

Legal Aid Link

Volume 8, Issue 2

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Want to see your news in *Legal Aid Link*? Send it to the person responsible for communications and development at your organization. The next issue will be published in August 2014.

[Visit our website](#) to read previous issues.



MLAC

MLAC Hosts 31st Annual Meeting, Announces Board Changes

Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Roderick Ireland gave the keynote address at MLAC's Annual Meeting on May 21 in Boston. Justice Ireland, who is retiring in July after serving on the state's highest court since 1997, thanked MLAC and the legal services community for sharing his commitment to equal access to justice for all. The MLAC board also announced changes in officer elections for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1. Marijane Benner Browne of Ropes and Gray will become the next Chair, replacing Rahsaan Hall of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice. Worcester attorney Michael Badger will serve as Vice Chair, replacing Martha Koster of Mintz Levin. Rahsaan and Martha will continue to serve on the board. Tim Linnehan of the Administrative Office of the Trial Court was reelected Treasurer.



MLAC board Chair Rahsaan Hall presents Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Roderick Ireland with an appreciation award at MLAC's annual meeting May 21.

Senate Proposes \$14 Million for MLAC in FY2015

The Massachusetts Senate included \$14 million for civil legal aid through MLAC in their FY15 budget for the Commonwealth, which they passed yesterday. MLAC had requested \$17 million. Governor Deval Patrick recommended \$14 million in his version of the budget in January, while the House of Representatives recommended \$15 million earlier this month. The current appropriation is \$13 million. For more on why an increase is needed, [download MLAC's latest fact sheet \[PDF\]](#).

Updated Fact Book Offers Overview of the Massachusetts Legal Aid System

MLAC published its Fact Book for fiscal year 2013 in April. The Fact Book provides MLAC funding and operations data and summarizes data provided by MLAC-funded programs at the end of each fiscal year. The Fact Book offers a comprehensive overview of the MLAC-funded legal services system. To download your copy, visit www.mlac.org/research.html.

New Staff Member

MLAC welcomes part-time data assistant Shamekka Kuykendall to its staff. Shamekka, who will be supporting HomeCorps data collection and analysis as well as other data projects at MLAC, is a doctoral student at Brandeis University in social policy.

Diversity Coalition

Diversity Coalition Launches Database of Recruiting Tools

A new database created by the Diversity Coalition is providing legal aid organizations easier access to a comprehensive list of sources to recruit candidates of color. The database, available through www.masslegalservices.org, was announced in April by the Diversity Coalition and contains regularly updated job posting information for publications, organizations and schools across the state. To access the database, visit masslegalservices.org/recruitment-database and log in with your credentials.

BBA Hosts Lunchtime Panel on Diversity in Legal Services

The Boston Bar Association's Delivery of Legal Services Section presented a panel of attorneys who discussed challenges facing the Boston legal community as it continues to recruit, retain and advance diverse attorneys on Jan. 27. The panelists included Volunteer Lawyers' Project Executive Director Sheila Hubbard, GBLS Executive Director Jacqui Bowman, Diversity Coalition Director Joyce-Allen Beckford, and Macey Russell, a partner at Choate, Hall & Stewart. After the discussion, participants viewed an excerpt from anti-racist expert Tim Wise's speech at the Legal Services Diversity conference in September 2013.

Diversity Coalition Offers De-biasing Workshop to Legal Aid Executive Directors

De-biasing expert Johanna Wald offered insights about overcoming implicit bias in the legal field at a workshop for legal aid executive directors in March. Johanna, the Director of Strategic Planning at Harvard Law School's Institute for Race and Justice, is also the co-author of a paper on implicit bias in the criminal justice system published in spring 2012.

Visit the Diversity Coalition Online

For more on the latest diversity coalition initiatives, as well as information on upcoming and past events, visit us online at www.mlac.org/diversity-coalition.html

Equal Justice Coalition

EJC Chair John Carroll Participates in Panel on Legal Aid Challenges in MA

Chair of the Equal Justice Coalition John Carroll joined other legal aid experts in a panel discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing civil legal aid in Massachusetts. The April 3 discussion, sponsored by the American Constitution Society and Suffolk Law School's Rappaport Center for Pro Bono, also included panelists Jacqui Bowman, executive director of GBLS, and Lonnie Powers, executive director of MLAC.



Get Involved

Your voice helps make sure that Gov. Patrick and the Massachusetts Legislature understand the importance of legal aid funding. You can follow the EJC on Twitter ([@EqualJusticeMA](https://twitter.com/EqualJusticeMA)), like the EJC Facebook page (www.facebook.com/EqualJusticeMA) and sign up for action alerts at www.equaljusticecoalition.org.

People

The Supreme Judicial Court in February appointed CLA Executive Director **Jonathan Mannina** to the Access to Justice Commission. The Commission works to make legal assistance available in important civil matters to all persons of low income in the Commonwealth by identifying and eliminating barriers to justice. Dean Mary Lu Bilek of the UMass School of Law was also appointed to the Commission in February. Several other Commissioners whose terms expired in February 2014 were reappointed to one year extensions, including GBLS Executive Director **Jacquelynne Bowman**, and MLAC board member **Marijane Benner Browne**.

GBLS Immigration Unit Senior Attorney **Jerry Wall** and Children's Law Center Staff Attorney **Jessica Berry** received awards from the Massachusetts Bar Association at its annual Law Day dinner on May 15. Jerry received the "Legal Services Award" which honors attorneys and law firms who "made significant strides in enhancing access to justice," recognizing their exemplary legal skills and service to the community. Jessica received the "Rising Star Award" for her work with families facing homelessness and other issues. For more information go to <http://www.massbar.org/publications/e-journal/2014/april/04-17/annual-dinner>.

