



## Legal Aid Reentry Projects for people with criminal records and other significant barriers to employment.

This chart identifies both Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and non-LSC funded legal aid programs that recently reported offering reentry-related legal services. The list is not meant to be comprehensive. There may be other active reentry legal services projects, and other local legal aid and pro bono programs or projects willing to develop a reentry pro bono program and/or partner with other reentry social service providers interested in collaborating on federal reentry grant applications such as those listed [here](#).

This chart was created by Cheryl Nolan, Program Counsel, Office of Program Performance, Legal Services Corporation. To add your reentry project to the chart, please contact Ms. Nolan at [nolanc@lsc.gov](mailto:nolanc@lsc.gov) or (202) 295-1561.

Program Information	Client Services and Data	Client Stories	Services Tied to Employment
<b>ARKANSAS</b>			
<p><b>Legal Aid of Arkansas</b> 714 South Main Street Jonesboro AR 72401 870 972-9224 <a href="http://www.arlegalservices.org/">http://www.arlegalservices.org/</a></p> <p><b>Contact:</b> <b>Lee Richardson</b> Executive Director <a href="mailto:lrichardson@arlegalaid.org">lrichardson@arlegalaid.org</a> 870-972-9224 ext. 6305</p> <p><b>Arkansas Expungement Document Assembly Interview</b> LAA developed its interview module with a 2006 TIG project, located at: <a href="http://bit.ly/qg35oE">http://bit.ly/qg35oE</a></p>	<p>In the last 18 months: 190 clients with a direct benefit to 508 household members with expungement/clarification issues. 114 received counsel/advice or brief service; 76 received extended services/representation; LAA obtained expungements for 69 clients with direct benefit to 174 household members.</p>		<p>LAA uses comprehensive advocacy tools to assist people where the ability to obtain or maintain a job is threatened. Includes child support, driver's license, and expungement.</p>
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>			
<p><b>BayLegal</b> 1735 Telegraph Ave Oakland, CA 94612 510-663-4755 <a href="http://www.baylegal.org">http://www.baylegal.org</a></p> <p><b>Contact:</b> <b>Adam Poe, Staff Attorney</b> Bay Area Legal Aid Contra Costa Regional Office</p>		<p>BayLegal is currently serving formerly incarcerated individuals in the following areas:</p> <p><b>Alameda</b> Alameda's Youth Justice Project provides civil legal services to youths in the juvenile justice system. BayLegal has been a partner agency in the Collaborative Court. Alameda's housing unit litigated</p>	<p><b>San Francisco</b> Legal Barriers to Employment Project: assists clients with driver's or professional license issues.</p>

successfully against the Oakland Housing Authority for the illegal and arbitrary use of criminal background checks.

**Contra Costa**

BayLegal is a funded partner on the County's Second Chance adult demonstration grant and the federal Responsible Fatherhood grant.

Under both grants, BayLegal provides housing, public benefits and credit counseling to remove barriers to housing and employment.

BayLegal was awarded AB109 funds to provide civil legal services to AB109 probationers.

They have done extensive advocacy work with the Housing Authorities on their admissions policies for formerly incarcerated applicants or family members. They successfully litigated against a private credit reporting company that was reporting arrest and stale conviction records. They won reversal of a CalFRESH (Food Stamps) application denial, for a formerly incarcerated individual who was incorrectly excluded from the program.

**Santa Clara**

BayLegal has been a partner agency in the Collaborative Court and provides civil legal assistance to youths served in that court.

**Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area**

131 Steuart Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
415-543-9444  
<http://www.lccr.com>

**Contact:**

**Meredith Desautels**  
Staff Attorney  
415-543-9444, ext. 223

In 2011, Lawyers' Committee launched its Second Chance Legal Clinic, a monthly clinic that provides free legal services to people who have prior arrests or convictions. The Second Chance Legal Clinic helps clients overcome

In 2011, Lawyers' Committee attorneys assisted an African-American client in his application for an establishment license for his barber shop. The licensing board initially proposed to deny the license based on the client's 27-year-old conviction, even though the client had already obtained a Certificate of Rehabilitation from the court. Working together with

The Second Chance Legal Clinic helps clients to overcome the legal barriers resulting from a prior record. The Clinic provides assistance in the following areas: criminal records remedies (i.e. "expungement"), employment, housing, background checks, occupational licenses, and driver's licenses. Clients are offered brief legal advice at the Clinic, and there is the possibility that clients may be matched with a *pro bono*

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barriers to successful community reintegration, with the goal that people with records not only reenter, but thrive. They provide services with the assistance of *pro bono* attorneys, who help staff the clinic and provide follow-up representation in individual cases. Since 2011, the Clinic has served more than 250 clients around the San Francisco Bay Area, providing them with free legal advice and representation.

Lawyers' Committee advocates, the client filed an appeal and the board granted the license. As a result, the client is able to own and operate his own salon business in San Francisco.

In 2012, one of their *pro bono* attorneys represented an African-American client in her petition for expungement in Santa Clara County. The client, a single mother working hard to support her daughter, had made a mistake in 2008 and received a misdemeanor conviction. The attorney appeared in court on behalf of the client, requesting that the conviction be set aside and dismissed (i.e. "expunged.") Despite the probation department's recommendation against the petition, the judge granted the request, commending the client for all the progress she had made in life and wishing her well.

attorney for additional representation in appropriate cases.

**Legal Services of Northern California**

***Clean Slate***

517 – 12th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 551-2150  
<http://www.lsn.net>

**Contact:**

**Kyanna Williams**  
**Staff Attorney**  
[kwilliams@lsnc.net](mailto:kwilliams@lsnc.net)

LSNC has 8 field offices and numerous specialty programs. Most offices provide some form of clean slate services. LSNC is developing a library of clean slate materials to make it even easier for local offices to assist clean slate clients. Services by office/program:

**Solano:** Offers clean slate self-help materials; hosted the County's first ever clean slate day in 2009; Hopes to offer expanded clean slate services after hiring staff in the fall.

**Shasta Regional:** Hosts

One client successfully dismissed her criminal record conviction and, as a result, maintained eligibility to work as an IHSS provider for her severely disabled adult daughter.

They found that no matter how much vocational and interview training clients receive, without an expunged criminal record, clients cannot find jobs. LSNC Expungement services include reducing felonies to misdemeanors, dismissing criminal convictions, early termination of probation, sealing of arrest records, and obtaining certificates of rehabilitation. In addition to recruiting volunteers from local law schools and bar associations, LSNC has collaborated with organizations like: County Career Centers, local IHSS labor union, Family Resource Center, the Justice Bus project, County Homeless Connect events, Asian Resources, All of Us or None, The Mutual Assistance Network of Del Paso Heights, and local public defenders.

quarterly clean slate workshops led by a local public defender; Offers self-help packets; Plans to offer expanded clean slate services after hiring staff in the fall.

**Ukiah:** Hosts clean slate events in English and Spanish; Offers self-help materials.

**Yolo:** Offers one-on-one clean slate assistance.

**Sacramento:** Staffs two clean slate events each year; periodically coordinates with community-based organizations on other clean slate events.

**VLSP:** A special program of LSNC, VLSP hosts 4 clean slate clinics per week at Sacramento County Career Centers.

**National Employment Law Project**

405 14th Street, Suite 401  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 663-5705  
[www.nelp.org](http://www.nelp.org)

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Staff Attorney  
[mrodriguez@nelp.org](mailto:mrodriguez@nelp.org)  
**(510) 663-5705**

**Nationwide and California**

Millions of Americans - one in four adults - have arrest or conviction records that often follow them throughout their lives. (See NELP report [65 Million "Need Not Apply"](#)). NELP has been a leader in the movement nationally to restore fairness to the process of criminal background checks and remove unnecessary barriers to the

**Bay Area**

NELP represents a limited number of individuals in the San Francisco Bay Area filing race discrimination complaints with the EEOC based on use of arrest or conviction record in employment.

