

CLIENT UPDATE

Fall - October 2015

Congratulations to the 2015 Winners of the Client Contribution Awards

For the past half-century, legal services clients have been spokespersons for justice, champions of local programs, allies and leaders in the many struggles in which legal service programs have been engaged. Clients are more than people with legal problems. However serious, that problem is only a small part of the whole person. Clients are a resource to their families, their communities, and this nation.

In 2014, the 50th anniversary year of the War on Poverty, TimeBanks USA and the Client Policy Group of the National Legal Aid & Defender Association initiated the Client Contribution Awards to honor, document, and support the role of clients and the client community as co-producers of justice. We are proud to present the 2015 winners of the Client Contribution Awards – a celebration of the contribution that clients have made to addressing injustice in their communities, and to battling for the integrity and growth of legal services programs across the country. This award was funded through the generous support of the Public Welfare Foundation for 2014 and 2015.

Out of the 14 nominees, the Client Contribution Awards Committee has selected five Extraordinary Client Champions. Extraordinary Client Champions will receive \$500.

Rosita Stanley has been a leader in Georgia's legal services community for more than three decades. She has worked

with Georgia Legal Services, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the National Clients Council. She also helped create the National Organization of Client Advocates. Ms. Stanley currently serves on the Board of NLADA as one of its strongest client voices.

John "Jay" Coleman serves as the Chair of the New York State Defenders Association Client Advisory Board, and for 25 years has mentored young Black and Latino men before, during, and after incarceration. Mr. Coleman helped create the Prisoner Pre-Entry Mentoring Program, and he serves as the program's Coordinator and Mentor. A former inmate, he is a champion for incarcerated people.

Norris Henderson of New Orleans is the Executive Director of the Voice of the Ex-Offender and a former OSI Soros Justice fellow. He served as Co-Director of Safe Streets/Strong Communities and Community Outreach Coordinator of the Louisiana Justice Coalition. After 27 years of undue incarceration, he has dedicated his life to helping ex-offenders transition back into society as productive citizens.

Tisha Ortiz is a student at California State East Bay who plans to become a lawyer, and has worked with the National Center for Youth Law in Oakland to help drive changes in public policy to improve the lives of foster children. Ms. Ortiz also served on the State of California's Quality

Improvement Project expert panel to design the state guidelines for administering psychotropic medication to foster children.

Rose Wilson recently concluded nine years on the Board of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation where she developed key relationships to raise awareness of the civil legal needs of Texans and helped increase state funding. She currently serves on the Board of the South Plains Food Bank, and previously served on the Board of Legal Aid of Northwest Texas.

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"We refuse to believe that the bank of justice
is bankrupt."

REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

A message from Harry Johnson, Client Policy Group Chair

I am pleased to once again to report the successes of the past year.

At the last NLADA Annual Conference, the Client Policy Group and TimeBanks USA presented four Client Contribution Awards at our client reception. The awards recognize the roles and contributions of clients of legal services programs across the nation was made possible by funding from the Public Welfare Foundation. The nominations process was developed by the Ad-Hoc Client Outreach Committee. Thank you to Ad-Hoc Client Outreach Committee members – Latryna Carlton, Myrnairis Cepeda, Harry Johnson, Sue Lau, Rosita Stanley and Ofelia Zapata (from the Client Policy Group) and Edgar Cahn and Christine Gray (from TimeBanks USA). Thanks also to Bridget Allen, TimeBanks staff, Tim Nicholson, video editor, and Camille Holmes, NLADA Client Policy Group liaison.


The 2014 awardees were Catherine Harris from Greater Boston Legal Services, Linda Morris from Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Harold Anderson from Atlanta Legal Aid Society and Tina Smith from Colorado Legal Services. The awardees received

\$500.00 dollars for their services to the legal services community and the community where they live.

This year we have selected even more Client Contribution Award winners. See front-page article for more information.

I want to thank Theron McNeil and Marcy Muller for the work with the communication committee. They have done excellent work identifying, gathering and writing articles and we appreciate their dedication to producing the Client Update for NLADA client members and members of the National Organization of Client Advocates (NOCA).

Rosita Stanley and Regina Kelly switched roles as chair and vice chair of the training committee and they are working on this year's training for the conference in November.

We do look forward to working with all committees and hope we can stay in lock step with each other so we will continue to have a very successful year. 

