadlines:

Ÿ Sept. 16: Early Bird Registration Discount

Ÿ Sept. 20: Hotel Room Booking Discount

October 27: Community Legal Aid hosts an event celebrating 65 years of legal aid in Worcester County, with a focus on work with victims of domestic violence. The event will be held at Tuckerman Hall in Worcester from 5:30-7:30 pm. Tickets are \$65 or \$35 for young professionals (available in a limited quantity). For more details, please contact CLA's Development Associate, Maura Flanagan, at mflanagan@cla-ma.org or 508-425-2805.

November 2: CLA hosts "Youth on the Move: Transition and Decision-Making for (and by) Youth with Disabilities" from 9:00 am-2:30 pm at UMass Medical School. The conference will provide vital information to parents, guardians, or service providers of a child or children with special needs ages 14-22. The conference is free to all. Please contact Alina Kantor Nir at anir@cla-ma.org or 508-752-3718 ext.5302 to register.

November 15: The Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee hosts "Privacy, Pets, and Possibilities: Making Integrated Care Work," a full-day seminar on ways to improve integration of physical and behavioral health care. Learn more and register on the [MHLAC website](#).

November 28: South Coastal Counties Legal Services hosts its Equal Justice Celebration fundraiser at 6 pm at The Cove Restaurant & Marina in Fall River. Congressman Joseph Kennedy III is the keynote speaker.

Advocacy & Program Updates

The companies that own and manage Lincoln Village, an affordable housing apartment complex in Worcester, agreed to pay \$27,000 to settle a tenant's complaint about alleged federal housing law violations. **Community Legal Aid** represented the tenant with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The tenant alleged that Lincoln Village denied her request for a transfer, which she had requested because of domestic violence. She also alleged the apartment community did not provide timely modifications for her autistic child. As part of the settlement, Lincoln Village must have an outside consultant review policies and procedures for compliance with state and federal laws, notify tenants about housing transfer rights if they are victims of domestic abuse, and train all employees on housing discrimination laws.

Northeast Legal Aid has expanded its Community Development and Entrepreneurship Practice to Lowell under the leadership of staff attorney Sumbul Siddiqui. The practice, which has been serving low-income entrepreneurs and small business clients in Lynn and Lawrence since September 2014, has assisted 80 clients, 88% of whom are people of color and over half of whom are women. The types of help available include entity formation, e.g., forming a corporation, LLC or partnership; compliance with licensing, permitting and zoning requirements; tax questions; and the drafting and review of contracts, such as commercial leases and financing agreements. The practice's attorneys also hold workshops on common legal issues faced by small businesses.

South Coastal Counties Legal Services will soon re-open its New Bedford office, which has been closed since 2012 due to budget cuts. SCCLS also secured funding for three more years of the AmeriCorps Legal Advocates of Massachusetts program, which recently celebrated its 10th year. Formerly known as the Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency Program, ALA-MA recruits and trains volunteer legal advocates who serve not only at SCCLS and its Justice Center, but also at civil legal aid programs throughout the Commonwealth. Read about ALA-MA's many contributions to the Massachusetts legal aid community in its [10 Year Report](#).

Massachusetts Advocates for Children has been involved in recent efforts to address incidents of racially motivated harassment at Boston Public Schools and Boston Latin School, in particular. MAC, in partnership with several civil rights and social justice organizations, hosted a press conference and called on the mayor and the school district to have a fair and open process to find new leadership for Boston Latin and create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. Read more about these efforts in the organizations' [joint press release](#).

New Resources from the National Consumer Law Center

NCLC recently published several new reports, legal analyses, policy briefs, and fact sheets, as well as a model state law:

- ✦ [Misaligned Incentives: Why High-Rate Installment Lenders Want Borrowers Who Will Default](#), July 2016
- ✦ [Toxic Transactions: How Land Installment Contracts Once Again Threaten Communities of Color](#), July 2016
- ✦ [Defusing Debt: A Survey of Debt-Related Civil Legal Aid Programs in the United States](#), June 2016

Legal Analysis

- ✦ [New Developments Limit Arbitration of FDCPA, Other Claims Against Debt Buyers and Collectors](#), August 2016.
- ✦ How to win RESPA claims under the CFPB's new mortgage servicing rules by [avoiding the "one-bite" rule for loss mitigation applications](#), July 2016.
- ✦ How to win RESPA claims under the CFPB's new mortgage servicing rules by [responding to the "exclusive address" trap for RESPA inquiries](#). July 2016.
- ✦ Ninth Circuit's July 20 decision in *Hernandez v. Williams, Zinman & Parham PC* is an important ruling that, even when a first debt collector sends notice of debt verification rights, that subsequent collectors sold or outsourced that debt must also send the notice to the same consumer. [Analysis](#). July 2016.
- ✦ [NCLC Library article](#) on four reported FDCPA circuit court decisions from May and June, 2016.
- ✦ NCLC Library [article](#) on the CFPB's June 2 proposed rule covering payday lending, auto title, and installment loans, with links to practice tips on representing clients with these predatory loans and links to state-by-state analyses of applicable law, June 2016.

