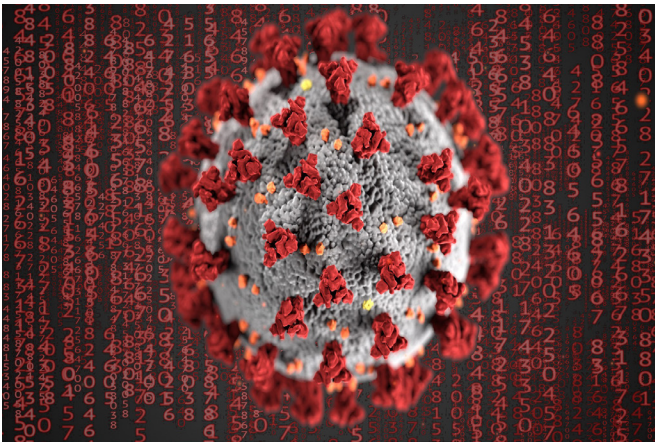
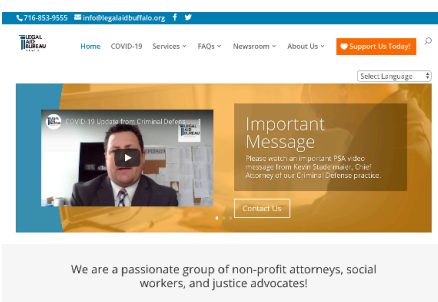


LEGAL AID AND THE COVID-19 CRISIS



When the COVID-19 crisis hit Western New York, the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo mobilized quickly to help our indigent population. Economically disadvantaged people are disproportionately affected by the faltering economy, skyrocketing unemployment, housing insecurity, and other threats to people's health, safety, and stability. We expect the COVID-19 pandemic to cause a significant increase in the number of people who are eligible for services, with record numbers of people losing full-time, part-time, and gig-economy jobs.

The Legal Aid Bureau is committed to continuing to serve our clients. We are taking precautions to protect the health and safety of our staff, clients, volunteers and all community members in response to uncertainty around the spread of COVID-19. While we are not available in-person at this time, we continue to provide all of our services. With budget cuts looming and demand for legal aid increasing, **[we need your support now more than ever.](#)** Together, we will get through this!



IT'S HERE! ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCH OF OUR NEWLY REDESIGNED WEBSITE!

The primary objectives of our new site efforts were focused on providing our clients and the community an easier way to learn about our services, improving the aesthetics, simplifying our content, adding new resources, and increasing the number of ways you can communicate, connect and provide us with feedback. The new design also allows for clear navigation and a responsive layout for all electronic platforms. Explore the site to learn more about our full spectrum of holistic services! **Visit: legalaidbuffalo.org.**

WHAT LEGAL AID IS DOING TO HELP DURING COVID-19

CRIMINAL DEFENSE PRACTICE

The Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo's Criminal Defense Unit continues to operate, albeit largely remotely, during the coronavirus crisis. All Erie County Criminal matters, including arraignments, are being held in one "virtual part." Our attorneys are appearing daily in that courtroom via Skype. All attorneys are available to consult by phone or e-mail on their cases. They are actively reviewing files and reaching out to clients for case reviews and consultations. Our phones, voicemails and e-mails are being monitored daily. If you have questions regarding an ongoing criminal matter or for other issues such as bail motions, order of protection modifications, or questions regarding court return dates, please contact us at any time at 716-853-9555.

APPEALS AND POST-CONVICTION PRACTICE

During this tenuous time, the Appeals and Post-Conviction Unit continues to correspond with their clients and perfect appeals. Although the Appellate Division, Fourth Department briefly suspended the complete filing of briefs, we remained determined to continue preparing briefs and appendices for filing in order to prevent any further delay when the court officially reopened. We also continue to discuss our clients' cases with them via confidential telephone calls. The Court of Appeals is accepting leave applications and we are preparing and filing them for our clients.

The Legal Aid Bureau [signed a letter to the Governor on our clients' behalf requesting release of individuals incarcerated in state prisons](#) during this unprecedented health crisis. [The letter was dated April 3, 2020.](#) We are also working with other agencies to advocate for the release of medically vulnerable prisoners throughout the state.