Powers of Attorney

Powers of Attorney, or POA, are different in each state. Generally there will be two different POA forms for Financial and Health Care. These documents may be called different things in each state. To find out more information about how your state handles these documents contact your local legal aid office. The following is general information that is likely to apply in each state.

Financial Power of Attorney

This allows you to pick an agent and back-up agent to make financial decisions for you if you are incapacitated and not able to make decisions on your own. Financial decisions can include: banking, paying bills, buying/selling property, running your business, or handling legal affairs. You can usually choose to make the POA effective the day you sign it, giving the person the authority to act on your behalf immediately, or you can make it effective at a later date when and if you become incapacitated.

Health Care Power of Attorney


This allows you to pick an agent and back-up agent to make health care decisions for you if you are incapacitated and

unable to make decisions on your own. Some states have combined the Health Care Power of Attorney and the Living Will into one document. The Living Will portion of the document generally allows you to tell your agent whether you want life support, CPR, feeding/breathing tubes, or no life saving measures at all if you are ever in a coma or persistent vegetative state. You can usually choose to make the POA effective the day you sign it, giving the person the authority to act on your behalf immediately, or you can make it effective at a later date when and if you become incapacitated.

Misuse of Powers of Attorney

Often times people choose family members, like their children, to be their Power of Attorney. We hope that these family members will make decisions in our best interest and not take advantage of us. Unfortunately, misuse of the POA does happen, and usually it happens with the Financial POA. These family members may decide to use your money for themselves, not give you money that is yours, transfer your property to themselves, or sell your property and keep the money. If this happens you have a few options you

can pursue. First, you can make a police report. Second, contact your state's Adult Protective Services (APS). APS investigates abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults. They also work with law enforcement when needed. Third, you can revoke the Power of Attorney. It is easy to revoke a POA. All you have to do is rip it up, cut it up, or shred it. Let anyone who has relied on that POA know you are revoking it, especially your agent. If you execute a new POA naming a new agent that should automatically take the place of your old POA.

Be careful in choosing your agent for your POA and make sure it's someone you trust. It helps to discuss your wishes with your agents so they are prepared in advance and know how to act on your behalf when/if they need to. It is difficult to discuss a future where you may not have control over yourself or cannot make your own decisions, but having these conversations with your agents now will help them later on if they need to step in and make these decisions for you. If you need a POA contact your local legal aid office to see if they can assist you. 

Message from Lucille Logan

NOCA President's Corner


NOCA is the National Organization of Clients. It has existed since 1991 and is the only organization in the legal services community that we control. We will have an election of officers at the NLADA conference in November. We also have vacancies on our Board of Directors. If you wish to be considered for one of the officers or for the board, please send your resume to the following person(s).

Phillis Butler 5326 Holly Street Indian Head, MD	Joy Johnson Chairperson 802-A Hardy Drive Charlottesville, VA E-Mail: joy@pharinc.org	Hafeezah Ahmad 3629 W. Layton Avenue Greenfield, Wisconsin 53221
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The nominating committee members are Joy Johnson, Phillis Butler and Hafeezah Ahmad. Please have all resume or names to the committee by November 1, 2015. You must be a member in good standing to vote or to seek office.

The following officers positions are open for nominations:

- President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- Recording Secretary
- Corresponding Secretary
- Treasurer
(The Sergeant at Arms and Parliamentarian will be appointed.)

The new officers and the board of directors will decide on their work program. Hope to see you at NLADA conference in November. This election year who ever we elect as officers let us support them. 

NOCA Officers

Lucille Logan

*President
Oklahoma City, OK*

Charlie Morris

*1st Vice President
Memphis, TN*

Mollie Gomaez

2nd Vice President

Yvette Long

Secretary

Harry Johnson

*Treasurer
Indianapolis, IN*

Rose Wilson

*Financial Secretary
Lubbock, TX*

JoAnne Wright

*Correspondence Secretary
Youngstown, OH*

Can't Get More Food Stamps?

Many people ask this question because the amount they are getting is just not enough. This article is aimed at those who are elderly and/or disabled. Many elderly or disabled people are only getting the minimum \$16.00 per month. This information may help you get more food stamps. Not everyone knows about the medical expenses that can be used in your food stamps case. Your state agency may not tell you about these expenses or ask if you have them.

Who is considered elderly?

Anyone who is age 60 or older.

Who is considered disabled?

Anyone who is getting disability benefits through social security, SSI, Railroad Retirement, the VA, or disability retirement benefits from a government agency.

