



MARYLAND
LEGAL AID

Advancing
Human Rights and
Justice for All

For Immediate Release

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Maryland Legal Aid Awarded Department of Justice Grant to provide Legal Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

BALTIMORE, Md., (October 1, 2014) – Maryland Legal Aid was awarded \$436,626 from the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women under the Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) Grant Program. The three-year grant will support comprehensive legal services through direct representation and advocacy for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence in order to enhance victim safety and autonomy.

To accomplish the objective set forth by the LAV grant program, Maryland Legal Aid will collaborate with TurnAround, Inc.— a Baltimore area non-profit that provides counseling and support services to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and sex trafficking—to lead and coordinate holistic civil legal representation for victims in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. A dedicated attorney will be hired to work from Maryland Legal Aid’s Baltimore County office and the TurnAround, Inc. offices to deliver efficient and victim-centered legal services. This strategy streamlines the referral process and reduces any time lag for victims to access legal assistance. As a result, victims may feel less intimidated by the legal process and more empowered to access services.

“In partnership with TurnAround, these victims will now have the critical help they need to create a life that is safe for themselves and their children,” says Ann Lembo, Chief Attorney of Maryland Legal Aid’s Baltimore County office.

Baltimore City and Baltimore County are areas that are ranked among those with the highest number of sexual assaults and domestic violence incidents in the state of Maryland. Victims are often burdened with multi-faceted legal issues inherently associated with sexual assault and domestic violence.

“There are a number of comprehensive domestic violence and sexual assault services providers in Maryland that offer assistance to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence through counseling, shelter and other essential supportive services,” says Denise McCain, Director of Compliance and Program Development at Maryland Legal Aid. “However, legal assistance is often lacking or limited to address the more long-term, complex legal needs of clients, such as divorce, custody, housing, employment, and consumer issues. High quality, effective legal assistance provided by Maryland Legal Aid offers survivors a real opportunity to flee abusive relationships with sustainable outcomes that will enable them to live independent, healthy lives.”

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About Maryland Legal Aid

Maryland Legal Aid is a private, non-profit law firm that provides free civil legal services to low-income people statewide. We serve Baltimore City and Maryland's 23 counties from 13 offices.

Our firm handles cases involving a wide range of issues, including family, housing, government benefits, healthcare, education, employment, and consumer law. Maryland Legal Aid also represents children in CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) proceedings in 12 Maryland jurisdictions. Other vulnerable populations, such as homeowners facing foreclosure, migrant and seasonal farm workers, and nursing home and assisted living residents, also receive representation through special projects.

For more information, visit www.mdlab.org or follow Maryland Legal Aid on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).