



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

Senator Webb Delivers Over \$90,000 in State Funding for Local Legal Service Programs

LEA WEBB January 18, 2024

| ISSUE: **LEGAL SERVICES FUNDING**



(BINGHAMTON, NY) Today, Senator Webb (SD52) held a press conference to announce that she has secured over \$90,000 in state funds to support the work of local organizations providing legal service programs across the Southern Tier.

- \$30,000 for the Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York to support legal services in the Binghamton office

- \$25,000 for the American Civic Association, Inc. to provide community safety and offer legal services
- \$17,500 in funding for the Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. to provide legal services including but not limited to housing public benefits, domestic violence and sexual assault, consumer protection and access to health care through their Ithaca office
- \$15,000 in funding for the Legal Services of Central New York to support legal services in their Cortland office
- \$7,000 in funding for Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier, Inc. to provide supportive services for incarcerated persons and families, including but not limited to legal advice and resources to help reduce recidivism

Said Senator Lea Webb, “I am thrilled to deliver over \$90,000 in state funds to support local organizations working to provide legal service programs here in Senate District 52. These organizations provide critical support to community members in need of legal services to help with matters regarding domestic violence and sexual assault cases, consumer protection issues, and access to health care. I will continue to fight for additional funding to expand access to community safety and legal service programs for our rural district in the upcoming legislative session.”

Said Paul Lupia, Executive Director of Legal Aid Society of Mid NY Inc, “The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York (LASMNY) thanks Senator Webb for securing a \$30,000 grant to support the work LASMNY provides out of our Binghamton office where we provide civil legal services to Broome County and the surrounding area. These funds will be used to support the legal services we provide on issues such as domestic violence, eviction defense, foreclosure prevention, and in other areas affecting the basic necessities of life. These funds will enable LASMNY to continue to provide high quality legal services to our clients ranging from counsel and advice to full litigation services.”

Said Hussein Adams, Executive Director of the American Civic Association, “Since 1939, the American Civic Association (ACA) has been instrumental in providing immigration legal services to the community. The ACA is truly appreciative and honored to be considered by Senator Webb for the grant totaling \$25,000. These funds will assist the organization in further expanding our refugee program services, enhance our infrastructure and legal services, essentially helping New Americans succeed. Ensuring the sustainability of our organization is paramount. Through increased funding, our staff’s efforts are also amplified, enabling us to adequately and efficiently respond to the emerging needs within our community.”

Said Lori M. O’Brien, Executive Director of Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. (LawNY) “Civil legal services support our communities in securing and preserving the essentials of life - income, housing, family, education and health. According to the 2022 Justice Gap Study conducted by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), low-income Americans did not receive any or enough legal help for 92% of their civil legal problems. We are incredibly grateful for Senator Webb’s support as increased resources are vital to reduce the justice gap. This funding will help us enhance access to free civil legal services in Tompkins County.”

Said Dennis A. Kaufman, Executive Director of Legal Services of Central New York, Inc., “Legal Services of Central New York (LSCNY) thanks Senator Webb for a \$15,000 grant to improve our civil legal services in Cortland County. The grant is timely as we will soon move to a more visible and accessible office on the first floor at 1 North Main Street in Cortland. LSCNY serves 13 counties in Central New York. The most difficult areas to serve effectively are the most rural. Maintaining a physical presence in Cortland is important to connect with those people who need our help.”

Said Andrew J Pragacz, President of Justice and Unity in the Southern Tier, “For almost ten years, Justice and Unity in the Southern Tier (JUST) has been dedicated to fighting against

the plague of mass incarceration in Broome County by supporting any and all incarcerated people and their families. We provide informational resources and offer community support for incarcerated people and their families. We ensure incarcerated people have access to a wide range of reading material through our Books Over Walls program. Our mission is urgent. For many years, the Broome County jail has had the highest incarceration rate in the state. Broome County continues to arrest, convict, and incarcerate Black people at rates far higher than other racial/ethnic groups in the county – and at rates higher than other upstate communities. Our mission seeks to create systemic transparency and accountability – for years it's been nearly impossible to get information out of the jail - with the goal of building a more socially just Broome County. We thank Senator Webb for supporting JUST's mission and ensuring we can continue this critical work.”

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