What expenses count?

Medical expenses you pay or owe from the following list, which are more than \$35.00 per month:

- Expenses for any medical or dental care (includes psychotherapy and rehabilitation services)
- Hospitalization, outpatient treatment, nursing home care (includes payments you are making for a person who used to be

a member of your household but is now in a hospital or nursing home)

- Prescription drugs (includes over the counter medications prescribed by your doctor)
- Medical supplies (including insulin)
- Sick room equipment (including the cost of renting)
- Health insurance premiums (Medicare, prescription drug plans, supplement plans)
- Hearing aids, dentures, and prosthetic devices
- Cost of animals to assist you if you are disabled (includes the cost of food and vet bills)
- Eyeglasses and contact lenses (as long as prescribed by a doctor)
- Transportation and lodging to get medical treatment such as trips to the doctor, dentist, or to fill prescriptions; to pick up dentures, hearing aids, eyeglasses, or sickroom equipment (includes cost of mileage, parking, bus, taxi, etc.)
- Maintaining a homemaker, home health aide, child care services, or housekeeper that is necessary because of your age, health condition, or illness

Who is the “Client” Representative on LSC Board?

At the NLADA meeting we had a great discussion about terms and term limits as they apply to LSC regulations. We also discussed who should “count” as a client for the client board member positions. Since there is no consensus among the client community about whether or not there should be term limits, I will not be asking that LSC consider any changes.

The issue discussed at the meeting was whether a representative of an organization that serves low income people or even run by and for low income people could take a “client slot” on the board if that person him or herself was not low income. The answer is a resounding NO. LSC is clear that ALL client eligible members of an LSC board must be actual low income people. The LSC Act defines “eligible client” as “any person financially unable to afford legal assistance.” The citation is 42 U.S.C. § 2996a (3).

Also discussed was if a client eligible member improves his or her position and is no longer poor if that individual can retain their position. The regulations say that one must be eligible when appointed. The regulations do not require someone to stay poor but if one had to be re-appointed their income at the time of re-appointment would dictate eligibility.

In most communities various groups or organizations became the “nominating entity” for LSC boards. These groups have included organizations that address welfare rights, domestic violence, tenant rights, and neighborhood groups. It makes sense to ask a community organization to nominate client members for Board service. Bar associations nominate attorney members. However, nothing can absolve the program of its obligations to assure that nominees meet the criteria when they are appointed and to do appropriate board training so that applicants and members understand their responsibility to communicate with peers. Finally, programs should remember that they have a steady stream of possible excellent board members—the clients that come through their doors every day. Programs should always be looking for leadership opportunities for clients, including in their own backyard!!

40th Anniversary News

LSC heard you loud and clear and included clients in a big way at the 40th Anniversary Conference. I was honored to facilitate a panel of clients—all of whom were amazing. If you have the ability to get on line and want to watch it (<https://vimeo.com/107528177>) or any other video from the conference (they are all online so everyone can enjoy the conference, <https://lsc40.lsc.gov/media/lscs-40th-anniversary-conference-media-gallery>) please check it



out. We need to get discussion going throughout the country using various social media tools. We need EVERY AMERICAN to understand how important it is that the courts are fair and that people that need representation get it. So those of you tuned into social media please chime in when stuff comes out. LSC has put op-ed pieces in many papers around the country. If you see an op-ed in your local paper, please write a letter to the editor praising the op-ed! Add your own two cents sharing your experience and why you are involved. You can find the op-ed pieces online, <https://lsc40.lsc.gov/category/op-ed>.

They will be expanding and doing more social media work in the months ahead so be on the lookout. If you do Facebook or Twitter (@LSCtweets) please like and follow LSC.

