



**MARYLAND**  
**LEGAL AID**

*Advancing*  
**Human Rights and**  
**Justice for All**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Maryland Legal Aid awarded \$25,000 grant from CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield**

**BALTIMORE, Md.**, (February 16, 2021) - Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) recently received a \$25,000 grant from CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst) to support MLA's *Legal Health and Wellness-Medical Legal Partnership*, which provides free legal assistance to low-income patients at medical facilities.

"This grant comes at a critical time as the pandemic continues to wreak havoc on our communities with outcomes especially detrimental to those who lack access to basic human necessities," said MLA's Executive Director Wilhelm H. Joseph, Jr. "We are most grateful to CareFirst, whose support will provide life-changing help for individuals experiencing medical and legal hardship s. This kind of assistance can help to stabilize individuals, families and communities."

With the this grant, MLA will increase patients' opportunities for positive health outcomes by addressing their civil legal needs, including those related to accessing housing, employment and public benefits. This assistance can occur onsite at medical clinics and through virtual outreach in collaboration with healthcare providers in Baltimore County and Baltimore City.

Since establishing its first formal medical-legal partnership in Montgomery County in 2016, MLA has assisted nearly 400 individuals with their civil legal issues at medical centers throughout the State, including 1Promise Treatment Center, Cumberland Treatment Center, Gaudenzia, Johns Hopkins University Center for Learning and Health, PennNorth Recovery Center, Serenity Health, SPARC, and University of Maryland Treatment Center. By assisting individuals in healthcare settings in partnership with CareFirst, MLA will continue to address social determinants of clients' health, including access to safe housing, gainful employment, and public benefits.

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### **About Maryland Legal Aid**

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is a private, non-profit law firm that provides free, civil legal services to people who are in Baltimore City and Maryland's 23 counties from 12 offices. The firm handles cases involving a wide range of issues, including family, housing, government benefits, healthcare, education, employment, and consumer law. MLA also represents children in CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) proceedings in 14 jurisdictions. Other vulnerable populations, such as homeowners facing foreclosure, migrant and seasonal farm workers, people with developmental and mental health disabilities, nursing home and assisted living residents, and veterans seeking benefits and assistance with related legal issues also receive representation through special projects. MLA's Community Lawyering Initiative, which includes its *Lawyer in the Library* program, assists with expunging criminal records to remove barriers to obtaining housing, employment, and child custody through clinics held in libraries, community centers, non-profit organizations, places of worship, schools, medical facilities, and other gathering places.

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