**Nationwide and California**

NELP is working to enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Credit Reporting Act to expand job opportunities for people with criminal records. NELP maintains extensive resources on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) guidance on the use of conviction and arrest records in employment decisions and the guidelines of the U.S. Department of Labor applying the

employment of people with criminal records. We promote model employment policies and basic protections, such as [ban the box](#), that allow qualified workers with records to attain and retain quality jobs.

civil rights protections to the workforce development community. NELP also maintains a criminal records listserv for advocates—contact NELP to join.

## CONNECTICUT

### Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut

#### *Pardon Assistance Project*

1290 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 3A

Wethersfield CT 06109

860 344-8096

<http://www.slsct.org>

#### Contact:

**Jane Kinney-Knotek**

**Deputy Director**

[JKnotek@slsct.org](mailto:JKnotek@slsct.org)

SLS began the Pardon Assistance Project in 2009, to raise awareness that “pardons” can be granted by the state of Connecticut authorities and can lead to increased employment and housing opportunities for ex-offenders, who have worked hard to better themselves. SLS has teamed with a local university, paralegals and service providers to successfully help clients navigate a complex set of administrative procedures, ranging from the initial interview and advice phase, up to the final application and hearing before the Board of Pardons and Parole. In 2009, the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BOPP) reviewed 826 applications and granted 415 pardons; in 2010 The BOPP reviewed 802 and granted 340

Clients must explain in detail, with supporting documentation and letters of reference, what led to their arrest and how they have changed their lives since turning away from criminal behavior. The parole board looks for self-improvement through education, community activities, volunteerism and employment. SLS helps clients prepare letters of recommendation and the submission of fingerprints.

Services focus on obtaining employment and housing through petitions for pardons. To apply, a felony conviction must be at least five years old; misdemeanor conviction must be three years old. Outreach for the Project Includes both open sessions with clients, community groups and service providers, and one-on-one advisement to over a thousand individuals.

## FLORIDA

**Three Rivers Legal Services  
(Gainesville)**

**Reentry Seminars Hosted by the Florida Department of Corrections**

901 NW 8th Avenue, Suite D-5

Gainesville, FL 32608

352-372-0519

Gainesville, FL

<http://www.trls.org>

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**Managing Attorney**

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Limited role with reentry. Participate with several other service providers at the reentry seminars hosted by the Florida Department of Corrections. Over the past 2 years, presented 3-4 times per year.

Staff present and speak on topics including family law, consumer law, foreclosures, child support, the dependency system and the availability of legal services throughout the state. Staff answers questions at the conclusion of the sessions in a "tabling" setting. Prisoners who participate are within 6 months of release. Staff encourages prisoners to schedule appointments with the legal aid program upon release. Three Rivers reports that in Florida, prisons are big business and there are many facilities located in the state.

**ILLINOIS**

**Cabrini Green Legal Aid**

740 N Milwaukee Ave.

Chicago, IL 60642

312-738-2452

<http://www.cgla.net>

**Contact:**

**Beth Johnson**

**Program Director**

[bethjohnson@cgla.net](mailto:bethjohnson@cgla.net)

The Help Desks are supervised by CGLA staff attorneys and 3-4 pro bono attorneys on a daily basis.

<http://www.chicagorealestatedaily.com/article/20120818/ISSUE03/308189988/charity-begins-at-the-office>

In FY 12, CGLA served 4,032 individuals through its Expungement Help Desk located in Chicago at the Clerk's Office. Of that number, 2,094 clients filed to expunge or seal their criminal records.

In FY 13, CGLA opened a second Help Desk in the Markham court house (in the south suburbs of Cook County) at the request of the Presiding Judge. Since opening in September of 2013, CGLA has advised 500 clients and filed 150 petitions.

In collaboration with the Presiding Judge in Cook County, CGLA also represents pro se petitioners on contested petitions to expunge and seal in Chicago (along with

Mr. Langdon was barred from working in the Chicago Public Schools because of a 25 year old drug conviction that occurred during his years of addiction. Although he had been in recovery for twenty years and worked for CPS for twelve years in the past, state law prohibited him from working in the schools. After receiving a Certificate of Good Conduct removing the statutory barrier, along with media attention on the issue, Mr. Langdon was allowed to begin work and set CPS hiring policy to consider future candidates with Certificates waiving the statutory barriers.

[http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-09-26/news/ct-met-trice-langdon-0926-20100926\\_1\\_cps-for-four-years-darrell-langdon-cps-spokeswoman-monique-bond](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-09-26/news/ct-met-trice-langdon-0926-20100926_1_cps-for-four-years-darrell-langdon-cps-spokeswoman-monique-bond)

The Help Desks operate to serve pro se petitioners in Cook County. Additionally, CGLA operates a Criminal Records Program in-house, providing direct service representation through staff and pro bono attorneys to clients seeking alternative forms of relief, including certificates, waivers, human rights act discrimination claims, identify theft and petitions for executive clemency. CGLA operates a similar program providing dedicated services for the homeless through an Equal Justice Works fellowship.

CGLA is active in the policy arena, advocating for more progressive laws to provide relief from past criminal records and combatting laws that impose further collateral consequences as a result of contact with the criminal justice system.

CGLA provides presentations in the community and partners with social service agencies to improve employment outcomes. Along with the Cook County Clerk's Office, CGLA participates in annual Expungement Summits which draws over 2,000 people each year. CGLA has also partnered with the national management firm of Morgan Lewis & Bockius to provide Employment Guidelines trainings to employers on best practices in terms of

	Chicago Legal Clinic). In FY 12, CGLA represented 796 petitioners with a 96% success rate.	hiring individuals with criminal records.
<p><b>LAF</b>  <b>(Formerly Legal Assistance Foundation)</b>  <b>Chicago, IL.</b>  <b>Juvenile Expungement</b>  <b>Help Desk</b>  120 S. LaSalle Street, Ste. 900  Chicago, IL 60603  312.341.1070  <a href="http://www.lafchicago.org">http://www.lafchicago.org</a></p> <p><b>Contacts:</b>  <b><u>Reentry Project Coordinator</u></b></p> <p><b>Tim Huizinga</b>  <a href="mailto:thuizinga@lafchicago.org">thuizinga@lafchicago.org</a></p> <p><b><u>Coordinators Juvenile Expungement</u></b>  <b>Jennifer Payne</b>  <a href="mailto:jpayne@lafchicago.org">jpayne@lafchicago.org</a>  <b>Richard Cozzola</b>  <a href="mailto:rcozzola@lafchicago.org">rcozzola@lafchicago.org</a>  -  <b><u>Pro Bono Coordinator</u></b>  <b>Mara Block</b>  <a href="mailto:mblock@lafchicago.org">mblock@lafchicago.org</a></p>	<p>In 2012, LAF closed 141 cases from the juvenile expungement desk after advising clients of their eligibility for expungement and assisting them with completing the legal forms. In several cases, LAF represented clients in court when those clients had cases needing specialized advocacy to obtain juvenile expungements.</p> <p>At the Juvenile Expungement Help Desk, individuals meet with an attorney who reviews the juvenile arrest record, the online court file, assists with the necessary paperwork and, when necessary, in-court legal assistance. The project is in operated collaboration with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. LAF staff conducts outreach for this project throughout Cook County including Juvenile Department of Correction sites, Juvenile Court probation offices, the Cook County Public Guardian and Public Defender, and social</p>	<p>Clients with expungement issues who identify other legal needs, such as housing, employment, or family law advocacy, are referred to resources within LAF where appropriate.</p>

service agencies such as SGA Youth & Family Services, which work with adolescents and young adults who are being discharged from state custody. A VISTA volunteer attorney coordinates the project, supervised by an LAF supervising attorney. LAF staff attorneys and law students also provide some coverage for the desk. Cases are referred to pro bono partners where appropriate. LAF has worked with the ABA Litigation Section Children's Rights Subcommittee to provide information on its work in this area for other organizations nationally. Because of increased demand for outreach and direct services LAF has expanded the time commitment for its VISTA for this project.

LAF has also begun working on adult expungements and sealing of criminal records at its neighborhood clinic in the Woodlawn neighborhood of Chicago – collaboration with DLA Piper.