Client participation on program quality visits gains momentum

I am happy to share that the idea of clients being part of program quality visit evaluation teams is happening. I went on a program visit in late October to get a sense of how they worked. I gave feedback to the staff and was pleased at the good thinking the staff put into how to make this work. LSC is now going to work on creating a “job description” (this is not a full time job by any means) that will include the desired qualifications. They will then advertise it and select just a few people to be part of a pilot program. They will be looking to people that are either former LSC program board members (have termed off or retired from the program boards) or who are on the board of a NON LSC program. Their ethics office has already determined that people that are currently involved with any LSC program cannot do evaluations of their peers. I think having a client member on the evaluation team will help LSC perform state of the art quality assessments. In the 21st century having the customer voice or a “lay person” on evaluation teams is how it works at hospitals, schools, and most government programs because the importance of a client perspective is so widely recognized in many professions. The client evaluators will be trained by LSC. The first visit they will shadow team members, then the second visit they might do a small amount of interviewing. As they gain comfort they will do more of the questioning. Areas of the visits where clients can be particularly helpful will involve assessing intake, board governance, community reputations and coalition building and looking at specific programs. What programs a client evaluator would review would be based on his or her experience. When I was on my visit I was able to visit a court based program. That was very useful. If you are interested in being notified when the announcement comes out please send an email to Janet La Bella at labellaj@lsc.gov.

I want to see you during my travels!!

In October we will be in both San Francisco and Los Angeles between the 4th and the 7th. The details are not set but that will conclude the year-long 40th anniversary.

- November 4-7, New Orleans, LA
- January 28-30 in Charleston, SC
- April 17-19 in Washington, DC
- May 12-14 Equal Justice Conference in Chicago, IL
- July 17-19 in Burlington, VT
- October 16-18 in Albuquerque, NM

You are welcome to email me or call at ANY time on ANY topic (jreiskin@ccdconline.org or 303-667-4216). If you are in any

of these cities and can come to our meeting, please do. I am also open to meeting for coffee or a meal to be able to hear your views and learn what you are doing. If any of you visit Denver for any reason PLEASE get in touch if you will have any time to meet with me!

In conclusion, I want to thank you for the great work you all do as Board members, community leaders, volunteers and advocates. Doing this work while living in poverty is not easy but as we all know it is absolutely necessary. Please know that your work is appreciated and progress is being made.

In Solidarity

Julie Reiskin, LSC Board Member

A Note from Fr. Pius Pietrzyk, OP

Dear Client Representatives,

Julie Reiskin does an extraordinary job reaching out to the client community, for which I am immensely grateful, given how difficult it is for me to be present at LSC events outside our Board Meetings. I am happy to be simply “the other client-eligible representative” on the Board, in deference to Julie’s great dedication and leadership.

I asked Julie if I could just add this short note to her NLADA Newsletter update to encourage you all to continue your work for the cause of providing civil legal services to the most needy in our communities. Wanting to do good for our neighbors is a wonderful thing, but without action, it is incomplete. We must not only decide to do good, but we must actively carry it out, and in a good way. The client members I have met are an impressive lot. They are the ones who so often have experienced the real need for legal services to the poor, and with great courage and determination have done something about it. All of you have done something about it, and your communities need your dedicated work. Thank you.

Both Julie and I believe strongly in improving client involvement in the work of the Legal Services Corporation. You all have made the commitment to legal services, and we want you to

know we are committed to you. If you ever want to reach out to us, please do. My email address is pius.pietrzyk@gmail.com, which is the best way to reach me. If you see me at a Board Meeting (and I’m pretty hard to miss!) or an LSC event, please stop by and say hello. I always appreciate meeting you all and hearing your stories.

Thank you again for everything you do for the cause of civil justice, especially for those most in need.

Fr. Pius Pietrzyk, OP

LSC Board Member




Food Stamps — Continued from page 3

How do I prove my expenses?

When you complete an application be sure to note that you have medical expenses. Your State Agency will ask you for verification or proof of these expenses. You can use medical bills you receive, explanation of benefits (EOB) from your insurance provider, or detailed receipts from the pharmacy/doctor. Generally you must show that you either paid the bill or incurred (owe) the bill since your last review.

This list includes the deductions allowed by federal law. Some states may have additional deductions. For more information on your state specific deductions contact your local legal aid office.

If you are denied or terminated from your food stamp benefits you have the right to file an appeal, also known as requesting a fair hearing, within 90 days of the date on the letter you receive. You should file your appeal in writing and bring it to your local State Agency office. Request a date stamped copy for your records. If you cannot go to your local office you can fax or mail the request. Be sure to keep a copy for your records if you mail the request. You can also contact your local legal aid office for assistance. The number for your local office should be listed on the termination or denial letter. 



NLADA
Insurance
Program

INSURING EQUAL JUSTICE

NLADA INSURANCE PROGRAM is the advocate and provider of quality professional liability insurance products for the full spectrum of the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) membership community. Participants include legal aid organizations, public defenders, corporate pro bono programs, law school clinics, individual attorneys and public interest groups.

