



**Legal Aid Society**  
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MAKING JUSTICE REAL

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **LEGAL AID EXPANDS SERVICES FOR D.C.'S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., November 15, 2017** – The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia (Legal Aid) announced today that it will expand its programming to improve access to critically-needed legal services for D.C.'s immigrant community. The new program will be seeded by a \$150,000 grant from the Venable Foundation, one of five grants the Foundation will provide to legal aid organizations nationwide.

“Our immigrant neighbors in the District face a wide range of legal challenges, yet often have trouble accessing the legal system either because of language issues or because of the fear of deportation,” said Eric Angel, Executive Director of Legal Aid. “Legal Aid is committed to actively standing up for the rights of all residents of D.C., no matter where they were born. This expanded programming will help us achieve that goal.”

Through this new program, Legal Aid will expand its in-house practice to provide a continuum of services for clients. Legal Aid's immigrant services will include assistance with T-visas, U-visas, and VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) petitions, as well as issues impacting immigrants like access to public benefits and housing, representation in domestic violence and family law matters, and the drafting of powers of attorney to ensure they can secure proper custodial arrangements.

“Our partners are very proud to support this valuable work,” said Stuart P. Ingis, chairman of Venable LLP, whose partners contribute to the Venable Foundation.

Funding from the Venable Foundation will enable Legal Aid to assist more clients like Ada Jackson (identifying information has been changed), who faced a range of legal issues, including domestic violence. Ms. Jackson's alleged abuser tried to intimidate her by threatening to use her immigration status against her. Legal Aid helped Ms. Jackson secure protection from her abuser, obtain temporary custody of her son, sign up for health insurance and food stamps, and fight eviction.

As Stephanie Troyer, Legal Aid's Family Law Supervising Attorney, put it, “Ms. Jackson displayed extraordinary courage with each step she took towards securing her independence from her abuser and seeking justice.”

## **About Legal Aid**

Legal Aid is the oldest and largest general civil legal services program in the District of Columbia. Legal Aid was created in 1932 with the goal of *making justice real* – in individual and systemic ways – for persons living in poverty in the District of Columbia. For more than 85 years, Legal Aid lawyers have provided a continuum of legal services to clients in the areas of domestic violence/family, housing, public benefits, and consumer law. Legal Aid also works to identify systemic issues that on which its advocacy can have an impact beyond an individual client. In such cases, it often seek structural solutions – from changes in law or regulatory schemes to a reform of government or court practice – to benefit our client community. And its nationally-recognized Barbara McDowell Appellate Advocacy Project, which pursues an anti-poverty agenda, litigates important cases affecting persons living in poverty before the D.C. Court of Appeals every year.