LAF expects that by January 2014 we will begin assisting clients with obtaining various

	forms of relief from criminal records, including certificates with relief from disabilities, certificates of good conduct, and executive clemency.		
<p><b>Illinois Legal Aid Online</b>  <b>Adult and Juvenile Expungement Document Assembly Interviews</b>  17 N State St #1590  Chicago, IL 60602  312 977-9047  <a href="http://www.illinoislegalaid.org">http://www.illinoislegalaid.org</a></p> <p><b>Contact:</b>  <b>Teri Ross</b>  Program Director  <a href="mailto:tross@illinoislegalaid.org">tross@illinoislegalaid.org</a>  312-977-9047 x14</p>		<p>The Huffington Post highlighted the module and interviews:  <a href="http://huff.to/r5MUUc">http://huff.to/r5MUUc</a></p>	<p>Illinois Legal Aid Online, the statewide website developed through TIG funding, hosts interactive expungement interviews for adults and juveniles.</p> <p>The general expungement interview is available through:  <a href="http://bit.ly/pMmW23">http://bit.ly/pMmW23</a></p> <p>The juvenile interview is online at:  <a href="http://bit.ly/mV7A0A">http://bit.ly/mV7A0A</a></p>
<b>INDIANA</b>			
<p><b>Indiana Legal Services</b>  <b>Ex-Offender Community Reintegration Project (ECRP)</b>  Market Square Ctr., Suite 1850  151 North Delaware Street  Indianapolis IN 46204-2523  317 631-9410  <a href="http://www.indianalegalservices.org/">http://www.indianalegalservices.org/</a></p> <p><b>Contact:</b>  <b>Roderick E. Bohannon</b>  <a href="mailto:rod.bohannon@ilsa.net">rod.bohannon@ilsa.net</a></p>	<p>Program was begun with a cy pres award, which was not refunded by the state. They have maintained relationships with social organizations and they currently accept referrals when able to incorporate into their other priority work.</p>		<p>ILS assists with expungement and sealing arrest and criminal Records. They help with driver license reinstatements, hardship licenses and Chapter 7 bankruptcies for recently released inmates.</p>
<b>KANSAS</b>			
<p><b>Kansas Legal Services</b>  <b>Topeka Moving Ahead Program (T-MAP)</b>  712 S. Kansas Ave., Ste. 200  Topeka KS 66603  785 233-2068  <a href="http://www.kansaslegalservices.org/">http://www.kansaslegalservices.org/</a></p> <p><b>Contact:</b>  <b>Marilyn Harp</b>  Executive Director  <a href="mailto:harpm@klsinc.org">harpm@klsinc.org</a>  785-233-2068</p>	<p>T-MAP has been in operation for almost 8 years. Project staff completed legal reviews for 377 participants since its inception.</p> <p>KLS also operates a pro bono project (LSC funded) for expungement work in the Kansas City area.</p>	<p>Nicole Fox was released from prison on a drug charge and paroled to the Topeka Rescue Mission. KLS helped her obtain divorce from abusive spouse. Sober for more than 2 years, she interned then became fully employed by Valeo as a certified peer specialist. Fox is now remarried and employed.</p>	<p>T-MAP is a program of Kansas Legal Services Employment Training Division. This is a 16 week classroom and internship program, during which the participants live in a local shelter. Participants are screened by a KLS paralegal and goals are set for resolving legal issues. Access to drivers' licenses and expungement of convictions are two of the most often occurring barriers to employment. Appropriate cases are assigned to an attorney for direct representation. KLS accepts custody cases and family law matters causing significant</p>

**Document Assembly and Statewide Website Initiative**

In 2011, KLS launched an Expungement of Criminal Conviction/Diversion document assembly interview on its statewide website. KLS began developing interactive interviews with its 2008 TIG and continues to support the initiative.

The interview is available online at:

<http://bit.ly/pE7amM>

stress to the client.

**LOUISIANA**

**Southeast Louisiana Legal Services**

1010 Common Street  
Annex Building, Suite 1400A  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
877 521-6242  
504 529-1000 or 529-1008  
<http://www.slls.org>

**Employment & Benefits Unit**

**Contact:**

Rowena Jones, Managing Attorney, (504) 529-1000, ext. 247; [rjones@slls.org](mailto:rjones@slls.org)

Since the 1990's, SLLS (and New Orleans Legal Assistance, which began the project and merged with SLLS in 2003) has provided expungement services to approximately 2000 persons.

In 2013, SLLS prevailed over a municipal taxi agency seeking to bar re-registration of a long-term city taxi driver based on his 30 year old criminal history, which the city had been aware of in earlier registrations. SLLS successfully invoked a state anti-discrimination law to return the driver to work. That case is currently on appeal by the city. In another recent case, a job applicant was invited back after SLLS cleared up a negative credit report that included another's criminal record. For clients seeking expungements, SLLS researches their records, assists in preparing expungements pleadings, assists in obtaining court cost reductions when available under state law for non-felony offenders, and represents individuals in court when self-help is insufficient to resolve the case.

Through Single Stop USA SLLS has an attorney stationed at New Orleans' community college, Delgado. Many students find themselves studying for careers only to learn they can't be licensed due to a past criminal conviction. Helping these students is a focus of SLLS' expungement work.

Another focus of SLLS' work is to remove employment barriers by overcoming criminal history job discrimination. With Louisiana at the top in terms of incarceration and arrests, especially of African-Americans, and the economy so poor, job discrimination is a major issue in SLLS' service area. SLLS gives advice, makes EEOC referrals when appropriate, and provides individual representation when possible. The expungements services range from advice to full representation in court. To assist others in the community, SLLS has produced self-help material on expungements and other employment barriers for online and community outreach use, has provided community training, collaborates with other community partners to increase availability of direct services, and participates in efforts to create a uniform and simple expungements process state-wide. SLLS works to identify and address systemic issues related to criminal records' expungements and job discrimination, and to enforce those laws available for relief.

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**Greater Boston Legal Services**

197 Friend Street  
Boston, MA 02114

In 2012, the project assisted 636 clients which included 219 full-representation cases

Assist people every month with barriers to employment caused by criminal records by helping them get copies of their own criminal record

Project targets Boston's African-American communities in Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan—poorest areas of Boston hardest hit by unemployment. Operate

617-371-1234  
800-323-3205

<http://www.gbls.org>

*(CORI: criminal offender record information—also referred to as the person's record in MA )*

involving representation of clients in court to seal or expunge criminal records, and 417 cases where client received brief services or limited representation related to sealing, expungement or related consequences of records.

(Data based on cases closed in 2012 and does not include open cases that continued into 2013).

reports and advising them on what employers will be able to access if they request records depending on statutory grant of access in MA; prepare cases and represent clients in court on requests to seal or expunge criminal records; pro se help with administrative process to seal "aged out" cases; help with juvenile record sealing; advice on the varying levels of access by employers and others to various types of criminal cases; motor vehicle suspension issues, "Ban the Box" rights, discrimination claims, and other collateral consequences.

Also work on systemic law reform issues pertaining to clients such many problems with implementation of recent changes in the law related to recent CORI reform legislation in 2012. Also handle appeals related to sealing and expungement, write amicus briefs, and produce web material for [masslegalhelp.org](http://masslegalhelp.org) on CORI and other materials for pro se parties.

"CORI help" tables bi-monthly at Roxbury and Dorchester courts. Represent almost all individuals who appear for criminal record sealing hearings in Roxbury court. Work on policy and systemic reform issues related to courts' handling of sealing cases, "ban the box" violations, state agency criminal record related issues, and appeals aimed at improving the body of law on sealing records.

Also have provided community legal education training to groups and agencies working with people who have criminal records.

## MICHIGAN

### Legal Aid and Defender Association

613 Abbott Street  
Detroit, MI 48226  
313.967.5555

<http://www.ladadetroit.org>

#### Contact:

**Lynda Krupp**

**Managing Attorney**

**Private Attorney Involvement Unit**

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In addition to staff time, LAD uses pro bono attorneys to handle cases. Where appropriate, clients are represented at their hearings. Since 2004, 509 expungements have been granted through LAD.

