



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

NYS Senator Amedore and NYS Senator Serino Secure Funding in Support of Legal Services for Veterans

SUSAN SERINO August 16, 2016

| ISSUE: **VETERANS, LEGAL AID OR LEGAL SERVICES**



WHITE PLAINS, NY – Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV), the only Hudson Valley provider of comprehensive civil legal services to those that cannot afford it when basic human needs are at stake, has been awarded two grants to support its Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Unit.

NYS Senator George Amedore, Jr. secured a **\$75,000** grant for LSHV to provide civil legal services (including services for veterans, survivors of domestic violence, and others) in Ulster County.

“Legal Services of the Hudson Valley does a great service by providing free representation to the men and women who have served our nation,” said Senator George Amedore. “I am proud to be able to help them continue their mission by securing funding for the Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project. Ensuring justice and fairness for our veterans is so important, and I commend them for the great work they are doing throughout Hudson Valley.”

NYS Senator Sue Serino secured a **\$75,000** grant for LSHV to provide general civil legal services to veterans in Dutchess and Putnam counties.

“Our veterans have made tremendous sacrifices on behalf of our community and our nation and we have a duty to ensure that they have the resources they need here at home to live their lives to the fullest,” said Senator Serino. “I am in awe of all the tremendous work Legal Services of the Hudson Valley is able to accomplish and I am proud to have the opportunity to help them help our area veterans. \$75,000 will go a long way towards ensuring that our veterans in need have access to justice—an American value that they fought so hard to protect.”

According to recent data, there are roughly 29,000 veterans in Dutchess and Ulster Counties, and approximately 5-6% of them live below the federal poverty line (which is \$11,880 for a single person household in 2016). LSHV serves clients below 200% of the poverty line - \$23,760 for an individual or \$48,600 for a family of four. That means that there are many, many veterans in these counties who would qualify for LSHV's services.

In 2015, LSHV handled 259 Veterans' Unit cases and served 699 veteran clients overall – 94 residents of Ulster, 113 residents of Dutchess, and 9 residents of Putnam. This is a fraction of the veterans eligible for our services in these counties, but with the support of Senator Amedore and Senator Serino, the agency will be able to handle many more cases for those who have served our country.

Speaking of the recent funding, LSHV CEO Barbara Finkelstein says, "We can't thank NYS Senator Amedore and NYS Senator Sue Serino enough for their support of Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. The funding they have secured will allow the agency to serve so many more of our neighbors who are fighting for the basic necessities of life. Targeting this funding to veterans and survivors of domestic violence, among other populations, means that we'll be able to assist people who face a unique set of barriers within the justice system and aren't getting help anywhere else."

About The Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley's Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project provides representation to those who have served, including those suffering from trauma, injuries, or facing denial of benefits, eviction, foreclosure or predatory consumer practices. The goal of the Project is to provide free legal advice and direct representation to veterans in civil (non-criminal) legal matters.

Together with our partners, LSHV is part of a comprehensive network of providers who address the distinct challenges that veterans face and ensure that we can provide prompt and appropriate referrals for non-legal matters. Through our referral network, veterans can receive a broad range of services including but not limited to addiction and substance abuse counseling; advocacy for veterans affected by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and Military Sexual Trauma (MST); transitional housing;

employment assistance; benefits management; counseling for survivors of domestic violence; child care resources; and more.

About Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

The mission of LSHV is to provide free, high-quality counsel in civil matters where basic human needs are at stake for poor and low-income individuals and families who cannot afford an attorney. With the gap separating those who can and cannot afford legal representation widening each day, we work to engage as many allies as possible in this effort. LSHV is the only provider of comprehensive civil legal services to all seven counties of the lower and mid-Hudson Valley (Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland, Orange, Ulster and Sullivan). We are the recipient of Legal Services Corporation funding for the region and provide a full array of services to low-income individuals and families to meet the legal needs for “essentials of life” and preserve the stability of client households. The work we do each day provides justice to thousands of our neighbors who have nowhere else to turn. Our funding empowers us to: *Protect people from domestic violence; Defend seniors against abuse; Serve veterans on the home front; Support the rights of the disabled; Keep families in their homes; and Advocate for children’s well-being.*

For more information about LSHV, please visit: www.lshv.org.

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