



**MARYLAND
LEGAL AID**

*Advancing
Human Rights and
Justice for All*

About *Lawyer in the Library*

Lawyer in the Library is a community lawyering initiative, the goal of which is to bring free, civil legal services and help for criminal record expungements directly to underserved communities.

Maryland Legal Aid developed the *Lawyer in the Library* project to provide direct outreach and assistance to people in their neighborhoods and to get feedback from community members about the civil legal issues that affect them and their families. The idea began with Enoch Pratt Free Library as a partner, given their excellent reputation in the community as a resource for information, education, and cultural enrichment. Maryland Legal Aid is committed to building and maintaining an enduring partnership with Enoch Pratt and with libraries throughout Maryland in an effort to increase access to civil legal services for people who are low-income.



Implementation of the project began in three-parts—information sessions, direct one-on-one civil legal advice, and assistance with record expungements, all of which have occurred and continue to occur at the Enoch Pratt Free Library Pennsylvania branch located at 1531 W. North Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217. Since the program launched in September 2015, Maryland Legal Aid now operates *Lawyer in the Library* clinics at the Essex Branch of the Baltimore County Library and at the Long Branch of Montgomery County Libraries.

Information Sessions

The project kicked off with three presentations led by Maryland Legal Aid advocates on civil legal issues in July and August 2015. Attendees of these presentations received information and asked questions about civil legal issues in their communities. Topics included **Housing and Landlord/Tenant** issues (e.g., foreclosures, evictions, and housing conditions); **Government Benefits** (e.g., Medical Assistance, Temporary Cash Assistance, and Social Security Disability) and **Employment Wage Claims**; and **Family Law** (e.g., divorce and child custody, support, and visitation). The three presentations served as a prelude for the central component of the project.

One-on-One Civil Legal Advice

Maryland Legal Aid attorneys, paralegals, law students, and volunteer attorneys provide brief, one-on-one advice on a variety of civil legal issues and help with criminal record expungements. No appointments are necessary and attendees are helped on a first-come, first-served basis.

Enoch Pratt Free Library Pennsylvania Avenue Branch

Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 PM

Essex Branch of the Baltimore County Library

Mondays, 4:00-6:00 PM

Saturday Expungement Clinics

One Saturday each month at the Enoch Pratt Free Library Pennsylvania Avenue Branch and the Long Branch of Montgomery County Libraries, advocates from Maryland Legal Aid answer questions and help participants handle their record expungements.

Maryland Legal Aid also partners with other legal services organizations to hosts expungement clinics with community partners throughout the state.

For more information, contact **Amy Petkovsek**, Maryland Legal Aid's Director of Advocacy Training and Pro Bono and *Lawyer in the Library* project manager, at (410) 951-7813 or apetkovsek@mdlab.org, and visit www.mdlab.org/law-in-lib.