

EQUAL ACCESS

May 2024

INTRODUCING THE
**TOGETHER FOR
JUSTICE TEAM**

PSLS IS CELEBRATING
47 YEARS

PSLS AWARDED
**\$1.2 MILLION
HUD GRANT**



PRAIRIE STATE
LEGAL SERVICES

PSLEGAL.ORG

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LAWYERS FOR JUSTICE

Dear Friend of PSLS,

Prairie State Legal Services works toward ensuring equal access to justice for residents of 36 counties across Northern and Central Illinois. PSLS staff are committed to helping our clients meet their basic human needs, supporting them every step of the way. **We focus on helping our clients become financially stable, live a safer life and have a place to call home.** With your support, PSLS is able to provide civil legal help to the most vulnerable in our communities. I introduce you to a few clients that PSLS has been honored to help:

Financial Stability for Zach

Meet Zach. When Zach was in his late teens, he made a mistake and ended up with a felony conviction for cannabis on his record. Zach shared that this happened during a challenging time in his life – both emotionally and mentally. Fast forward 10 years: Zach's personal life improved, but he was regularly turned away from job opportunities because of the felony. Zach turned to PSLS when a company that wanted to hire him told Zach that they couldn't hire him because the felony prevented their insurance carrier from insuring him. PSLS staff successfully assisted Zach in vacating and expunging the felony from his record, opening the doors to employment for Zach.

Housing for Maren

Meet Maren, a young woman expecting her first child. Maren was depressed because her best friend recently passed away. She started missing work often due to being depressed. Then Maren was hospitalized and continued to miss work. Maren fell behind on rent and faced eviction. She needed to act

quickly to ensure that she and her newborn had a place to call home. Maren reached out to PSLS for a helping hand. PSLS staff listened carefully to understand Maren's situation. PSLS advocated for Maren, working with her landlord to successfully come to a payment plan agreement that was considerate of Maren's situation. Thanks to the high-quality legal services provided by PSLS, Maren's eviction case was dismissed and sealed. Today, Maren is starting her motherhood journey with stable housing.

Safety for Laila

Meet Laila, a young lady who grew up in a tight-knit, religious community. Unfortunately, Laila also grew up in an abusive home. Laila moved out of her childhood home after an incident of abuse, and got an order of protection on her own. Laila's finances were impacted because she had to find emergency housing and she missed work while she found a safe place to go. Laila was desperate and reached out to PSLS for help. PSLS assisted Laila throughout her journey to obtain an order of protection. PSLS represented Laila at the hearing for an order of protection. After Laila's testimony, the abuser agreed to a plenary order of protection. The plenary order of protection included \$3,000 to Laila for losses due to the abuse and also required Laila's abuser to get a mental health evaluation. Today, Laila is living a safer life free from her abuser.

PSLS was honored to provide free civil legal services to Zach, Maren and Laila and walk alongside them in their unique journeys to meet their basic needs.



Denise E. Conklin

PSLS' life-changing legal work is possible because of our friends, supporters and community partners, like you. **Together – join PSLS in its mission to ensure equal access to justice for all.** Please consider donating to PSLS to help us continue to provide legal representation, advocacy, education and outreach to those in need. With your support, PSLS can continue to provide free legal support to individuals in our communities, such as Zach, Maren and Laila, for many years to come.

To donate, visit pslegal.org/donate or scan the QR code. PSLS is a charitable not-for-profit organization and gifts are tax deductible under IRS section 501(c)(3).

Thank you for your support and partnership,

Denise E. Conklin
PSLS Executive Director

SCAN TO DONATE



PSLS is proud to protect the confidentiality of our clients. Client names were changed above.



EVERYTHING IS BETTER TOGETHER!

Announcing PSLS' new Together for Justice Team

2023, we conducted interviews and member surveys to determine how to evolve our approach to recruit the next generation of supporters and the best support for PSLS.