A 57-year old divorced man was living on \$176 a week in unemployment benefits when he sought LAD's help to expunge his criminal record. Through LAD's efforts his expungement case was filed and a volunteer attorney was recruited to represent him at the hearing. His expungement was granted. He now has a job with the company that does the landscaping for the Ford Motor Company campuses. He likes his job and says the expungement made the difference in his job search. Previously he was not even able to get a job interview, although he has a college degree. This is because many employers started conducting more extensive background checks after September 11, 2001.

LAD's expungement project has been recognized nationally as an innovative pro bono project. LSC recognized this project as a model for other pro bono programs by placing it on LSC's Legal Resource Information Website. The National Association of Pro Bono Professionals (NAPBPro) chose the project as one of five projects to be showcased in a national Webinar on "Best Practices" in 2010.

There are thousands of individuals residing in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb County who are legally eligible to have their criminal records expunged. Providing this legal service enables ex-offenders, who have demonstrated their ability to turn their lives around, with expanded employment opportunities to help reduce the rate of unemployment in the county

			<p>and increase the standard of living for ex-offenders. This program has helped expand secure, safe and affordable housing opportunities for the ex-offenders and their families as ex-offenders are often barred from subsidized housing. Since its inception several years ago over five hundred (500) people have had their criminal records expunged.</p>
<p><b>Legal Aid of Western Michigan Reentry Law Project</b> Cornerstone Bldg., Suite 400 89 Ionia Avenue, NW Grand Rapids MI 49503 616 774-0672 <a href="http://www.michiganlegalaid.org/">http://www.michiganlegalaid.org/</a></p> <p><b>Contact:</b> <b>Leslie Curry</b> <a href="mailto:lcurry@legalaidwestmich.net">lcurry@legalaidwestmich.net</a></p>	<p>Since 2006, the Reentry Law Project has provided legal services to nearly 2,000 clients from a broad demographic including juveniles and senior citizens, and people of all races.</p>	<p>LAWM assisted a man to expunge a home invasion conviction that made it impossible for him to gain employment and pursue his dream of becoming a firefighter. 19 years old at the time of conviction, and more than 10 years later, the conviction was still on his record and prevented him from maintaining consistent employment and the firefighter position he desperately wanted, despite successfully completing training, passing exams and undergoing a community- led interview process. LAWM helped clear his record, allowing him to reapply and secure a firefighter position.</p>	<p>After the Michigan legislature enacted a statute making it illegal for a nursing home to employ individuals with any felony convictions and some misdemeanor convictions, the RLP filed an administrative complaint with the Consumer and Industry Services Bureau seeking a clarification of the statute's impact. The RLP obtained a declaratory ruling that the new law did not apply to 1) Juvenile adjudications or 2) Individuals previously employed in the field who are returning after the effective date of the law and 3) to someone who has been grandfathered in when they change jobs within the industry after the effective date of the statute. This ruling saved the jobs for hundreds of workers employed in the nursing home field.</p>
<b>MINNESOTA</b>			
<p><b>Legal Services State Support; Volunteer Lawyers Network; and Council on Crime and Justice Criminal Expungement Start-to-Finish</b> Midtown Commons - Suite #101B 2324 University Avenue West St. Paul, MN 55114 651-228-9105 <a href="mailto:statesupport@mnlegalservices.org">statesupport@mnlegalservices.org</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.mnlegalservices.org">http://www.mnlegalservices.org</a></p>	<p>Webinars providing an overview of expungement law and a tour of the document assembly tool were held in April 2010, April 2011 and July 2013. 2010 attendance: 130; 2011 attendance: 250; 2013 attendance: 42. Attendees were primarily pro bono attorneys, legal aid attorneys, and public defenders.</p> <p>More than 1,100 sets</p>		<p>This project leverages resources by integrating innovative document assembly technology, trainings and webinars and the use of volunteer attorneys. Benefits are consistent pleadings to the courts, increased pro bono and better results for clients. The interview is being continually modified to respond to changes in the law. It can be found at <a href="http://www.projusticemn.org/criminalexpungement">www.projusticemn.org/criminalexpungement</a> (must be a site member). Covers all avenues for criminal expungement, printing one of a dozen petitions and proposed orders based on the answers to a series of simple questions.</p>

of pleadings were created using the tool between 2010 and 2012.

## NEW JERSEY

### Essex-Newark Legal Services

5 Commerce Street  
2nd Floor  
Newark, NJ  
973 624-4500  
[enls@lsnj.org](mailto:enls@lsnj.org)  
<http://www.lsnj.org>

**Contact:**

**Elizabeth Duelly**  
**Staff Attorney**  
[EDuelly@lsnj.org](mailto:EDuelly@lsnj.org)

ENLS has handled expungement matters since the early 1980's. It is staffed with one part-time attorney whose efforts are supplemented by volunteers.

To date in 2013, ENLS is assisting 69 clients with active files. This includes petitions that were granted this year, petitions filed this year, interviews this year, and clients in other stages of processing. Besides direct representation, ENLS also provides advice and brief service to a host of other client-eligible persons who are self-petitioning for expungement relief. Each year, staff serves as panelists at expungement law seminars sponsored by the Essex County Superior Court. In 2012 two such seminars were held. In 2013, ENLS staff also prepared resource documents and participated in training for Legal Services of New Jersey's annual statewide conference. The volume of arrests in Essex County, particularly among members of minority groups (who traditionally suffer the highest unemployment rates), makes the need for expungement services great. In 2011,

K.C., a mother of four, was dismissed from her phlebotomist job because of a 2002 felony conviction which arose from a street fight. K.C. is completely reformed, a Christian evangelist, leading Bible study groups, and taking food to the homeless in public places. Yet, she was repeatedly refused employment, and she and her children were relegated to the welfare rolls for support. ENLS successfully petitioned the Court in 2012 to grant an early expungement of K.C.'s record. ENLS also assisted K.C. after her expungement was granted but her previous record still came up because of an error by a government agency. Now, K.C.'s record is completely clear, and the agency error has been corrected.

Another discretionary expungement involves I.V., a 48 year old mother of two grown children whose 1980 felony drug conviction prevented her from obtaining even minimum wage jobs, since her prior employer closed in 2011. I.V. overcame the heroin addiction which preceded her conviction, the methadone conviction which replaced it, and severe depression from her infant nephew's violent death, but could not overcome the barriers to employment caused by her decades-old conviction. ENLS petitioned the court with voluminous documentation of I.V.'s prior employment, certifications, educational efforts and career goals, and now awaits a positive response from the Court.

H.F.'s 1980 shoplifting offense had been the subject of a 2006 expungement order obtained by a private attorney. Yet, when she sought re-certification as a Homemaker- Home Health Aide in 2012, her application was refused because the record came up. H.F. came to ENLS in tears because she was no longer able to

Clients are provided resource materials including a chart listing reentry organizations. When eligible, ENLS files the petition for full expungement. If only partially eligible but the eligible portion of the record would be a great hindrance to employment if not expunged (e.g. dismissals for kidnapping and sexual assault which are eligible and C.D.S. convictions which are not), ENLS will file. State statutory amendments in 2010 have broadened the scope of drug-related offenses that are now eligible for expungement at the courts' discretion. The 2010 amendments also reduced the waiting periods for all eligible felonies at the courts' discretion. ENLS uses a client's past employment history, jobs refused because of criminal record, training and certifications and any current (often below the client's level of ability) employment, as well as the client's career goals, to build the case for expungement. So far, in all cases where ENLS requested the exercise of the courts' discretion, the petitions have been granted. ENLS also assists clients where their Criminal Case History is inaccurate. In those instances, they contact the State Police to correct the record. ENLS also advises clients on how to proceed if expunged records still come up in public record searches.