ATTORNEYS FOR CHILDREN PRACTICE

At the Legal Aid Bureau, our Attorneys for Children represents children in child welfare and juvenile justice matters. Every day, our lawyers stand side-by-side with the most vulnerable children and youth in our community, giving them a clear and strong voice in decisions that affect their lives. Now, more than ever, we are concerned about the well-being and safety of children everywhere, and especially the most vulnerable children among us in Erie County.

During this COVID-19 health crisis, our attorneys, social workers and child advocates are working tirelessly to connect with our clients, whether they live with family, in foster care, or in other residential settings. When the Family Court shut down in March for all but "essential" appearances, our attorneys continued to appear in court to represent children. When the court transitioned to "virtual proceedings," we adapted quickly, set up home computers and now appear routinely in Family Court daily, though remotely daily, serving at the court's disposal to represent children in child welfare, juvenile justice and similar matters. Early on in this crisis, aware of risks to children and adults in the transmission of COVID-19, our lawyers secured the safe release of youth held in local detention facilities, returning them home to safety.

If you a child or youth and would like to talk with your Legal Aid lawyer, social worker or child advocate, please call us at 716-853-9555.

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES

All of our attorneys are standing by to respond to inquiries via our hotline numbers below. We continue to offer the full scope of civil legal services, including: assisting low-wage workers with questions about their unemployment insurance applications; aiding tenants facing evictions and foreclosures who are unsure about their rights; helping with debt collection matters; and assisting on family security cases. We accept applications by email (CLS@legalaidbuffalo.org), by phone at 716-853-9555 Ext. 400, and through our website contact form. Intakes are processed by email, snail mail, and/or fax. Initial consults for new clients are conducted by phone and teleconference.

The mission of the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo is to provide access to justice and due process to the most vulnerable individuals, children and families in the Western New York community through quality legal representation and assistance.

legalaidbuffalo.org

Issue	Contact
Housing Landlord/Tenant Housing Code Violations	716-853-9555 x 453 jkimura@legalaidbuffalo.org Mon through Thurs: 10am-2pm
Mortgage Foreclosure	1-855-969-3775 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week
Unemployment Benefits Child Support Health Care Proxy & Living Wills	716-217-0375 Tues, Fri: 9am-4pm
Family Law	716-245-5383 Wed, Thurs, Fri: 10am-2pm
	716-416-7485 (Habla Espanol) Mon, Thurs: 8am-1pm
	716-3793375 Mon, Fri: 12pm-4pm; Wed: 2pm-4pm
Non-Court Immigration Cases	716-416-7488 Mon to Fri, 10am-4pm
License Suspension	716-853-9555 x242 Various times of availability
All other issues	716-853-9555 ext. 400 cls@legalaidbuffalo.org

Subscribe to our e-newsletter: legalaidbuffalo.org/newsletter

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"Equal justice under law is not merely a caption on the facade of the Supreme Court building, it is perhaps the most inspiring ideal of our society. It is one of the ends for which our entire legal system exists...it is fundamental that justice should be the same, in substance and availability, without regard to economic status."

- Lewis Powell, Jr.,
former US Supreme Court Justice

**YOUR GIFT TO
LEGAL AID CAN HELP:**

Stop Child Abuse and
Family Violence

Prevent Homelessness

Secure Critical Life Saving
Benefits

Increase Access to Education

PLEASE GIVE TODAY

legalaidbuffalo.org/donate

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

We need your help to continue the fight for justice for low-income people in our region. Please consider making a gift to Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo and leave your legacy of caring. You can make a bequest, a tax-free gift from your IRA or 401K or a cash gift. Legacy giving can provide you with income and/or tax savings. Call Executive Director David Schopp at 716-853-9555, ext. 450.

HAVE ANY CHILDREN'S BOOKS TO DONATE?

We are always looking for books that empower our young children and adolescent clients in our Attorneys for Children Unit. To make a donation, please contact Judith Gerber at 716-853-9555, ext. 532.