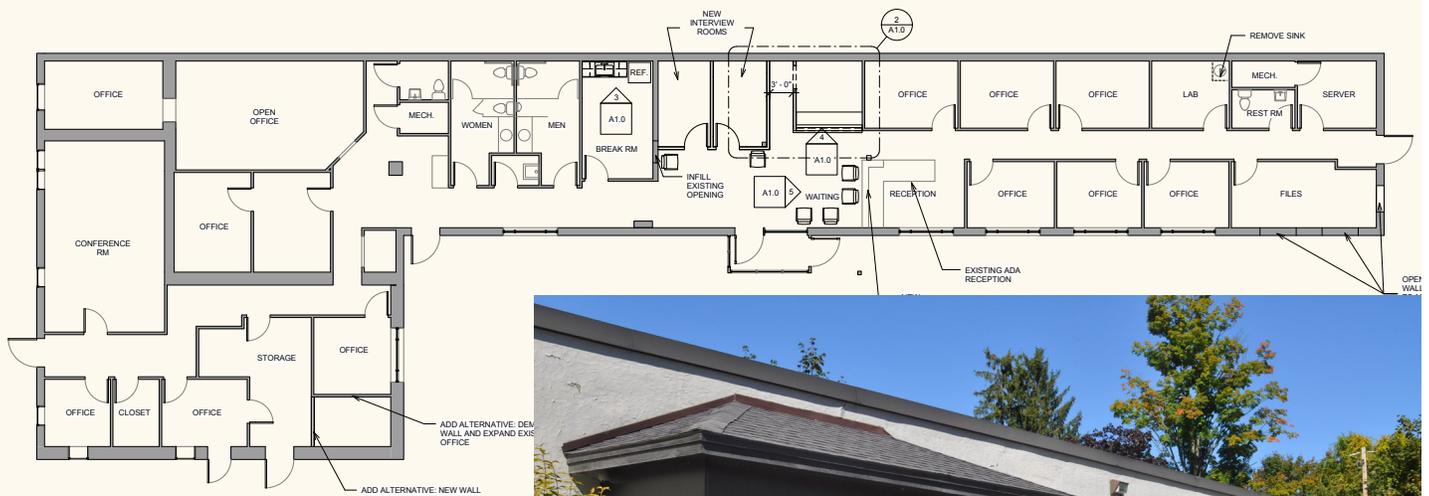


The Right Time and the Right Place

Our New Building at 40 New Street

**LEGAL AID SOCIETY IN SARATOGA SPRINGS
A CASE FOR SUPPORT**



PROPOSED PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



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Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York

www.lasnny.org

for more information contact Deanne Grimaldi: 518-689-6336; dgrimaldi@lasnny.org

*A Word from the
Saratoga Springs Supervising Attorney
Mary Withington*



Mary Withington receiving the Ruth M. Miner award from LAS Executive Director Lillian Moy in May 2013.

Near the end of my first year at Albany Law School, I headed over to the Career Planning Office where there was an announcement indicating the Legal Aid Society of Albany was looking for summer law clerks.

It was also the beginning of the Reagan era with massive Legal Services Corporation cutbacks in funding.

Simultaneously with the consolidation of the Legal Aid Societies of Albany, Schenectady and Rens-

selaer was a northern expansion to the City of Saratoga Springs, spearheaded by Roger Kiley, Esq., of Snyder, Kiley and Toohey. Roger, who was president of the Saratoga County Bar Association and president of the Legal Aid Society Board of Directors at the time, had secured cheap space in City Hall right across from City Court. On December 1, 1980, the doors opened for business with a staff



Edward J. Lindner (left), Mary Withington and V. Jerome Luhn at the Saratoga Springs office in 1983.