To expand our network of support and impact in our communities, we are now launching the Together for Justice Team. This team is a committee of professionals who give time, talent and financial support to help PSLS meet its goal of promoting just communities and access to civil legal aid for all Illinois families who need it across our 36-county service area.

The Together for Justice Team will meet four times annually to learn about the impact of PSLS' services and ways to support PSLS' work in their communities. In addition to these

INTRODUCING THE TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE TEAM

For more than 30 years, local Campaign for Legal Services committees have been raising support for PSLS. Since the inception of these committees, staff and founding donors have helped build strong groups of attorney philanthropists across our service area whose work and investments have made PSLS' work possible. Now we are bringing together these groups into one Together for Justice Team to continue to raise support for and awareness about PSLS throughout our 36-county service area.

Over the years, these volunteer committees directly supported each PSLS neighborhood office. As PSLS grew, the committees organized help when needed, fundraised to serve more families, and invited friends and colleagues to support PSLS. Committees averaged 5-10 members per office and met several times each year to plan signature events and organize support within the legal community for civil legal aid. These committees asked for support when offices and budgets grew to address increased needs during difficult times. Whatever the community idea or need, these committees rose to the occasion and supported PSLS' work and the clients we serve. COVID-19 introduced a virtual world to these committees, and in

meetings, PSLS staff will organize several working committees and Giving Circles to increase support throughout our service area. The working committees are organized by philanthropic passion not geographic location. Organized communication and opt-in options for PSLS donors to become more involved will help us convene more volunteers and build more organized support.

As we prepare to harness our collective power across 36 counties, we would like to recognize the former Campaign for Legal Services' committee members for their support and counsel in Bloomington, Peoria, Rockford, Waukegan and the few and mighty in Galesburg, Joilet, Kankakee, Moline, Ottawa, West Suburban and Woodstock.

Thank you for growing our grassroots support. To find more information visit pslegal.org/our-supporters.



**PRAIRIE STATE
LEGAL SERVICES**

GET TO KNOW PSLS' FUNDRAISING TEAM



KATEY FREDERKING ANNUAL GIVING SPECIALIST

kfrederking@pslegal.org

What do you love most about working at PSLS?

I just joined the PSLS team in mid-April, but I'm excited to join and fundraise with a team that helps create better and safer communities throughout the state that I grew up in. I am a firm believer in the importance of the legal system and thrilled to work with the fundraising team to strengthen the mission and vision of PSLS.

Who or what inspires you?

Community inspires me – and the little ways that neighbors show up for each other, and the ways that we all invest in a better world.

Where is your favorite place on Earth?

While I spent two years studying, traveling and living abroad – at the end of the day, my favorite place is curled up with my two rescue dogs and my fiancé, wherever that may be!



LISA HUME MAJOR GIVING SPECIALIST

lhume@pslegal.org

What do you love most about working at PSLS?

The Resource Development team that I work with is both mighty and driven. They operate like the heart-centered engine of PSLS. I enjoy collaborating with them and building relationships with dedicated PSLS donors.

Who or what inspires you?

Vulnerability is inspiring to me. "This is the world you have made yourself, now you have to live in it."
-Nina Simone

Where is your favorite place on Earth?

Palermo, Sicily. Although, tourism is up there since season two of The White Lotus!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, PSLS!



May 31, 2024 will mark 47 years since PSLS opened its doors. Since 1977, PSLS has worked to serve individuals across Northern and Central Illinois with civil legal aid, one client at a time. The Legal Services Corporation, PSLS' partner in providing civil legal services to our clients, is also celebrating an anniversary. LSC's 50th anniversary is on July 25, 2024. In April, PSLS Executive Director, Denise Conklin, represented PSLS in Washington, D.C. at LSC's 50th Anniversary celebration. Conklin met with congressional staff about the importance of civil legal aid and attended LSC's 50th Anniversary Gala. PSLS is grateful to call LSC a partner in providing high-quality legal services to our clients.