33,792 persons were arrested in Essex County. Of this total, 25,717, over 76%, were African-American. Of the 2,679 juveniles arrested in Essex County in 2011, 2078, over 77%, were African-American. Essex County's most populous city, Newark, experiences the return of approximately 1, 542 persons each month, from state and county penal institutions.

support herself. ENLS properly served the expungement order on all agencies, ensured her State Police record was cleared and contacted the Board of Nursing on numerous occasions on H.F.'s behalf. Due to ENLS intervention, H.F. was re-certified and can now be employed in her chosen field.

**Legal Services of New Jersey** P.O. Box 1357  
Edison, NJ 08818-1357  
732 572-9100  
<http://www.lsnjlaw.org>

***Prisoner Reentry Project (PREP)***

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**Vice President and Assistant General Counsel**  
[aroper@lsnj.org](mailto:aroper@lsnj.org)

**Lisa Kalichman, Esq.**  
**Pro Bono Coordinator**  
**973-624-4500, ext. 4408**

In 2012, PREP provided advice and counsel, brief services, and representation to 268 individual clients.

***Appellate Advocacy***  
In 2012, LSNJ participated as Amicus Curiae in two significant matters before the Supreme Court of New Jersey. In *In re Kollman*, a case which ultimately provides guidance to lower courts in the fair handling of public interest expungements; and *DYFS v. J.G.*, a matter questioning whether the Division of Youth and Family Services rightfully terminated the parental rights of a formerly-incarcerated father. They also successfully appealed the denial of petitioner's application seeking the expungement of a record of dismissed cases before the Appellate Division in the *Matter of A.W.*

***Employment Discrimination***  
While they assist clients with filing criminal record discrimination/race based charges of discrimination with the EEOC, they have been successful in directly resolving several cases involving the denial of an employment opportunity. In one example, we represented an individual in his appeal of the State Police's denial of his

PREP is currently staffed with one attorney and one paralegal, with some assistance provided by volunteers and pro bono attorneys. They provide assistance in civil legal matters to eligible inmates and recently-released prisoners to help their successful transition back into society. They accomplish these goals through: *Advocacy; Community Legal Education; Advice and Counsel; and Representation.*

Recognizing that employment is crucial for effective reentry, most legal services are aimed at helping clients get "job ready," and ultimately obtaining and maintaining employment, including (but not limited to) expungement, driver's license restoration, occupational licensing and employment barriers.

***Expungement***  
Expungement remains a major area of LSNJ's advocacy and direct assistance. They updated their step-by-step *Clearing Your Record Expungement Manual (2012)*, which now includes additional pro se materials to help unrepresented people file "public interest" and compelling circumstances" certifications, if needed, with their petitions for expungement. Since its inception, they

application for security officer certification due to a criminal conviction. The case was settled after we assisted T.D. obtain an expungement. He is now entitled to receive his security officer's license.

In another example, we communicated with an employer, verbally and in writing, after it had denied an applicant based on her criminal record. We advised the employer of the rights of individuals with conviction records, and provided an explanation of her history with evidence of rehabilitation. We were able to negotiate with the employer for a meeting to further discuss the employment opportunity.

have assisted hundreds of individuals expunge their criminal records, providing advice as to their eligibility, helping them draft petitions, and in some cases, representing them. They routinely provide expungement seminars and trainings to local organizations and community groups.

#### ***Statewide Reentry Support for Recently Released Population***

They recently completed a grant-funded assistance program at Essex County College's Opportunity Reconnect-Newark, providing legal assistance to parolees, max-outs and local residents. They continue to partner with and provide services to serve urban centers where many reentering individuals reside, including Newark, Union County, Atlantic City, and Jersey City.

#### ***Employment Discrimination***

They submit comments to the *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* (EEOC) in response to requests for guidance in drafting a strategic enforcement plan. They made a number of suggestions to help establish priorities, increase efficiency of operations and improve customer service. PREP regularly assists clients to file charges of discrimination with the EEOC, the enforcing agency under Title VII.

#### ***Outreach / Publication***

PREP advocates continued their outreach last year, and made further efforts to establish a presence in state and federal correctional facilities and programs. In this regard, they made presentations to *Fort Dix Federal Prison* and *Mid-State Correctional Facility for Women*, and *Kintock Halfway House*. They traditionally provide an overview of the services available from LSNJ and PREP, and disseminate materials at the respective facilities for the benefit of inmates.

They publish a number of relevant articles

in the LSNJ publication *LSNJ Report*, for statewide advocates, and Looking Out for Your Legal Rights, for the clients and populations they serve, including: *Criminal Record Discrimination in Employment (LSNJ Report)*; *New Jersey's Supreme Court Provides Guidance in Filing Public Interest Expungements (Looking Out)*; *Department of Corrections to Remove Former Inmate Information from Searchable Database (LSNJ Report)*; *Bill May Restrict Public Housing Opportunities for Former Sex Offenders (LSNJ Report)*; and *EEOC Issues Revised Guidance on the Use of Criminal Records in Employment Decisions (LSNJ Report)*.

**NEW YORK**

**Center for Community Alternatives Reentry Clinic**

115 E. Jefferson Street  
Suite 300  
Syracuse, NY 13202  
315-422-5638

[cca@communityalternatives.org](mailto:cca@communityalternatives.org)  
<http://www.communityalternatives.org/>

**Contact:**

**Lisa Baily, Director, Reentry Clinic**  
[lbailey@communityalternatives.org](mailto:lbailey@communityalternatives.org)  
315-422-5638, ext. 213

**Patricia Warth, Co-Director, Justice Strategies**  
[pwarth@communityalternatives.org](mailto:pwarth@communityalternatives.org)  
315-422-5638, ext. 229

The Center for Community Alternatives is a community-based, non-profit organization with 30 years' experience working to promote reintegrative justice and a reduced reliance on incarceration through services, advocacy, and policy development. Based in Syracuse, New York, CCA has programs in New York City, Syracuse, and Rochester, New York.

Charles, a Reentry Clinic client, has worked for 6 years for a company that provides food services to nursing homes. Recently, a state agency determined that his "rap sheet" had to be reviewed for "clearance" to continue this work. The rap sheet revealed an old arrest from 1985 that had been arraigned, but never prosecuted. As a result, the arrest appeared as "pending." The state agency instructed Charles' employer to suspend him without pay until he could get this "pending" arrest resolved. CCA's Reentry Clinic was able to quickly file a motion to terminate the prosecution convincing the judge and district attorney to expedite the motion. The motion was granted, and the arrest charges dismissed and sealed. CCA notified the state agency, and Charles was cleared to return to work.

CCA's Reentry Clinic helps clients obtain their official criminal history records ("rap sheets") so they can accurately report their past criminal convictions if required to do so during the job application process. We also identify and take steps to correct rap sheet mistakes that can create barriers to employment. We assist clients in developing an effective strategy for discussing their past convictions and their rehabilitation and good conduct with employers. We help clients apply for Certificates of Rehabilitation if eligible. For clients who are pursuing a career that requires occupational licensing or "clearance" by a state agency, we help clients navigate this process. Finally, we inform clients of their rights when applying for employment, and if needed, help them exercise their rights by putting employers on notice when they fail to honor the law. If necessary, we assist clients in pursuing legal remedies that may be available to them.

**Legal Action Center (LAC)**

225 Varick Street  
New York, NY 10014  
212 243-1313  
800 223-4044  
[lacinfo@lac.org](mailto:lacinfo@lac.org)

In the last year, LAC closed approximately 2,800 cases for 2,000 clients throughout New York State.

