



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MID-NEW YORK, INC. (LASMNY) WILL RECEIVE A \$207,233 GRANT TO HELP THOSE IN ECONOMIC CRISIS IN CENTRAL NEW YORK

The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc (LASMNY), which operates in 13 counties across Central New York, and the Southern Tier, has been awarded a \$207,233 grant to provide access to legal counsel and advice in consumer-bankruptcy services to those most stricken by the economic crisis. The funding comes from the Legal Services Corporation, the federally funded, 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation established by the United States Congress to help provide equal access to justice to Americans by providing funding for civil legal aid to those who can't afford it.

“This funding comes at a crucial time in our region. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many households. Across New York State, people are still facing job loss and lost income. This Pro Bono project gives people in an emergency, access to legal counsel,” Paul Lupia, ESQ, Executive Director, said.

Volunteer attorneys will triage cases, screen and advise clients who will then be referred to pro bono attorneys. LASMNY is also partnering with bankruptcy clinics at Syracuse University School of Law and pro se legal clinics.

“Everyone deserves a second chance. Bankruptcy can give people the opportunity to get back on their feet. This project's funding will allow us to engage local attorneys, partner with Upsolve.org, and give Syracuse University law students hands on experience,” Arlene Sanders, ESQ, Director of Pro Bono programs said.

A unique part of the grant is identifying the possibility of student loan discharges through the triage process in Bankruptcy. Up until January 2020, students were told that student debt could not be forgiven through bankruptcy. Now, more judges and lawyers say that's a misnomer, and bankruptcy can help.

The significance is not lost on the regions federally elected Representatives, Anthony Brindisi (NY-22) and John Katko (NY-24) both of whom issued official statements congratulating LASMNY on the critical funding.

“As Upstate New Yorkers continue to respond to the challenges of this public health crisis, access to adequate legal representation is more important than ever, especially for low-income communities. Everyone has the right to legal representation and this grant from the Legal Services Corporation will help level the playing field for low-income Upstate New Yorkers,” Rep. Brindisi said. “This grant money will help connect people in our area with the help they need to get through hard times and give them the right tools to get back on their feet. I was



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proud to play a role in securing this grant money for Legal Aid of Mid-New York, Inc. and I know these dollars will make a difference in the lives of hardworking Upstate New Yorkers.”

“I’m pleased to announce the Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc. has received \$207,233 in funds through the Pro Bono Innovation Fund Grant,” Rep. Katko said. “In Congress, I was proud to lead a bipartisan effort to increase funds for this vital grant program. Since its inception, the grant has empowered volunteer attorneys to fill gaps in consumer bankruptcy and other important legal services. With these new funds, the Legal Aid Society

of Mid-New York, Inc. will be better equipped to continue advising Central New Yorkers and have the resources needed to develop an online tool to identify candidates for student loan discharge.”

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The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc. is a not-for-profit law office. LASMNY provides free civil legal information, advice, and representation to people who cannot afford a lawyer. We serve thirteen counties, including Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and Otsego. We also serve agriculture workers anywhere in New York State. For more information, visit lasmny.org.

LASMANY has offices in Utica, Syracuse, Binghamton, Watertown, Oswego, Oneonta, Cooperstown, and New Paltz

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