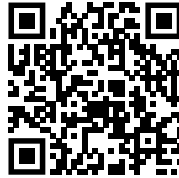
L-R: PSLS Executive Director Denise Conklin, Legal Aid Chicago CEO/Executive Director Katherine W. Shank, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid Executive Director Clarissa Gaff at LSC's 50th Anniversary Gala in Washington, D.C.

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

Explore PSLS' success in numbers in the 2023 Impact Report, now available on PSLS' website, pslegal.org. The data from 2023 will showcase the positive impact that PSLS' high-quality legal services have made in clients' lives. You will read about the unique journeys of three clients and how PSLS helped them meet their basic needs.

Find the 2023 Impact Report on pslegal.org or scan the QR code.

SCAN ME



High-Quality Legal Services for Every Client. Every Time. 2023 Impact Report



OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

PSLS recognizes May as Older Americans Month. In 2023, PSLS provided assistance with legal issues to nearly 4,000 clients aged 60 and older. Meet Janice, an older adult with a disability and a non-English speaker. Janice is a victim of fraud and identity theft, which led to more than \$40,000 in unauthorized charges in credit card debt. Janice turned to PSLS for help fighting two collection cases related to the debt. PSLS worked side by side with Janice to review documentation and fully understand her situation. PSLS stepped in and was a voice for Janice, proving that Janice did not authorize or have knowledge of the credit card transactions. Thanks to the high-quality legal services provided by PSLS staff, both collection cases against Janice were dismissed!

PSLS AWARDED \$1.2 MILLION HUD GRANT

PSLS will receive \$425,000 annually for three years to fight Housing Discrimination from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). PSLS' award is part of the more than \$30 million given to fair housing organizations across the country under its Fair Housing Initiatives Program. PSLS funds are received through the Private Enforcement Initiative (PEI). The PEI funds non-profit fair housing organizations to carry out testing and enforcement activities to prevent or eliminate discriminatory housing practices. PSLS is thankful for HUD's partnership in fighting housing discrimination.



DO YOU NEED LEGAL HELP?

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation manages four state-funded programs that offer free legal help, advice and information to people who can't afford a lawyer.



25 YEARS ★
Powering Legal Aid,
Championing Justice
for All

FOR HELP WITH ISSUES SUCH AS FAMILY LAW, CONSUMER FRAUD, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & GOVERNMENT BENEFITS



Cook County Residents

Call CARPLS Legal Aid Hotline at 312.738.9200

Northern and Central Illinois Residents

Call Prairie State Legal Services at 800.531.7057

Central and Southern Illinois Residents

Call Land of Lincoln Legal Aid at 877.342.7891

Anyone in Illinois can visit IllinoisLegalAid.org to find simplified legal information, forms and other resources.



FOR HELP WITH EVICTION-RELATED ISSUES

Illinois tenants and landlords can contact Eviction Help Illinois to see if they qualify for free legal help.

Call 855.631.0811 | Text 'Eviction' to 844.938.4280 | Visit evictionhelpillinois.org



FOR HELP WITH VETERANS LEGAL ISSUES SUCH AS DISCHARGE UPGRADES AND BENEFITS

Illinois veterans, active-duty military and their families can contact the Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network (IL-AFLAN) to see if they qualify for free legal help.

