

NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES (NLS) AND  
THE MOBILE SAFETY-NET TEAM PRESENTS



# NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES COMMUNITY ADVOCATE TRAINING SERIES

Come learn about legal topics that Neighborhood Legal Services provides assistance for throughout the Western New York area. Come learn about ways you can serve as an advocate!

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**MARCH 4, MARCH 6,  
MARCH 8, MARCH 11,  
MARCH 15**

All trainings are FREE .  
Registration is required.  
You can register for  
individual sessions or the  
entire series on Eventbrite.

Attendees will receive a  
copy of the updated  
Neighborhood Legal  
Services Resource Manual.



# **NLS COMMUNITY ADVOCATE TRAININGS OFFERED**

**SPACE IS LIMITED TO 30 PEOPLE A TRAINING.  
REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.**

## ***Monday, March 4***

12:00pm- Family Law- Presented by Patricia McGrath

2:00pm- Disability/Community Health Advocate- Presented by Krista McDonald and Marge Gustas

## ***Wednesday, March 6***

12:00pm-Student Loans- Presented by Karen Welch

## ***Friday, March 8***

12:00pm- Consumer Law- Presented by Karen Davis and Jim Morrissey

2:00pm- Public Benefits- Presented by Penny Selmonsky

## ***Monday, March 11***

12:00pm- Disability Advocacy Project- Presented by Steve Brooks

2:00pm- Housing Law- Presented by Katelyn Niedermier

## ***Friday, March 15***

12:00pm- Veterans Advocacy- Presented by Lonnie Farrington and Cassandra Christman

2:00pm- Human Trafficking- Presented by Michelle Roy

***Register for the trainings at***

***<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/neighborhood-legal-services-community-advocate-training-series-registration-55042270914>***

***If you have questions or concerns please contact Greer Hamilton, MSW, Community Impact Coordinator with the Mobile Safety-Net Team at [info@msntwny.org](mailto:info@msntwny.org) or (716) 830-7968.***

# NLS COMMUNITY ADVOCATE TRAINING DESCRIPTIONS

## **Veteran Unit Presentation**

Veteran Advocacy- We have a large population of individuals that served our country with honor and valor. Many of these individuals adapt to the military lifestyle and find themselves changed when returning to civilian life. The things you become accustomed to change drastically and this transition causes many issues such as unemployment, homelessness, matrimonial disputes, and custody matters. These men and women served our country and when their choice to serve leads them down a path that eventually ends in legal issues, we owe them diligent advocacy. In our presentation we will discuss the different areas of law in which Neighborhood Legal Services can assist veterans; as well as some Veteran specific benefits that are available.

## **Human Trafficking Unit Presentation**

Human Trafficking is a worldwide problem that also affects many individuals locally. The number of identified victims in Western New York continues to rise and includes victims of both sex and labor trafficking. With funding from Equal Justice Works Crime Victims Justice Corps., Neighborhood Legal Services can provide critical legal services to survivors to help them move on with their lives. Some of the most needed services include assistance with family court matters, name changes, and vacating criminal convictions that were incurred as a result of being trafficked.

# NLS COMMUNITY ADVOCATE TRAINING DESCRIPTIONS

## Family Law Unit Presentation

The Family Unit helps families dealing with questions of custody, family offenses, support and divorce. A large portion of our practice focuses on survivors of domestic violence and the ripple effects it brings to the parents and children impacted by this crisis. Sometimes a parent or adult family member needs to negotiate the court system in an attempt to hold the family together when there has been domestic violence, substance abuse, and/or mental health problems. This may entail appearances in Family Court to obtain enforceable custody or access orders, orders of child and spousal support, and orders of protection where the other party's behavior threatens the household. Sometimes, the Family Unit attorneys are called upon to assist a person seeking a divorce, whether that individual has been the subject of domestic violence or simply cannot afford the time and cost of navigating the court system without an attorneys guidance. The Family Unit attorneys seek to prevent further hardship to families through fair and just resolutions.

## Public Benefits Presentation

The Public Benefits Unit assists clients who are destitute and in need of help simply to survive. Most commonly, we represent clients who are in need of various government benefit programs. Cases range from the single mother who has no money for food or rent, to the homebound elderly client in need of medical assistance, to the family of a laid-off worker threatened with a utility shut-off. Our areas of expertise include Public Assistance, SNAP (food stamps) and Medicaid benefits. We also help people get the health care they are entitled to through the New York State of Health Market Place including Medicaid, the Essential Plan, Child Health Plus and other private health plans. We represent clients before administrative tribunals and in state court. We also represent homeless clients through the Homeless Task Force.

# NLS COMMUNITY ADVOCATE TRAINING DESCRIPTIONS

## Disability Law Presentation

The Disability Law Unit assists both children and adults with disabilities. Our attorneys and advocates assist individuals in two primary areas; benefits counseling to pave the way to self-supporting employment (helping clients understand the impact work has on Social Security, SSI, Medicaid and Medicare and how work incentives in those programs can help them); Healthcare Advocacy-helping to establish eligibility for Medicaid and/or Medicare, helping to reduce or eliminate out of pocket costs associated with those programs, and appealing agency decisions when services through those programs (including the right to durable medical equipment) are denied.

## Student Loans Presentation

Student loan debt has reached epic proportions and low-income borrowers are especially burdened by this debt. There has been a great increase in elderly, disabled and veteran borrowers who have their income and benefits attached to pay back student loan debt. The Student Loan Clinic is held monthly at Neighborhood Legal Services. We assist student loan borrowers on a variety of issues including repayment plans, student loan forgiveness, options for getting loans out of default and a variety of discharges of student loans. We are able to assist borrowers in navigating collection agencies and government entities in order to reduce the burden of student loan debt.

# NLS COMMUNITY ADVOCATE TRAININGS OFFERED

## **Housing Unit Presentation**

Homelessness has become an increasingly serious problem, especially for families with young children. The correlation between homelessness and evictions is strong and undeniable. The Housing Law Unit represents clients facing housing crises. Usually, this means representing clients facing illegal evictions or clients who have already been locked out of their homes. By making sure that landlords maintain apartments that are safe and habitable, the Housing Unit helps preserve and improve the housing stock. The Housing Unit also represents tenants in both public and subsidized housing, along with clients who are victims of discrimination.

## **Disability Advocacy Project Presentation**

The Disability Advocacy Project (DAP) assists both adults and children in appeals regarding eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Based on disability, SSI provides a more generous and dependable source of income than public assistance for disabled children and adults. Clients include individuals with a broad range of both physical and mental impairments. A Representative is provided at Administrative Hearings, at the Appeals Counsel, and in Federal District Court.

## **Smart Seniors: Consumer Law Presentation**

The Attorney General's Office will present on consumer law and seniors; focusing on how to recognize and avoid the current fraud and scams affecting our area. Assistance is also available with the ongoing issues of Do Not Call violations and what you can do about them; how to protect yourself from identity theft at any age; credit and financial tips to protect your assets and finances; door-to-door contactor issues and general safety for seniors regarding the digital world and much more