



**Justice Alliance of Central  
New York**

**Legal Aid Society of Mid-NY, Inc.  
(LASMNY)**

**Legal Services of Central NY, Inc.  
(LSCNY)**



# Communication Lines



**A publication of the Central New York Legal HelpLine**

Serving Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego and Otsego counties

Vol. III, Issue I

October 8, 2008

## Special points of interest:

- HelpLine Welcomes New Manager and Staff Attorney
- New York Bar Foundation Awards Grant for HelpLine Equipment
- Current list of counties and legal problems served
- Client stories from the HelpLine front lines
- Client Satisfaction Surveys Completed

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## HelpLine Welcomes New Manager and Staff Attorney



HelpLine Manager Christina Reilly (left) trains new HelpLine Staff Attorney Catherine Palermo (right) at LASMNY's Utica office.

her juris doctor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2000. In her seven years representing low-income people, she has developed a broad range of legal expertise, including consumer matters, family matters, elder law, public benefits and housing. As a HelpLine Staff Attorney from August 2007 through May 2008, she single-handedly assisted 559 callers.

The HelpLine also welcomes back Catherine Palermo of Watertown, who left LASMNY in 2006 to serve as Senior Assistant County Attorney for Jefferson County. Ms. Palermo is a 1993 graduate of Albany Law School of Union University, whose areas of legal expertise include employment law, family law, Social Security Disability/SSI and general practice. Welcome back, Cathy!

LASMNY and LSCNY jointly welcomed Christina L. Reilly aboard as manager of the Central New York Legal HelpLine as of May 2008. Ms. Reilly replaces former HelpLine Manager Cindy Domingue-Hendrickson, who has returned to her duties as grant-writer in light of federal and state funding cuts. Ms. Reilly earned

## New York Bar Foundation Awards Grant for HelpLine Equipment



Former HelpLine Manager Cindy Domingue-Hendrickson (center) accepts a check from the New York Bar Foundation from David Hayes, Esq. (left), while LASMNY Executive Director Paul J. Lupia (right) looks on.

The HelpLine has received a grant in the amount of \$4,900 from the New York Bar Foundation. The New York Bar Foundation has been a supporter of the HelpLine since its early stages, awarding a \$10,000 equipment grant in 2005 and another \$10,000 equipment grant in 2006. The 2008 grant provides headphones for HelpLine intake workers and attorneys, allowing hands-free typing of casenotes real-time while speaking with clients. The grant will also provide scanners, allowing instant electronic viewing of client papers from any LASMNY office.

### HelpLine Funders

The Central New York Legal HelpLine was made possible by grants and donations from the following funders:

The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties  
 The Northern New York Community Foundation  
 The Central New York Community Foundation  
 The Community Foundation for South Central New York  
 The New York Bar Foundation  
 The Utica National Group Foundation  
 Senator John DeFrancisco  
 Partner's Trust Bank  
 The Legal Services Corporation  
 Private Bar Pledge Drive  
 New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)

### Now Serving...

**The Central New York Legal HelpLine is now serving:**

Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego and Otsego Counties. Clients can call about any type of civil (non-criminal) legal problem.

Clients can call toll free at 1-877-777-6152, or call any of our local office numbers, to access HelpLine services.

Please keep checking our website at [www.lasmny.org](http://www.lasmny.org) for the most up-to-date list of services.

### HelpLine Stories

*A couple with a baby, both disabled, received a 5-day eviction notice from their landlord even though their rent was paid up in full. The woman had just gotten out of surgery with a six-week recovery period. Section 8 also had informed them that because they were being evicted, they would lose their Section 8 voucher. A HelpLine attorney advised the landlord that the eviction was illegal under both federal and state law, as a result of which the landlord withdrew the 5-day eviction notice. The HelpLine attorney also called Section 8, which withdrew termination of the voucher after being informed that federal law did not allow termination simply because the family had received an eviction notice.*

*A young woman fled her abusive husband in California, seeking safety with her family in Central New York. At the time she contacted the HelpLine, she was eight months pregnant, terrified that her husband would file for divorce in California and take the baby away from her. A HelpLine attorney reassured her that only New York would have jurisdiction over the child when he/she was born, and advised her how to get a custody order in family court at that time. Relieved of her anxiety, the woman was able to focus on the birth of her child.*

### Client Satisfaction Surveys Completed

In 2008 LASMNY enlisted the assistance of a graduate student from Binghamton University, Andrew Baranowski, who completed a random telephone survey of HelpLine clients as part of his master's degree program in public administration. According to the survey results, 97% of HelpLine clients were satisfied with the services they received, indicating that they would use the service again. LASMNY has now completed one year of mail surveys, as well. Each HelpLine client receives a survey, along with a postage prepaid envelope, at the time of case closing. To date, survey results have been 94% positive. The following are some examples of client comments:

*"[My HelpLine attorney] was very clear and kind. I appreciated her patience and professionalism. She was compassionate towards the situation which made me comfortable. Thank you for your time."*

*"[My HelpLine attorney] was very helpful with what to do to have the creditors stop calling my mother. My mother has a heart condition and she was having a difficult time. Thanks again."*

*"[My HelpLine attorney] was very polite and called me on Sunday when he could not reach me on Saturday, which you do not expect. Took time to listen and give advice. Was polite and did not rush me at all."*



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Funded in part by the Legal Services Corporation