Call 855.452.3526 | Visit ilaflan.org

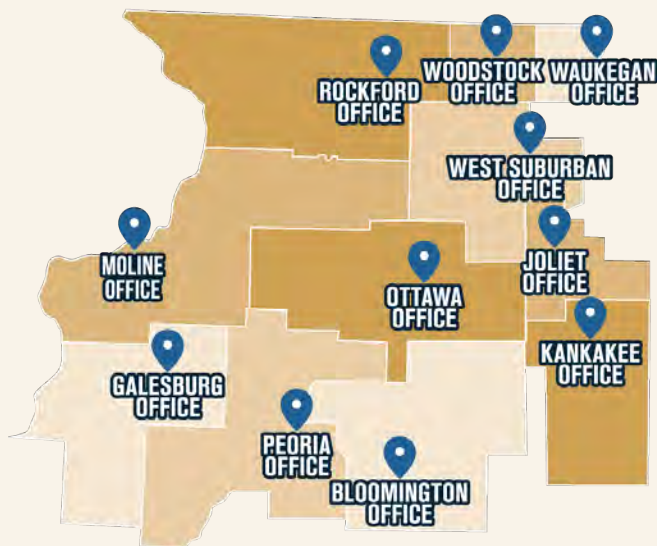


FOR HELP CLEARING CANNABIS RECORDS

Illinois residents can register with New Leaf Illinois to find out if they qualify for cannabis expungement.

Call 855.963.9532 | Visit newleafillinois.org

Civil Legal Aid Programs, the Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network and New Leaf Illinois are funded through the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. Eviction Help Illinois is funded through the IL Department of Human Services.



PSLS OFFICES

BLOOMINGTON

Serving Livingston,
McLean and
Woodford Counties
Phone: 309-827-5021
Toll Free: 800-874-2536

GALESBURG

Serving Henderson,
Knox, McDonough and
Warren Counties
Phone: 309-343-2141
Toll Free: 800-331-0617

JOLIET

Serving Will County
Phone: 815-727-5123
Toll Free: 877-315-4472

KANKAKEE

Serving Iroquois and
Kankakee Counties
Phone: 815-935-2750
Toll Free: 800-346-2864

MOLINE

Serving Henry, Lee,
Mercer, Rock Island
and Whiteside Counties
Phone: 309-794-1328
Toll Free: 800-322-9804

OTTAWA

Serving Bureau,
Grundy, LaSalle and
Putnam Counties
Phone: 815-434-5903
Toll Free: 800-892-7888

PEORIA

Serving Fulton,
Marshall, Peoria,
Stark and
Tazewell Counties
Phone: 309-674-9831
Toll Free: 800-322-2280

ROCKFORD

Serving Boone,
Carroll, Jo Daviess,
Ogle, Stephenson and
Winnebago Counties
Phone: 815-965-2902
Toll Free: 800-892-2985

WAUKEGAN

Serving Lake County
Phone: 847-662-6925
Toll Free: 800-942-3940

WEST SUBURBAN

Serving DeKalb,
DuPage, Kane and
Kendall Counties
Phone: 630-690-2130
Toll Free: 800-690-2130

WOODSTOCK

Serving McHenry
County
Phone: 815-344-9113
Toll Free: 877-480-3020

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PRAIRIE STATE
LEGAL SERVICES

PSLS HELPLINE NUMBERS

General Telephone Counseling
800-531-7057

Fair Housing Project
855-347-7757

Domestic Violence Legal Advice Line
844-388-7757

Legal Help for Homeowners
888-966-7757

Legal Assistance for Older Adults
888-965-7757

Low-Income Tax Clinic
855-829-7757

JOIN THE PSLS TEAM

Do you want to work with a team of caring individuals and make a difference in others' lives? Consider a career at PSLS. Explore opportunities on pslegal.org/jobs.



PRAIRIE STATE
LEGAL SERVICES

303 North Main Street, Suite 600, Rockford, IL 61101

Charity
Navigator



★ FOUR-STAR ★



HAVING PROBLEMS
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LEGAL ASSISTANCE
FOR OLDER ADULTS

888.965.7757
pslegal.org



JOIN PSLS ON ITS MISSION —
VOLUNTEER!

PSLS is honored to have committed volunteers who truly care about our clients, our communities and believe in PSLS' mission. Thank you for making a difference in the communities that PSLS serves.

Interested in joining PSLS as a volunteer?
Email volunteer@pslegal.org



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LEGAL SERVICES

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