LAC's legal staff and pro bono attorneys won administrative hearings for many clients denied security guard licensure due to a criminal record. Most of these individuals had employers willing to hire them

LAC services range from obtaining rap sheets and providing written, user-friendly summaries, to advising and assisting with error correction, obtaining Certificates of Good Conduct or Relief from Disabilities, providing advice, advocacy, and

<http://www.lac.org>

**Contact:**

**Sally Friedman**

**Legal Director** [sfriedman@lac.org](mailto:sfriedman@lac.org)

**The Legal Aid Society**

- *The Robin Hood Foundation's Rikers Island Single Stop Reentry Project Initiative (The Riker's Re-entry Project)*
- *The Prisoners' Rights Project*
- *The Parole Revocation and Defense Unit*
- *The MICA Project*
- *The Adolescent Intervention and Diversion Unit*
- *The Trafficking Victims Legal Defense and Advocacy Project*
- *The Employment Law Unit (ELU)*

199 Water Street

New York, NY 10038

212 577-3300

<http://www.legal-aid.org/en/home.aspx>

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**Pro Bono Counsel and Director**

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The Riker's Re-entry Project provides full representation and advice to incarcerated clients on issues related to housing matters, family law, and consumer issues. The Prisoners' Rights Project seeks to remedy unconstitutional conditions and illegal practices in the New York City jails and New York State prisons. The reentry practice focuses on advocacy to support ex-inmates' transition and reintegration into their communities with their families and in obtaining employment, housing, health and other benefits, in resuming their education, and in re-gaining their civil rights as they are assisted through our Parole Revocation and Defense Unit, the MICA Project

provided they received licensure.

Through pre-litigation negotiations and representation in administrative agencies and litigation, LAC obtained jobs and monetary settlements for individuals denied employment in violation of New York's law prohibiting discrimination based on a criminal record.

LAC paralegals helped individuals obtain Certificates of Relief from Disabilities that prospective employers stated were a pre-requisite to employment.

The ELU helped a nineteen year old who was terminated from his employment with the NYC Parks Department for allegedly omitting information related to his criminal conviction history on his employment application. After reviewing his criminal record history it was discovered that he did not have any criminal convictions and only has a sealed violation and a youthful offender adjudication - which are not convictions. The NYS Human Rights Law specifically prohibits discrimination in employment against those with sealed violations and youthful offender adjudications. The Unit was able to advise the client of his rights and help him obtain the appropriate documents from criminal court to present to his employer to resolve the matter.

representation to overcome criminal record-related barriers to jobs, occupational licensure or public housing, and to enforce laws governing commercial background checks. LAC publishes popular know-your-rights publications, available at [www.lac.org](http://www.lac.org).

The Employment Law Unit is supporting bills on a number of reentry issues, some of which are specifically focused on increasing employment opportunities for ex-offenders. The Unit has helped draft a bill that would protect employees who are arrested from being terminated once they have accepted an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal of any criminal charges. The ELU works with The Legal Aid Society's Criminal Defense Practice and Juvenile Rights Practice in advising clients on the employment consequences of different possible pleas or other options. The ELU also offers representation to clients if employers do not honor their legal rights once they have negotiated resolutions of their criminal cases.

for mentally ill and chemically addicted clients, the Adolescent Intervention and Diversion Unit, special projects assisting children who have had involvement with the juvenile justice system to ensure that their privacy rights are protected and that records sealed by the Family Court remain sealed, and the Trafficking Victims Legal Defense and Advocacy Project. The Employment Law Unit (ELU) provides assistance in cases that involve collateral consequences and criminal records discrimination.

**Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York (LASMNY)**

***Parent Success Initiative (PSI)***

255 Genesee Street, 2nd Floor

Utica NY 13501

315 793-7000

<http://www.lasmny.org>

**Contact:**

**Dan Altwarg**

**Senior Managing Attorney**

[daltwarg@wnylc.com](mailto:daltwarg@wnylc.com)

Greater Syracuse Works (GSW) is the organization of 30 non-profits in Onondaga County (Syracuse). The goal is to collaborate with local social service agencies to obtain funding for services to clients to obtain employment. The two largest client populations are ex-offenders/reentry and child support respondents. This was so glaring that New York amended its laws last year to clearly authorize the family court to order non-custodials into

PSI agencies include a core of 8-10 GSW members, including LASMNY. Partners include the family court, child support enforcement unit and the center for court innovation. LASMNY and another non-LSC funded legal aid provide legal assistance to overcome barriers that interfere with employment (child support, license suspension, general debt collect, and vehicle and traffic infractions). A local prisoner reentry project (Center for Community Alternatives) handles expungement and civic restoration. Several agencies provide case management and job locator/employment services and a couple of other agencies provide parenting skills/classes. Their new DOL grant will also include a large employment component as the contract will fund work crews.

<p>employment projects similar to PSI.</p> <p>The Urban Institute evaluated the PSI in 2009. From June 2010-April 2011, the PSI recruited 321 clients, opened 180 cases, 93 clients received legal assistance, 81 received parenting education, and 44 received civic restoration. 41 clients were placed in employment.</p>		
<p>Serves over 100 clients with criminal record employment issues/year. 181 jobs involving NY State licenses saved in the last 4 years. \$1m+ employment income restored/year after initial revocation of state licenses. Est. \$4,525,000 total annual wages preserved in last 4 years for jobs requiring state screening. 44% clients reported they are no longer on public benefits. 31 employment discrimination cases filed and successfully resolved in 4 years; \$177,220 recovered damages.</p> <p>Examples of client work highlighted in Clearinghouse Review, January-February 2011. <a href="#">[1]</a></p>	<p>LawNY® settled a case involving a background reporting company improperly providing sealed arrest information for screening tenant applications. The company agreed to pay damages and to comply with laws prohibiting the reporting of sealed criminal arrests.</p> <p>LawNY® successfully reversed a NYS Department of Education decision that denied a client paraprofessional employment clearance based upon a 1976 assault conviction. The State record check was triggered when the client was promoted to a Teachers Aid position after working for the school district for 20 years.</p> <p>LawNY® filed a complaint against Radio Shack with the NY State Attorney General. The complaint charged Radio Shack with statewide, systemic discriminatory hiring practices. As a result of that complaint, in 2009, the AG's Office reached a settlement requiring Radio Shack to discontinue its unlawful practices, comply with NY State law, pay a fine to the AG's Office and additionally pay \$245,000 into a victim restitution fund.</p>	<p>LawNY® focuses on qualifying former offenders for employment, professional licensing, and clearances subject to state mandated criminal background checks. In addition to enforcing NY state employment rights, the LawNY® reentry project utilizes federal and state fair credit reporting statutes to remove unlawful criminal record check barriers to employment and housing.</p>

**Legal Assistance of Western NY (LawNY®)/ Rochester Office**

One West Main Street 4th Floor  
Rochester, NY 14614  
585 325-2520  
<http://www.wnyc.com>

**Contact:**  
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**Managing Attorney,**  
**LawNY Rochester Office**  
[lprieto@wnyc.com](mailto:lprieto@wnyc.com)

<p><b>MFY LEGAL SERVICES, INC.</b>  299 Broadway, 4th Floor  New York, NY 10007  212-417-3700  <a href="http://www.mfy.org">http://www.mfy.org</a></p> <p><b>Contacts:</b>  <b>Jeanette Zelhof, Executive Director</b>  <a href="mailto:jzelhof@mfy.org">jzelhof@mfy.org</a></p> <p>-  <b>Bernadette Jentsch, Re-entry Project Coordinator</b>  <b>212-417-3772</b></p>	<p>MFY serves approximately 80 clients per year providing advice and brief service, and appealing to and appearing at administrative hearings when licenses for various jobs (home health aids, security guards, etc.) are denied as a result of criminal history.</p>	<p>Mr. J had worked successfully as a security guard for several months but his employer could not offer him a permanent job until he secured a license. His life had been difficult. He had had periods of homelessness and several violations and misdemeanors as a result of his time on the streets. Since he had a past criminal record, he could not get the license without showing that he was rehabilitated. MFY worked with him to document his rehabilitation and present credible testimony at his hearing as a result of which he received the license and was able to get the full-time permanent position.</p> <p>Several; other client stories are available separately from MFY.</p>	
<p><b>Youth Represent</b>  346 BROADWAY, STE 601  NEW YORK, NY 10013  212 553-6421  <a href="http://www.youthrepresent.org">http://www.youthrepresent.org</a></p> <p><b>(all five boroughs)</b></p> <p><b>Contact:</b>  <b>Laurie Parise</b>  <b>Executive Director</b>  <a href="mailto:lparise@youthrepresent.org">lparise@youthrepresent.org</a></p>	<p>Youth Represent provides legal services to low-income NYC youth age 24 and under with current or past justice system involvement. We use a community lawyering model to provide services within programs throughout the city. In addition to criminal defense services, we provide youth with the legal services necessary to give them access to the cornerstones of stability--education, employment, housing, and family resiliency. In 2012, Youth Represent worked with 578 youth and opened 801 new services. 674 of those services involved obtaining criminal</p>	<p>(1) A participant at a job training program spent hours attending class to become a licensed Emergency Medical Technician. At the end of the class, when asked about her criminal record, she didn't know what to do. YR obtained the client's record, found and corrected a mistake where sealed criminal justice information was being released to employers, and helped the client obtain the employment license.</p> <p>(2) A client at a community-based organization's employment program was rejected from a job on the basis of an open criminal warrant. Working with YR, the client was shocked to learn she had a warrant on a 5 year old case for being on the playground after dark. YR represented the client on the criminal charge, secured a dismissal of the case, and worked with the employer to explain the situation and assist the youth in obtaining the job.</p>	<p>Obtaining criminal records and providing advice as to employment rights, criminal records repair, obtaining Certificates of Relief, housing applications and evictions based on criminal records, employment discrimination based on criminal records, child support modifications.</p>

histories, criminal records repair, certificates of relief, or employment legal services.