GBLS AmeriCorps Attorney **Sheila Gholkar** has won a prestigious Borchard Fellowship from the Borchard Foundation on Law and Aging. She'll be able to continue her work at GBLS with elders who have been abused for at least another year.

Save the Date

2014 Nancy King Memorial Golf Tournament

The Campaign for Legal Services and MutualOne Charitable Foundation are hosting the 17th annual charity golf event to benefit MetroWest Legal Services. Attendees will enjoy a cocktail reception and bid on golf outings, Disney passes, fine dining, a vacation at a New Hampshire lakeside home, Boston hotels and more in live and silent auctions. The event will also include a raffle (40 tickets for \$25) where you do not need to be present to win. [Click here for more information \[PDF\]](#).



Monday, June 2, 1 p.m., Framingham Country Club, 16 Gates St, Framingham.

Disability Law Center to Host Annual Benefit and Auction

DLC will honor advocates for disability rights at its annual celebration June 17 in Cambridge. Honorees include Jim Brett, President & CEO, New England Business Council; Francis X. Bellotti, Former Attorney General; David J. Holway, NAGE National President; and disability advocate Ashley Wolfe. The proceeds of DLC's benefit and auction will be used to help provide a variety of services for people with disabilities in Massachusetts. [Click here to purchase tickets.](#)

Tuesday, June 17, 6 p.m., Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge.

Seminar Will Explore Drug Treatment and Alternative Psychiatric Care

Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee will present Beyond the Medical Model: Alternative Approaches to Mental Health and Illness, a full-day seminar for attorneys and others interested in the vital question of the efficacy of drug treatment and alternatives to the medical model of care for psychiatric issues. This seminar features a wide range of speakers with expertise in alternative methods and models, providing information both on the range of alternatives and on how to access and advocate for them. Visit the MHLAC website's Upcoming Training page for full details.

Friday June 20, Albert Sherman Center at UMass Medical Center, Worcester.

Advocacy & Program Updates

CLA Wins Appeals Court Victory in Foreclosure Case

CLA Staff Attorney Daniel Bahls successfully argued an Appeals Court case in April on behalf a woman threatened with eviction after she lost her home to a foreclosure. The Western Massachusetts Housing Court dismissed the eviction case based on Dan's argument that, because the lender could not demonstrate a clear chain of title to the mortgage, it lacked the standing to foreclose and to bring the eviction action. The lender appealed, and, in *MidFirst Bank v. Love*, the Appeals Court upheld the Housing Court's decision in favor of Dan's client. CLA's foreclosure attorneys challenge the chain of title of mortgages in situations where there have been multiple assignments of the mortgage from one lender to the next, and we are pleased that the Appeals Court ruled in our client's favor in this case.

Resources from NCLC

Free Reports

- [Shifting into Gear: A Revised Guide to Creating or Improving a Car Ownership Program, April 2014 \[PDF\]](#)
- [Review and Recommendations for Implementing Water and Wastewater Affordability Programs in the United States, March 2014](#)
- [Big Data: A Big Disappointment for Scoring Consumer Credit Risk, March 2014](#)
- [No Lost Causes: Practical Ideas to Help Low-Income Students Succeed in College, March 2014 \[PDF\]](#)
- [Riddled Returns: How Errors and Fraud by Paid Tax Preparers Put Consumers at Risk and What States Can Do, Updated March 2014](#)
- [It's a Wild World: Consumers at Risk from Tax-Time Financial Products and Unregulated Preparers, February 2014](#)

Free Racial Justice Webinars

NCLC recently launched a series of six webinars on consumer financial issues seen through a racial justice lens. The webinars, which take place this spring and fall, feature national experts and include topics on:

- aging into poverty for older consumers of color and LGBT elders,
- how problems with consumer scores and reports can worsen the racial economic gap,

- weblining and other racial justice concerns in the era of big data,
- the role of broadband in rebuilding wealth and opportunity in communities of color,
- for-profit student loans, and
- mortgage lending.

Can't attend a live webinar? You can listen at a later date to these and more than 100 other free webinars which are archived on [NCLC's website](#). Search via the category of interest; make sure to check the "Archived Webinars" button.

Tech Tip

You can quickly and easily find anything on your Windows 7 computer using Windows Search. To do

so, click on the start icon  in the lower left corner of your screen. Then, type one or two keywords from the document or email you're looking for and see results appear almost immediately.

-- Patricia Shaughnessy, support and training specialist



Media Highlights

These are just some highlights of recent media coverage. For a full list, visit the [News](#) section of MLAC's website.

State funding for civil legal aid critical in fight against poverty (The Springfield Republican)
 CLA Executive Director Jonathan Mannina and CLA Board Chair Charles Casartello author an op-ed in support of state funding for civil legal aid.

GCC students will soon have legal aid on campus (The Greenfield Reporter)
 An innovative new partnership between Community Legal Aid and Greenfield Community College will help students tackle issues that may be getting in the way of their education.

West Roxbury lawyer joins fight to fund civil legal aid (Roxbury Transcript)
 Sally & Fitch attorney Heather Baer says, "It's important for us to ensure that [people] have

adequate representation to ensure their rights are protected."

Massachusetts psychiatric prison under scrutiny (Associated Press)

The Disability Law Center has opened an investigation into the treatment of inmates at the Bridgewater State Hospital psychiatric prison.

"People Pages"

CLICK HERE to print "People Pages," an alphabetical directory of Massachusetts Legal Services staff members and their contact information (NOTE: You must log in to MassLegalServices.org in order to access the list). You can also look up staff individually by last name using the search function on MassLegalServices.org.

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