I applied and commenced my employment on June 4, 1979. It was a time of consolidation and it was not long before I found myself working for the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York with staff attorneys from Schenectady and Troy such as Susan Anthony, Esq. and David Fruchter, Esq., also occupying offices at 55 Columbia Avenue in downtown Albany.

comprised of V. Jerome Luhn, Esq., Edward J. Lindner, Esq., Kathleen Corbett, Esq., Deborah Schoenberg, Barbara Brody, Darla Zelinsky and Gretchen Zeh. When Kathleen left to join Roger in his firm, I was hired as a staff attorney, returning

We are in a time of expansion with new funds from the Judiciary to assist us in meeting client legal needs.

to LAS on September 29, 1982. This was another time of transition as Lawrence Klepper, Esq., the Executive Director, was replaced on an interim basis by Joel Spitzer, Esq., who had served many years as the Managing Attorney in the Albany office, and then by J. Denison “Denny” Ray, Esq. Denny moved the Saratoga Springs office out of City Hall and across the street to 10-12 Lake Avenue in 1986 where the office remained for twenty years before relocating in February 2006 to 112 Spring Street to space in an old school building which had been beautifully rehabilitated by Linell Lands.

Grants come and grants go. Staff is hired and staff leaves. The physical needs of the Saratoga Springs office expand and contract as these events occur. We are fortunate to be in a time of wonderful expansion with new funds from the Judiciary to assist us in meeting client legal needs, needs which have done nothing but expand over the years. It was time to find a permanent home for the Legal Aid Society and we are extremely grateful for the opportunity to call 40 New Street home. Please join us in making this latest transition with a financial contribution to meet the cost of our down payment and modest rehab.

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York provides effective, free civil legal services and education to and advocacy for people with low income or other barriers to accessing the legal system. We secure basic needs, protect and preserve legal rights, provide equal access to justice and seek fairness and dignity for our clients.

The Right Time and the Right Place

Our New Building at 40 New Street

- LASNNY has been serving Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties since 1980 and rented our old space at 112 Spring Street from 2006. Despite our love for the beautifully renovated School No. 04, we were bursting at the seams and needed more contiguous space.
- With the rapidly rising cost of real estate and projected rise in lending rates we acted swiftly so we would not be priced out of both renting and buying in Saratoga Springs.
- The building at New Street formerly housed a non-profit, the Saratoga Equal Opportunity Commission, and is familiar to many of our clients and on the bus line.
- The 5,500 square foot building gives our staff, law clerks and volunteers much needed space as well as space to expand.
- The property also has a newer and well-constructed 4,000 square foot storage building which will generate income to defray the mortgage and accelerate the building of equity.
- A new multi-purpose conference room allows us to offer on-site classes for our clients.

Purchasing a building in Saratoga Springs allows LASNNY to remain in the city near our community partners and accessible to our clients for years to come, accommodate our new expansion and improve financial stability as equity grows.

About Us

At present, our staff consists of seven lawyers and two paralegals who provide advice and counsel, extended representation, community education and referrals to help our clients meet their essential needs: housing, income, health care, safety, stability, education and consumer protection. Led by Supervising Attorney Mary Withington, our Saratoga Springs office, which serves three counties, has always been one of our most efficient and effective. In 2012, the staff in Saratoga Springs closed 1,453 cases, with 499 pending at the end of 2012. Approximately one third of the cases handled in the Saratoga Springs office consisted of family law matters, with income maintenance and housing cases making up the bulk of the remaining caseload.



New Home on New Street in Saratoga Springs

A Capital Campaign to fund the permanent home of LASNNY in Saratoga Springs has begun. The office has a long history in the county, and had always rented space. Purchasing the new building consolidates operations and allows Legal Aid to make the most of staff and volunteer efforts.

Saratoga Statistics

The justice gap can be less visible in a relatively well-off community like Saratoga, since signs of prosperity can mask the need for civil legal services. Even the markers of poverty can be misleading. The Census, for the period of 2007-2011, put 6.5% of people in the county below the poverty level,

compared to 14.5% across the state.

However, drive through downtown Saratoga Springs, and an ever-growing homeless population is visible in the parking garages, public spaces and facilities open through the night. Saratoga County hit a record high in January 2012 when 799 people applied for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. Nutrition outreach is one of the many legal service areas addressed by LASNNY. With additional services to assist clients with extended representation in housing issues, domestic relations matters and public entitlement problems and with advice in a wide range of civ-

Each year our Saratoga Springs office is one of the most productive in the program.

In 2012, 1,453 cases benefitting 3,187 people were closed. The office also had 583 pending matters at the end of the year.

il legal matters, the staff closed over 1,500 cases in 2012. Statistically and realistically, this is only a fraction of the civil legal services need, and many people with legal problems cannot get representation.