## OHIO

### The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland "Access to Employment"

1223 West Sixth Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
888-808-2800  
216-861-5500

<http://laslev.org/get-help/work/>

**Contact:**

**Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.**  
**Executive Director**  
[cmcotter@laslev.org](mailto:cmcotter@laslev.org)  
**216-861-5273**

Prior to 2012, Cleveland Legal Aid worked with judicial leaders and the local public defender to train attorneys on the basics of sealing criminal records. Numerous individuals were helped through clinics and other outreach programs. In 2012, a local state senator introduced a bill in Ohio to expand the definition of expungements so more people become eligible to seal records in Ohio. The Ohio governor signed the bill into law in later 2012. Since the law change, Cleveland Legal Aid fielded 1255 intake applications for expungements – a 188% increase. In addition to this, Legal Aid helped 2200 people overall in 2012 with other employment law issues.

Rochelle Jones\* needed help. A 30-year-old misdemeanor on her record was a barrier to her getting a job. Although she wanted to clear her record, she didn't know where to start until an expungement clinic hosted by the Legal Aid caught her attention. Stephanie Jackson, managing attorney of Legal Aid's Health-Education- Work-Income-Immigration practice encouraged Ms. Jones to work with Legal Aid at the clinic. Ms. Jones remembers "Ms. Jackson set me up with a spot in one of the community clinics; she was so kind and professional, I knew I wanted to come in and talk personally." Ms. Jones attended a free legal advice clinic focused on expungements and other legal needs. At the clinic, Ms. Jones met attorney Christopher Murray, one of Legal Aid's 1,600 pro bono volunteers. Mr. Murray worked personally with Ms. Jones on her case to ensure her success. After getting guidance at the clinic, Ms. Jones filed a pro se expungement with Bedford Municipal court. The motion was granted within days.

Ms. Jones was ecstatic and didn't have enough positive things to say. "I thank God for Legal Aid, all the workers and attorneys who volunteer their time and expertise, and give back by helping others." She also made no secret that she thought that Legal Aid was special. "Whenever I would talk to a lawyer somewhere else, they were

Chronic unemployment is often caused by a legal issue that must be removed in order for employment to be accessible. For instance, a young man with a past conviction can only get a job with that conviction sealed on his record; a single mother's beautician's license if denied unlawfully and she doesn't have the capacity to fight the denial. The people helped by Cleveland Legal Aid's employment law practice are low income people who are confronted with a legal problem that -- if left unresolved -- will result continued long-term unemployment. The problems they face are life problems that have a legal resolution. These clients have legal rights but without an attorney those rights will not be enforced. There is no civil right to counsel in the United States. When someone is faced with a barrier to employment, the best response is often the use of our legal system. Many low-income people work, often at more than one job. Many workers do not receive the full, lawful benefit of that hard work. Cleveland Legal Aid helps workers maintain the income they have earned from working, helps workers who have lost their job get unemployment compensation benefits, and helps people who are facing tax problems.

Cleveland Legal Aid removed barriers and helps increase access to employment. Cleveland Legal Aid helps low-income people with expungements and reinstating drivers' and professional licenses. Additionally, Cleveland Legal Aid works with people who have lost their jobs to exercise their rights in unemployment compensation

haughty and judgmental. But every single person I ever talked to at Legal Aid was kind and compassionate. Especially the volunteers taking time away from their families to come help people like me.” Since the expungement, she was able to obtain employment and is now proud to be supporting her family. As to whether she would recommend The Legal Aid Society to other people: “Sometimes you want to throw up your hands and quit, but don’t. There are good people that will help you.”

*\*Name changed to protect privacy of client.*

and lost wage cases to help ease the impact of lost employment and help clients get back on their feet to find and retain employment.

Cleveland Legal Aid engages the private bar in pro bono activities to increase low-income peoples’ access to employment. This work increased over the last twenty-four months because of Ohio’s increased focus on the use of sealing criminal records (aka “expungements”) to provide access to work for people previously barred from certain types of employment.

**Legal Aid of Western Ohio**  
**Reentry Coalition of Northwestern Ohio**  
 525 Jefferson Avenue, Suite 400  
 Toledo OH 43604-1371  
 419 724-0030  
<http://www.lawolaw.org>  
**Contact:**  
**Janet Hales** [jhales@lawolaw.org](mailto:jhales@lawolaw.org)

The Reentry Coalition of Northwestern Ohio holds monthly reentry legal clinics inside Toledo Correctional Institution for inmates 6 months or less from release. The project uses LAWO staff, volunteer attorneys from the private bar and volunteer law students to identify and resolve civil legal issues likely to interfere with post-release employment of housing. During 2010-2011, the project directly assisted 97 inmates. 42 volunteer attorneys participated in the clinic to date. The project holds pre-release videoconference hearings between inmates still in prison and judges at the Toledo Municipal Court. This aspect of the

LAWO’s reentry project helps reentering prisoners obtain reinstatement of driver’s licenses where needed for employment; clears warrants that otherwise would put the inmate at risk of post-release re-arrest; helps ex-offenders seek expungement where eligible; assists in resolution of payment plans for child support obligations and other debts that would lead to garnishment of wages; helps inmates qualify for medical assistance where otherwise not available through expected employment; and helps reentering prisoners obtain housing in communities where they will have access to employment.

project so far has cleared outdated warrants and cleared \$12,671 in fines that otherwise could have led to re-arrest during the first year of release.

**PENNSYLVANIA**

**Community Legal Services, Inc.**

1424 Chestnut St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19102-2505  
215 981-3700  
<http://www.clsphila.org>

**Contact:**  
**Sharon M. Dietrich**  
**Managing Attorney**  
**215-981-3719**  
[sdietrich@clsphila.org](mailto:sdietrich@clsphila.org)

In 2012, 1032 clients sought representation from CLS for criminal record/employment issues.

Expungements; pardons; correcting inaccurate criminal records produced by public or commercial sources; disputing and making payment plans for criminal debt; negotiating with or filing EEOC charges against employers who improperly reject workers; assisting with occupational licenses; helping gain entry to job training programs.

**TEXAS**

**Legal Aid of Northwest Texas (LANWT)**

*Helping Individuals Remove Employment Disadvantages*

*Project (Hired)*

600 E Weatherford St. 3rd Floor  
Fort Worth, TX 76102  
817 336-3943  
<http://www.lanwt.org>

**Contact: Laura Davis**  
**Staff Attorney**  
[davisl@lanwt.org](mailto:davisl@lanwt.org)

Staffed with one attorney. Total Number of Applicants Since Project Inception - March 2010: 143. Accepted for Full Representation: 39. Advice Only: 19. Advice Only due to Limited Resources: 25. On Hold Pending Investigation: 27. Brief Service, No Show, Referral, Conflict, Ineligible Matter: 33.