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Invest in NLADA's Advocacy Efforts on Behalf of the Equal Justice Community

Client Awards — Continued from page 1

Nine nominees also received Client Champion Recognition Certificates in four categories.

LifeTime Client Champions

Shaquella Monei Butler is a beloved mother of four, grandmother of five, and champion for justice. She currently serves on the Board of Greater Boston Legal Services and on the Client Caucus committee.

Gwen Johnson has been involved in equal justice for four decades and is currently Vice President of Maryland Legal Aid's Board of Directors.

Rachel Johnson served as an AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer in the National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) in 1996, and has continued her work as a HUD tenant organizer in Southern and Central Florida for the past twenty years.

Michael Rosado Perez serves as an active member on the boards of several organizations, including the Sociedad Puertorriquena de Epilepsia, the National Hispanic Coalition Advisory Board, and Legal Services of Puerto Rico, Inc.

LaShung Willis works passionately in the community to expand outreach and develop new partnerships to impact health and wellness for those less fortunate within East Chicago communities. Her volunteer activities include teaching Chronic Disease Self-Management and serving on the ISLI Client Council.

Young Pioneers — The Next Generation of Client Champions

Victoria Crider works as a full-time organizer in Chicago, Illinois on First Defense Legal Aid's staff team as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer. Her team connects FDLA to groups such as Black Lives Matter and the Black Youth Project.

Community Catalysts of Client Empowerment

TIGER Community Group Parent Leaders sponsor Community Groups to help parents of children with special needs navigate the special education system. TIGER serves as a liaison between the Learning Rights Law Center and these Community Groups.

LA Community Action Network works in partnership with the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and pro-bono attorneys to host a community legal clinic that serves the city's homeless and low-income population.

Social Engineer and Trail Blazer

Alyse Ferguson serves as the attorney director of the Mental Health Managed Counsel program in Collin County, Texas. She established the county's first Mental Health Symposium in 2014.

NLADA extends its sincere congratulations to these winners of the 2015 Client Contribution Awards.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. CHARLIE MORRIS, RECIPIENT OF THE MARY ELLEN HAMILTON AWARD

The NLADA Annual Conference Awards honor outstanding service in advancing the cause of equal access to justice. One such honor is the Mary Ellen Hamilton Award. Named after a founder of the National Clients Council and the Alliance for Legal Rights, the Mary Ellen Hamilton award recognizes a client who has provided extraordinary service or support to the delivery of legal services to the poor.

This year's winner of the Mary Ellen Hamilton Award is Mr. Charlie Morris. Mr. Morris served on Memphis Area Legal Service's Board for over three decades, during which he held several committee positions including Executive Treasurer for more than two decades, and then Treasurer Emeritus.

Long before he joined MALS' Board, Mr. Morris was a voice for marginalized people in North Memphis where he and his late wife, Alma Morris, addressed economic and political issues in their community. They formed the Klondyke Neighborhood Association to serve as a platform for community activism and gain the attention of politicians and government leaders alike.

Within the equal justice community, he was a board member of the National Clients Council and served as president of the Region VI Clients Council for several years. A longstanding advocate for equal justice, NLADA is proud to honor Mr. Charlie Morris with the Mary Ellen Hamilton Award.

NLADA Client Policy Group

Harry Johnson, Chairperson

Regina Kelly, Vice Chairperson

Ofelia Zapata, Secretary

Theron McNeil, Communications Cmte.

Rosita Stanley, Training & Conference Cmte.

Sue Lau, Client Bill of Rights Ad Hoc Cmte.

Myrnairis Cepeda, Client Outreach Ad Hoc Cmte.

Daryl Atkinson, Member

Betsy Biben, Member

Latryna Carlton, Member

Catherine Harris, Member

Marcy Muller, Member



Advancing Justice Together

November 4-7
New Orleans, LA

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015



Addressing the Opening Plenary on Thursday, November 5, will be Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Johnson.

The Opening Plenary will also feature presentation of the NLADA Award for Justice through Philanthropy to Gail C. Christopher, vice president for policy and senior advisor at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The Awards Luncheon on Friday, November 6, will feature remarks from ABA President Paulette Brown and presentation of the New Leaders in Advocacy, Charles Dorsey, Mary Ellen Hamilton, Reginald Heber Smith, and Clara Shortridge Foltz Awards.



CLIENT UPDATE

Fall 2015
October



National Legal Aid & Defender Association

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