Increasing Services

Fortunately, the new building at 40 New Street in Saratoga Springs has room for extra staff, and funding has been created to address the ever growing civil legal services need—primarily through the efforts of the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, the Honorable Jonathan Lippman. Honored at LASNNY’s 90th Anniversary celebration earlier this year with the Arthur Harvey Award, Judge Lippman has worked fervently toward creating a “civil Gideon” where any individual facing problems with an essential need will have an attorney to provide legal assistance. “So much of our expansion of services and our ability to continue to function the way we do is in large measure due to him,” said Mary M. Withington, the Supervising Attorney of the Saratoga

The justice gap can be less visible in a relatively well-off community like Saratoga Springs, since signs of prosperity can mask the need for civil legal services.

Saratoga Springs office. “He made it his mission to provide civil legal services to people who are facing essential needs, which is a pretty broad category.”

This means more people looking for child support, public assistance, unemployment insurance benefits, or help with consumer debt issues will

Room to Breathe

That expansion of funding allows more legal staff in Saratoga Springs, requiring more office space. The staff



receive enhanced legal services and not simply advice. “Housing work has been so grant specific that if you were living in the City of Saratoga Springs we would have been able to assist you with an eviction proceeding,” explains Withington. “But, if you were in the next town over, Ballston Spa, we didn’t have any funding for an attorney to go to court with you. All we could do was give you advice. So this expansion of civil legal funding dedicated to low income persons’ essential needs has been a tremendous boon.”

outgrew the two floors at 112 Spring Street in Saratoga Springs. Staff had doubled up in one-person offices; interns squeezed in where they might fit. The building at 40 New Street has room for increased staffing and volunteers.

This is especially important as all applicants for admission to the New York State bar are required to perform 50 hours of pro bono services. Both the Saratoga Springs and Albany offices have a long history of working with Albany Law and other law school students, in meeting the civil legal service needs of clients and the educational needs of the students. LASNNY serves not only as a

law firm, but a teaching institution for law students, especially those interested in performing in the public sector.

“I think the location will serve both the staff and the community really well,” said Ronald J. Kim, Esq., who serves on the LASNNY board. “When you have an office setting in Saratoga, one of the challenges is parking. This has parking so that’s good for people who need to access services.” He notes, another benefit of the larger office to both clients and staff is that it fosters confidentiality.



It’s history. The previous LASNNY office at 112 Spring Street is in a beautiful building, but the space was small and crowded.

Community Collaboration

The work of Legal Aid is part of a vibrant non-profit community. The new office, in the old Saratoga County Economic

Opportunity Council (EOC) building, is indicative of the links between the human service agencies in the area.

The EOC relocated to Ballston Spa. Julie Hoxsie, retired director of the EOC, was instrumental in initiating the purchase of 40 New Street by Legal Aid. “We’ve collaborated in many ways,” said Hoxsie. “We have a food stamp facilitator that comes to our office from Legal Aid on a regular basis. We’ve been able to secure services through Legal Aid for many of our customers. I think it’s a one of a kind, very essential service and I’m happy to see them come in a location that I think will be easy for people to access.”

The collaborative nature of Legal Aid’s work is also apparent in its long-standing relationship with Catholic Charities. “From our earliest days in the tri-county communities, we have shared the same mission of serving the poor and the vulnerable and often served the same clients,” said Sister Charla Commins, Executive Director of Catholic Charities in Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties. “Agencies work together on various grants, task forces and community organizations to better serve the elderly, the homeless and victims of domestic violence and their children. Mary Withington and I worked closely in the 1980s and 90s with people living with HIV/AIDS through the HIV/AIDS Coali-

tion of the Saratoga Region. No agency alone could have accomplished what occurred in those difficult years.”

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“Saratoga County is a wonderful place to live and work,” Sister Charla continued, “but it is increasingly difficult for Catholic Charities and LAS to convince people that we have low income people who need assistance. The prolific upscale development occurring throughout the county tends to hide that reality.”

Long term cooperation has created a level of comfort between LASNNY and other providers that makes navigating difficult situations easier for shared clients.

The Mechanicville Area Community Center works closely with the LASNNY Saratoga office. “We have a lawyer who comes out here once a month and works with Domestic Violence clients,” said Merritt-Jorgensen, Violence Advocacy Program Director with the center. “We’re not lawyers here so we rely on their expertise,” she said. “We can refer clients right to them and make the transition smooth.”

