

Justice Notes: LawNY®'s Blog



EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS EXPANDS LAWNY® SERVICES TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

In the 2016-2017 program year, Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.® (LawNY®) will host a total of 12 Equal Justice Works Fellows that will serve over 1,500 individuals and vulnerable populations within their 14 county services area (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne and Yates).

Every year, Equal Justice Works funds hundreds of Fellows with the main mission of helping lawyers more fully assist the communities in which they serve. Fellows allow organizations like LawNY® to serve a larger and more diverse population of

individuals per year, furthering the impact of civil legal services nationwide. As the Honorable Jonathan Lippman has said, "No issue is more fundamental to the court's' constitutional mission than ensuring equal justice for all. The availability of affordable legal representation for low-income New Yorkers is indispensable to our ability to carry out that mission."

In 2013, Equal Justice Works received AmeriCorps funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service - AmeriCorps for the creation of the Veterans Legal Corps. The Veterans Legal Corps is designed to improve the lives of veterans and their families by helping them secure access to income, housing, employment, and health care. In 2014, Equal Justice Works, with funding through AmeriCorps, created the Employment Opportunity Legal Corps, a program designed to work on removing barriers to employment by providing legal assistance to correct, remove or seal criminal records, correct credit reports, obtain or keep occupational licenses, and address other legal barriers to employment. LawNY® has been a host site since the inception of both programs. In the 2016-2017 program year, LawNY® will host four Veterans Legal Corps Fellows and four Employment Opportunity Legal Corps Fellows throughout their service area.

In 2015, LawNY® became the host site for a two year Equal Justice Works Fellow, Adrianna Anderson. Entering into her second year, Ms. Anderson's project will continue to increase economic stability and reduce the collateral consequences of predatory debt collection for low-income people in rural New York.

In addition, LawNY® has been selected as a host site for two new programs. LawNY® will host two Equal Justice Works Fellows within Elder Justice AmeriCorps, a collaborative effort by the Department of Justice and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). These fellowships will focus on the provision of legal services to low-income older adults who have been victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. One Fellow will also serve within the Equal Justice Work's Tenant Engagement and Community Development (TECDev) AmeriCorps VISTA Fellowship Project. The VISTA Legal Fellow will work with tenants in certain HUD-financed properties to increase educational and economic opportunities for residents, and engage residents in anti-poverty and quality of life programming.

Throughout the year, Fellows will recruit twenty four law students to LawNY's seven field offices to maximize the impact of these services on their respective communities, furthering justice to those who need it most.

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