This project is modeled after the Legal Action of Wisconsin RTO. Like the RTO, it receives referrals from community partners. LANWT would like to expand this project. Staff attorney meets with clients and determines the appropriate level of service and legal remedies. Hired works in conjunction with other services aimed at preventing homelessness and helping clients obtain jobs.

**VIRGINIA**

**Legal Aid Justice Center**

1000 Preston Avenue  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
434 977-0553  
[info@justice4all.org](mailto:info@justice4all.org)  
<http://www.justice4all.org>

**Contact:**  
**Carolyn Kalantari**  
**Attorney**  
**(434) 977-0553, x 113**

In the last 12 months, LAJC has received more than 50 requests for assistance with driver's license restoration in their Charlottesville office. The vast majority of the clients lost their licenses due to court costs and fees that have remained

One client lost his driver's license and consequently his job when he failed to pay approximately \$350 to two courts. In Virginia, driver's licenses must pay these fees in full in 30 days or their license is suspended. In order to reinstate the license, client needed to pay the DMV \$150 reinstatement fee and establish payment plans in both courts. Each Virginia court independently manages its repayment

LAJC has trained local attorneys to assist clients pro bono with driving and voting rights restoration and scheduled several clinics to match clients, pro bono lawyers and law students with meritorious cases. LAJC participated in local reentry meetings and developed relationships with numerous stakeholders including probation, Offender Aid Restoration, and jail staff looking at ways to reduce recidivism.

[Carolyn@justice4all.org](mailto:Carolyn@justice4all.org)

outstanding for more than 30 days.

They receive numerous requests for assistance with voting rights restoration. In Virginia, all felony convictions strip individuals of their voting rights until such time as the individual successfully petitions the Governor to reinstate them.

They also assist clients released from the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice with school reenrollment and mental health transition planning.

terms. One of the courts at issue, which was located one hour away, would have required client to appear in person to sign paperwork, pay 50% down and timely pay an additional \$25 each week to establish a payment plan. They advised the client as to how to prioritize the debt and explore most manageable way to seek license restoration. LAJC also assists clients seeking restricted driver's licenses.

They have implemented a press strategy to let the community know that they are available to assist with driver's license restoration and voting rights restoration matters for convicted felons. LAJC is considering advocacy designed to make expungement a more viable option in Virginia for individuals who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

**Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society, Inc. (SVLAS)**

227 West Cherry Street  
Marion VA 24354  
276 783-8300  
<http://www.svlas.org/>

**Contact:**

**Larry T. Harley**  
**Executive Director**  
**Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society**  
**227 West Cherry Street**  
**Marion, VA 24354**  
**276.783-8300, ext. 223**

SVLAS provides advice only. In 2011, the program closed two expungement cases with successful court orders, and closed 16 cases as counsel/advice. The other effort involves assisting participants in an area drug treatment court with access to housing. Participants in the local drug treatment court who need housing are directed by the court personnel to a local public housing provider. The provider denies the application for housing and refers the client to SVLAS for representation in

Expungement is considered a Tier One priority under the Miscellaneous category of SVLAS's priorities. The program handles expungement of police and court records when there has been no finding of guilt and the existence of such records interferes with housing and/or employment opportunities.

appeal with the understanding that together they will work with the public housing provider to fashion a lease that both protects the public housing provider and its other tenants and provides housing to the client. This project has just started in February 2012.

**WASHINGTON**

**Northwest Justice Project** (Statewide Legal Aid Program)

**RISE: Reentry Initiated through Services and Education (King County (Seattle area) Washington)**

401 Second Avenue South, Suite 407  
 Seattle WA 98104  
 206 464-1519  
<http://www.nwjustice.org>

**Contacts:**

**Elizabeth Hendren**  
 RISE Fellow/Attorney [elizabethh@nwjustice.org](mailto:elizabethh@nwjustice.org)

**Cesar E. Torres**  
 NJP Executive Director [cesart@nwjustice.org](mailto:cesart@nwjustice.org)

The RISE Project provides comprehensive civil legal services to formerly incarcerated mothers in order to assist them with the broad range of civil legal issues that need to be resolved in order for mothers to reunite with their children post-incarceration and build stability for their families. Specifically, this includes legal information, direct assistance, and referrals in the areas of family law, domestic violence, child support, housing, consumer debt issues, relicensing, record sealing, and public benefits. From September 2012-May 2013, RISE assisted 28 clients, 15 of whom returned for multiple appointments. Nine were assisted on more than one legal issue. RISE is currently providing direct representation to six

One RISE client identified nine legal issues she needed assistance with in order to reunite with her child, including an administrative appeal of an improperly investigated finding of abuse against her, obtaining an order and parenting plan to protect the client and her child from her former abusive partner, help negotiating lower interest payments on her legal financial obligations, reinstatement of her driver's license so she could work, assistance getting her child on SSI, information about sealing her criminal record, help to obtain a Section 8 voucher to move out of transitional housing, and reduction of her monthly payments for back child support for the period she was in jail and shortly after release. The client also had an ongoing dependency action for which she had been appointed a public defender. RISE represented the client in her CPS appeal and protection order action, and coordinated with her public defender in the dependency action to accurately portray her efforts to the dependency court. She was reunited with her child and RISE now represents the client to obtain a protective parenting plan and is assisting the client to reinstate her driver's license so that she can drive to work from the

RISE counsels on driver's license reinstatement issues, which arise frequently for formerly incarcerated clients who can't afford to pay their traffic tickets but need to drive in order to work since they frequently can only obtain housing in rural areas due to their criminal convictions. RISE also counsels on occupational licensing issues, e.g. helping nurses with criminal convictions to avoid losing their license due to their conviction, as well as represents to challenge employment disqualifying administrative findings of abuse or neglect and provides record sealing information to eligible clients. Finally, RISE's work on the above family reunification issues is also tied to employment as research has shown that formerly incarcerated parents who are allowed to take an active parenting role in their children's lives tend to gravitate more towards trying to obtain employment in the formal economy and away from illegal activity.

clients.

rural area where her transitional housing is located. RISE also advised the client to help her successfully negotiate a lower monthly child support payment for the owed arrears, referred her to a debt clinic to help reduce her legal financial obligation monthly payments and interest rate, advised her regarding SSI and Section 8 enabling her to complete applications for assistance, and informed her about sealing her criminal record when she becomes eligible for that relief.

**WISCONSIN**

**Legal Action Wisconsin**

**Road to Opportunity (RTO) and DOES SSI Prison Project**

230 West Wells St., Room 800  
Milwaukee WI 53203-1866  
414 278-7777

<http://www.legalaction.org>

**Contact:**

**David A. Pifer** [DAP@legalaction.org](mailto:DAP@legalaction.org)

**RTO:**

In the last 3 ½ years, the RTO project represented clients in 2,459 cases: 406 were criminal record issues, 53 noncustodial parent child support problems and 2,000 were driver's license restoration cases. RTO is currently representing clients in 472 open cases: 83 criminal record issues, 110 noncustodial parent child support problems and 279 driver's license restoration cases. The increase in child support cases is a result of the recent funding for that purpose.

**DOES:**

236 open cases.

Client stories separately available.

**RTO:**

This project has been in place since 1999, when it was called *Legal Intervention for Employment (LIFE)*. This project focuses on removing barriers to employment as a means of bringing clients out of poverty. The RTO Project works closely with an alliance of providers, including the Milwaukee Workforce Development Board and other employment and training organizations. These agencies refer the cases to LAW. LAW's target population for RTO services are re-entering offenders and at-risk individuals trying to find employment and avoid criminal behavior. The RTO primarily serves clients through driver's license restoration, child support issues for non-custodial parents, correction of criminal records and licensing/certification problems. They do some expungements.

**DOES:**

This is a new project with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. While not tied to employment, it is intended to obtain benefits for disabled reentering individuals, thereby providing an income stream, greater stability and reduced recidivism. No closed cases to report since project still new.

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[\[1\]](#) Lou Prieto, Persis S. Yu, & Jason Hoge, *Consumer Law and Criminal Record Barriers*, Clearinghouse REVIEW Journal of Poverty Law and Policy, (January-February 2011).