Maggie Fronk, executive director of the Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Services of

Saratoga County, said, “We have had a 30-year relationship working with LAS for the benefit of individuals in our community. We are thrilled that they have moved into this new facility with expanded services because they provide an essential function in helping people with a broad range legal issues. We’ve come to know and depend upon Legal Aid, which operates with the highest standards of professionalism.”

LASNNY staff often work with the Saratoga District Attorney’s office. District Attorney Jim Murphy said, “I’ve known Mary and all her colleagues at Legal Aid for many years. I’m proud to work with them in our local domestic violence coalitions. They are an integral part of our community in Saratoga County and I’m happy they have found a permanent home at 40 New Street.”

Support for the new building and how it will help the agency serve its clients and the community is strong. Building strong support for the Capital Campaign is the next step.

“Any investment in the Legal Aid Society is a wonderful investment because it means real people with real needs are getting assistance,” said Withington. “If we have to pay less on our mortgage, that gives us

We’ve come to know and depend upon Legal Aid, which operates with the highest standards of professionalism.

more money to provide legal services. I hope that people will get on board and get on the bus to justice.”



The Saratoga Springs staff celebrating the Legal Aid Society’s 90th Anniversary in May 2013.

Serving the low-income and needy residents of Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, St. Lawrence, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington Counties, and the St. Regis Reservation.

A Happy Ending



Lorrie Cleavland (right) with her Legal Aid Society attorney, Joanna Davis.

Lorrie Cleavland is very happy about a very unhappy event. The ordeal that began with an argument last August settled after 11 months of intense proceedings. “My husband assaulted me and I had him arrested. I went to Family Court to get emergency custody for my 3 year-old daughter, and the court directed me toward the Legal Aid Society,” said Cleavland. She called the Saratoga office right away and within a day, Joanna Davis called her. “She was completely comforting to me,” Cleavland remembered,

noting that just speaking with her was a huge relief. “When I met her, I felt so much better. She is so wonderful, by the way.”

The feeling is mutual. “Lorrie is a model client,” said Joanna Davis. “She’s one of your dream clients who is really cooperative, listens to the advice given her, and asks questions.”

The case was really rough on many levels. Domestic violence is never easy, but Lorrie had her leg broken while her daughter was in her arms. As matters progressed, she faced attacks on her charac-

Domestic violence is never easy, but Lorrie had her leg broken while her daughter was in her arms...she faced attacks on her character, too.

ter, too. The respondent still claims she broke her leg kicking a door, and that she was drunk or abusing prescription drugs – despite medical records that clearly show none of this was true.

“Everybody told me this is going to be a really long hard run and I had no idea how long and hard it was going to be,” said Cleavland. “Without the help from LAS and Joanna and the whole team, I don’t know if I would have been able to do it. I don’t know if I would have just thrown in the towel, and said forget it, I can’t do this.”

The support was critical both emotionally and financially. Without LASNNY, she could not have afforded a lawyer, but the services she received extended beyond practical necessities.

“She was always trying to make me feel better,” Cleavland said of Davis. “Joanna was incredible in court. You walk into court with an abuser, and you try to hold your head up high and it’s really hard not to not feel intimidated.”

Davis, however, assured her that it was okay to be upset *and* hold her head up high. “You’re better than this,” is one of the things Davis said. And, “just think about the outcome.”

Keeping her eyes on the prize paid off. Cleavland now has a 5-year stay away Order of Protection, sole legal and sole physical custody, and supervised visitation for Dad. Other problems led to adding on therapeutic visitation to supervised visits, and the father is



required to take anger management and parenting courses.

Domestic Violence law is Joanna Davis’ passion. While attending Albany Law, Davis participated in the Domestic Violence clinic and that’s really where she found her niche. She discovered she liked matrimonial and family law during law school, and the clinic narrowed that interest. Her attraction to this area was so clear that she knew if she went into private practice, she’d have to do a lot of pro bono work to address her calling. She was hired at LASNNY in 2005, before she officially passed the bar.

“We need to do good with our degrees,” said Davis. Following that sense of duty has paid off with great job satisfaction.

