

For Immediate Release
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Legal Aid Selected to Host Financial Coach to Help Economically Vulnerable Clients

Washington, DC – The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia (Legal Aid) announced today that it has been selected by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to participate in the federal agency’s Financial Coaching Initiative. As part of this initiative, Legal Aid will host a full-time financial coach to work with its clients to help them with their financial goals.

“During the course of representing our clients with their legal issues—whether it is helping them to separate from an abusive partner or to obtain a loan modification to prevent foreclosure and stay in their home—we see the financial challenges that they are facing. Our clients need and want the expertise and guidance of a trusted financial professional who can help them meet their financial goals, but do not know where to turn,” said Heather Latino, a Supervising Attorney at Legal Aid. “Through this partnership with the CFPB, we will now be able to offer our clients in-person, individualized guidance that will be available at our office, a trusted and convenient location for our clients.”

Millions of consumers are economically vulnerable, including the 49.1 million people living below the poverty line, and the more than 68 million who are financially underserved. These consumers are the most likely to lack access to traditional financial services, which may include products that are more appropriate to their needs and less costly. In-person, individualized and trustworthy guidance can help these consumers make good financial decisions and reach their financial goals.

The [CFPB Financial Coaching Initiative](#) provides financial coaching services at critical points in consumers’ lives as they move along the path to financial stability. The program helps both veterans as they transition from active duty status as well as economically vulnerable consumers seeking other services from social services and other providers.

Legal Aid is one of sixty diverse partner organizations from around the country that have been selected to host professional financial coaches. The sites include various nonprofits, as well as Department of Labor American Job Centers, which provide resources to help people find a job, identify training programs, and gain skills in growing industries.

Legal Aid was selected as part of a competitive process involving hundreds of organizations nationwide. All of the nonprofit organizations selected to host financial coaches for economically vulnerable consumers also provide services that complement financial coaching, such as job training and education, social, and housing services.

The coaches hired for the program have experience working with the populations they will service, are accredited by the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education, and will be trained in financial coaching techniques.

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The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia was formed in 1932 to “provide legal aid and counsel to indigent persons in civil law matters and to encourage measures by which the law may better protect and serve their needs.” For more than 80 years, Legal Aid has been making justice real – in individual and systemic ways – for persons living in poverty in D.C. Since its founding, Legal Aid has served tens of thousands of the District’s neediest residents. Last year, more than 4,000 individuals came to Legal Aid for an initial interview during our open walk-in hours. Legal Aid currently serves individuals and families living in poverty in four priority areas – public benefits, consumer, family/domestic violence, and housing law. It also litigates appellate matters through its nationally-recognized Barbara McDowell Appellate Advocacy Project. To find out more about Legal Aid, please visit its website at www.legalaiddc.org.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is the nation’s first federal agency whose sole focus is protecting consumers in the financial marketplace. Using its multiple authorities, including regulation, supervision, enforcement, market research, financial education, and the authority to deal directly with consumer complaints, the CFPB is working to restore trust in consumer financial products and services. For more information on the CFPB, visit www.consumerfinance.gov.