Policy Briefs & Fact Sheets

- ✦ **Consumer Fact Sheet: Disputing Errors in a Credit Report**, August 2016
- ✦ **Consumer Fact Sheet: What You Should Know About Your Credit Report**, August 2016
- ✦ **Advocates Fact Sheet: Understanding Credit Scores**
- ✦ **Strong Language Access Protections Needed for Homeowners**. The materials include an issue brief, narratives, and summary. The materials are available in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Russian. Published in May 2016. Materials are available on NCLC's website at: <http://www.nclc.org/special-projects/sustainable-homeownership.html>.
- ✦ **New Ways to Understand the Impact of Auto Finance on Low-Income Families**, May 2016
- ✦ **Fact Sheets on Living Trusts: Elder Advocates Fact Sheet and Consumer Fact Sheet**, May 2016

Model State Law

[Making Repossessions Safer and Fairer: Model Consumer Amendments to Uniform Commercial Code Article 9](#). The amendments are designed to reduce the risk of physical injury during repossession and to give consumers more financial protections.

People

Community Legal Aid recently welcomed four new staff members: family law staff attorneys **Sandy Benitez** and **Lauren Schaal**, development associate **Maura Flanagan**, and **Eileen Messier**, returning as human resources manager. CLA and its subsidiary, Central West Justice Center, are also pleased to welcome AmeriCorps members for the upcoming service year: **Anne Keyworth**, who will be doing re-entry work; intake workers **Leighann Agyemang** and **Natalie Saloio**, and **Danielle DeWinter**, returning for her second year to work on immigration law.

The Volunteer Lawyers Project appointed **Joanna Allison** as its executive director, effective September 1. Allison has worked at VLP for 23 years, having served as interim executive director for the last 11 months.

Greater Boston Legal Services recently welcomed nine new members to its board of directors to serve three-year terms: **Iris Awilda Diaz**, **Halley Gilbert**, **Angela Gomes**, **Eyette Green**, **Jillian B. Hirsch**, **Peggy Ho**, **Traci L. Lovitt**, **Michael MacDougall**, and **Timothy W. Mungovan**. The new members include two community representative board members, two general counsel from the biopharmaceutical industry, the managing partner of the Boston office of Jones Day and four additional accomplished lawyers from the greater Boston legal community. GBLS also elected board officers and re-appointed several board members to new terms. To see a full list of officers and board members, visit [the GBLS website](#).

Awards & Recognition

CLA family law staff attorney **Lauren Schaal** received the Massachusetts Bar Association's [2016 Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. Scholarship](#), given to third-year law students committed to serving underrepresented populations upon graduating.

Greater Boston Legal Services was honored with a Salt of the Earth Award by Community Labor United on June 10. This award recognizes the work of attorneys in the Asian Outreach/Employment Law Unit on behalf of low-wage workers who are cheated out of minimum wage, overtime, and other earnings. It was accepted by current GBLS attorney **Lili Ibara**, and former GBLS attorneys **Audrey Richardson** and **Rachel Smit**, who all contributed to this campaign.

Three legal services attorneys were selected as 2016 Top Women of Law by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly: Community Legal Services and Counseling Center immigration attorney **Deirdre M. Giblin**, GBLS immigration attorney **Nancy Kelly** and GBLS benefits attorney **Melanie Malherbe**. MLW also selected **Jayne Tyrell**, director of the Massachusetts IOLTA Committee, for its 2016 Circle of Excellence. Each year MLW honors women attorneys who have made tremendous professional strides and demonstrated great accomplishments in the legal field, which includes: pro bono, social justice, advocacy and business. The awards highlight women who are pioneers, educators, trailblazers, and role models. The Top Women of Law event will be held on Thursday, October 27 at the Marriott Copley Hotel.

Valenda Applegarth, a senior attorney in GBLS' Family Law Unit, was chosen for the [2016 Gail Burns-Smith Excellence in Victim Services Award](#), by the National Crime Victim Law Institute.

Media Highlights

These are just a few highlights of recent media coverage. For a full list, visit the [News section](#) of the MLAC website.

[Disability Law Group Urges Changes, Receivership For Bridgewater State Hospital](#) (WBUR)

After an investigation following a patient's suicide in April, the Disability Law Center is recommending that control of Bridgewater State Hospital be transferred from the Department of Correction to the Department of Mental Health.

[New legal aid helping business](#) (Lowell Sun)

The Lowell Sun highlights the stories of two women in Lowell who were able to start small businesses thanks to the help of Northeast Legal Aid's Community Development and Entrepreneurship Practice.

[Advocates mystified as proposal to tighten nursing home oversight killed](#) (Boston Globe)

In early July, state lawmakers rejected a proposal that would have increased limits on fines for troubled nursing homes from \$50 a day to \$10,000. Advocates stated that the current limit does nothing to deter

nursing homes, and for-profit nursing homes in particular, from ignoring violations that harm vulnerable elders living in their facilities.

[Good nutrition is both sound economic policy and effective preventive medicine](#) (Springfield Republican) Massachusetts Law Reform Institute Executive Director Georgia Katsoulomitis co-authors this opinion piece highlighting the interconnectedness of nutrition and human health, and the efficiency and cost savings that could be gained by allowing low-income Massachusetts residents to apply for MassHealth and federal nutrition benefits through a common form.

People Pages

[CLICK HERE](#) to print "People Pages," an alphabetical directory of Massachusetts Legal Services staff members and their contact information. (Note: You must log in to MassLegalServices.org to access this list.) You can also look up staff individually by last name using the search function on MassLegalServices.org



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