“The camaraderie between the domestic violence service providers, and the other staff attorneys in the organizations

that do domestic violence work is wonderful,” said Davis.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and that community is more poised than usual to give a voice to men and women who experience domestic violence.

“All the power and control is taken away from our clients,” said Davis. “It’s our job to give that power and control back, so that they get to decide how they want to live their lives.”

Lorrie Cleavland tells everyone she can about how Legal Aid eased the stress of her situation. This opportunity to tell her story for the newsletter is another chance to thank Joanna Davis and the agency.

“I’m looking forward to paying it forward, because this is the least I can do,” she said.

Note: Brenna Sharp helped on this case, serving for Neglect Proceedings in Family Court.

2012 Accomplishments Saratoga County

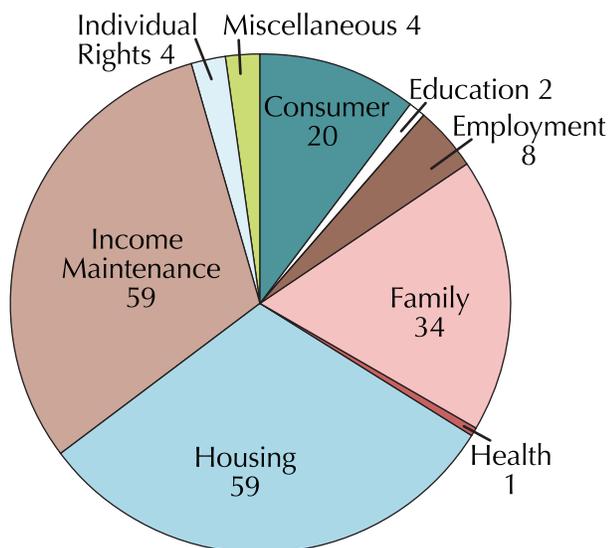
- LASNNY staff at the Saratoga Springs office closed 885 cases and had 279 cases pending at the end of 2012, benefitting 1,941 people, at an average cost of \$571.48 per closed case.
- Continued to deliver high quality advice and brief service through our client hotline system; our intake specialists closed 338 cases in 2012.
- LASNNY staff saved NYS taxpayers \$194,820; won 31 Supplemental Security Income SSI/SSD cases; clients received about \$668,996 in benefits.
- Closed 80 domestic violence program cases.
- 46 people were able to stay in their homes due to our eviction prevention services.
- 6 cases handled by the Foreclosure Prevention Project, which assists low and moderate income homeowners threatened with foreclosure.

Demographics:

Clients in the Saratoga Springs service area receiving services are:

- 72 percent female
- 92 percent white
- 3 percent African American
- 2.5 percent Hispanic and
- 2.5 percent other.

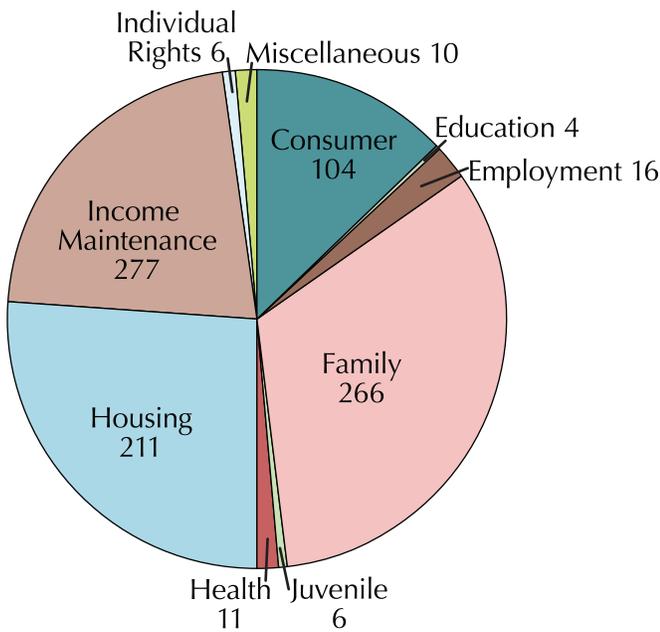
**Types of Cases
Saratoga Springs 2012**



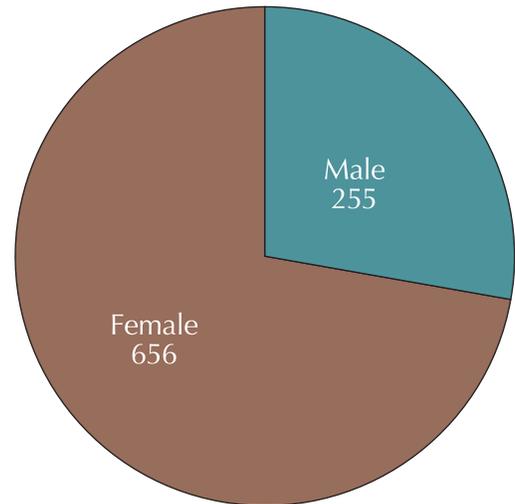
Saratoga County Statistics

Over 62% of the caseload in LASNNY's Saratoga office comes from Saratoga County, which has about 63% of the combined population of the Saratoga office's three-county service area.

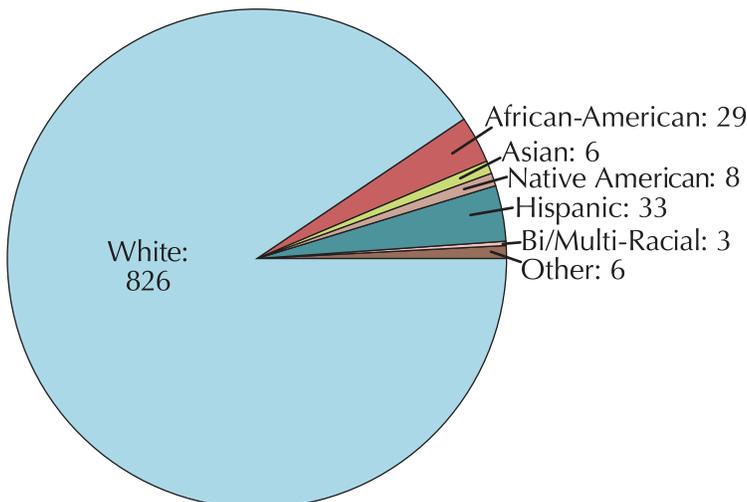
Saratoga Cases



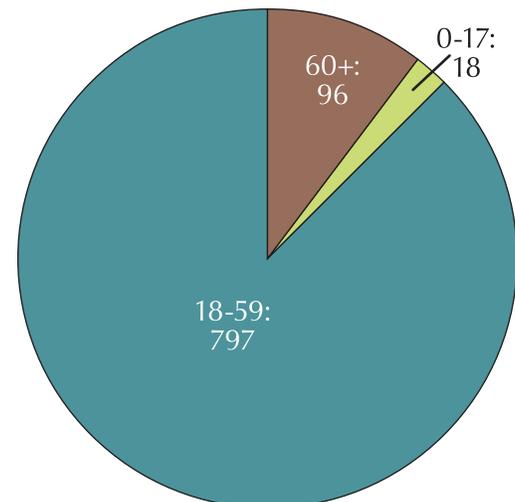
Saratoga Gender



Saratoga Race



Saratoga Age



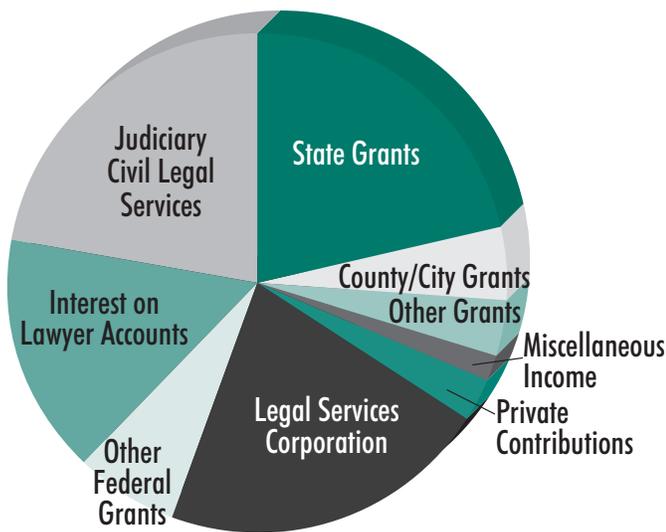
Common Questions about the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York

Are you a state or governmental agency?

No. The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (LASNNY) is a nonprofit organization governed by a Board of Directors. LASNNY is recognized as a 501(c)(3) by the IRS and registered as a charity in the State of New York.

Where does your money come from?

Our revenue comes from a diversity of sources which includes federal, state, county, city and private funding sources.



How many lawyers do you have?

Agency wide we have 43 attorneys, 15 paralegals and 15 support staff. In the Saratoga Springs office we have seven lawyers and two paralegals that provide advice and counsel.

How many offices do you have?

Currently we have five offices, serving 16 counties; They are located in Albany, Canton, Amsterdam, Plattsburgh and Saratoga Springs. We own the buildings where our offices are housed in Albany, Plattsburgh and now Saratoga Springs.

What is the composition of your board?

The LASNNY Board is composed of 21 members, 60% of which are appointed by county bar associations and 35% of which are client eligible and appointed by community agencies. Rounding out the Board is the Community Representative, appointed by the Board of Directors.

What are the criteria for accepting a client?

Generally a family's income must be at or below 200% of the poverty level. For a family of four this is \$47,100.

How do individuals get services from LASNNY?

Clients either call us directly or are referred by a community agency.

What types of cases do you handle?

We handle urgent civil non-criminal cases with the majority in the areas of family law, housing and income maintenance.

What type of assistance do you provide?

The following types of services are available:

- **Full Representation** a lawyer or a legal advocate in court or at a hearing at a government agency
- **Brief Advice** consultation person or over the telephone
- **Pro Se Legal Clinic** where you are shown how to "help yourself" with a particular legal problem
- **Self-Help Materials** such as educational fact sheets and brochures
- **Community Legal Education** — preventative education about legal rights and responsibilities
- Other workshops and other services

LASNNY Funding Partners

- Legal Services Corporation
- Interest on Lawyer Account Fund of the State of New York
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- United States Department of Justice
- New York State Legislature
- New York State Office of the Attorney General
- New York State Attorney General Homeowner Protection Program
- NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance
- NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
- NYS Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
- NYS Unified Court System Judiciary Civil Legal Services
- Albany County Department for Aging
- Fulton County Office for Aging
- St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging
- Washington County Office for the Aging
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Office for the Aging
- City of Saratoga Springs
- New York State Bar Foundation
- United Way of the Greater Capital Region
- Albany Law School
- Hunger Solutions New York
- Warren County
- Albany County Department of Social Services
- Schenectady Community Action Program
- Joseph's House
- City of Schenectady
- City of Albany
- City of Troy
- law firms, corporations and individuals through the Justice for All Campaign.

Community Partners

Addressing our clients' legal needs successfully and holistically cannot be done without the assistance of our community partners. Working in concert with these agencies through task forces and networks, mutual referrals and case planning, we seek to improve the lives of our clients and the quality of life in the communities we serve.

- Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Services of Saratoga County (DVRC)
- Mechanicville Area Community Services Center (MACSC)
- Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council (EOC)
- WAIT House (Welcoming Adolescents in Transition)
- Catholic Charities of Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties
- CAPTAIN Youth and Family Services
- City of Saratoga Springs
- Saratoga County Mental Health Center (Cramer House and Friendship House)
- Saratoga County Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (SCASAS)
- The Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Council (The Prevention Council)
- Four Winds-Saratoga
- Unlimited Potential, Inc.
- Saratoga Springs Public Housing Authority (SSPHA)
- Transitional Services Association (TSA)
- Saratoga Center for the Family
- Southern Adirondack Independent Living Center (SAIL)
- Saratoga Bridges
- Franklin Community Center, Inc.
- Helping Hands Food Pantry (Jonesville United Methodist Church)
- Saratoga County Public Health Nursing Services
- Saratoga County Department of Social Services
- Saratoga Hospital
- Skidmore College
- Moreau Community Center
- Saratoga Hospital Health Insurance Navigation Program
- Fidelis Care
- Crisis Action Network (CAN)
- Saratoga Senior Center
- Saratoga Office of the Aging
- Wesley Community
- National Grid
- Schuylerville Area Food Emergency Resource (SAFER)
- Planned Parenthood