North Penn Legal Services

2010-2011 Annual Report

service information ad

Our mission is to provide civil legal representation to low-income people and ensure equal access to justice for all.



What We Do

As a regional provider of free civil legal aid, NPLS helps low-income people in 20 Pennsylvania counties. A not-for-profit organization, NPLS understands the problems and issues affecting low-income people. NPLS works to protect the poor by providing access to the justice system. Services include individual representation, information and advice, community legal education, and support for those clients who take direct responsibility for handling some or all aspects of their legal problem.



The mission of North Penn Legal Services

(NPLS) is to provide civil legal
representation to low-income people and
ensure equal access to justice for all.



A Letter From The Board President and Executive Director

At North Penn Legal Services (NPLS) we pride ourselves on the ability to offer our clients something that was previously out of reach—Access to Justice. As an ally, NPLS supplies low-income people with the necessary tools to prevent or resolve legal issues. By providing our clients with services such as individual representation, information and advice, community legal education and "pro se" support, the staff at NPLS does its best to bring the legal system within reach

This year NPLS has achieved enormous accomplishments amidst a slew of economic struggles. The current economic climate threw many roadblocks in our way, but thanks to stimulus funding programs, we were able to maintain level services and, in fact, focus on some priority areas of need for our clients. In fact, NPLS provided help to 19,431 clients, which resulted in 9,084 closed cases.

Around Northeastern Pennsylvania, the conversation about NPLS has provided nothing but affirmative feedback. In the news, some recent articles written demonstrate our efforts. For example, some headlines have read: "Pro Bono Helps Sustain Legal Aid for Low-Income Clients," "No Foes for Higher Fees for Legal Aid Layers," and "Court Tosses Debt Collector's Suit." By spreading the work of NPLS through news outlets, we have been able to increase awareness and a better understanding of our services.

NPLS became part of a statewide legal aid system victory this year when the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee released positive results of a statewide audit designed to review the performance of the Access to Justice Act. This act is also commonly known as the "filing fee bill." Some money from every civil filing goes to an account maintained by the IOLTA Board and is then distributed to legal aid programs based on the poverty population it serves. The Pa Legal Aid Network administers the distribution of funds to the individual programs and monitors program performance. These funds have been critical to sustaining legal aid services in the state, especially since interest rates, a major source of funding, dropped significantly. Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald J. Castille praised the results of the audit by commending the PA Legal Aid Network for its work. Roughly 24% of state funds received by the legal services programs result from the Access to Justice Act.

NPLS continues to increase Access to Justice by helping clients to help themselves. We empower our client population by providing them with the knowledge they need to handle some aspect of their legal problem on their own. One such example of direct client support is the distribution of a Family Law Handbook which is a comprehensive book on almost all family law issues our clients face. It is on our website and on palawhelp.org, so that it benefits clients throughout the state. We also support clients through outreach such as television and providing information to other providers that serve the same client population that we do. For example, Pete Macky, Esquire Managing Attorney of NPLS's Sunbury office, participated on the American Law Journal television show and spoke about Social Security Disability, while our Bethlehem staff put on a fair housing workshop to housing providers that focused on identifying and confronting discrimination in the rental and home sales market.

A new project supported by our Wilkes-Barre office focuses on representation of children during dependency proceedings. This work, while undertaken in our Scranton and Towanda offices, is new for Luzerne County. Under contract with the County, NPLS hired two new attorneys to provide comprehensive Guardian Ad Litem services. Another new project involved a partnership with the PA Health Law Project to provide outreach to Pennsylvanians about health care coverage and services.

There are several reasons why we maintain a creative and flexible outreach program. The first is that by increasing awareness of services through these different methods, NPLS has been able to reach a greater number of people to let them know help is available. Second, when we train other private or government social service agencies, we are able to develop more outlets for the information to get to clients. Finally, as

we face a very uncertain state and federal funding future, we need to create methods where clients can help themselves in the event that we have to cut back on our individual representation. As the only non-profit legal service for low-income people in Northeastern Pennsylvania, NPLS believes that with knowledge comes the power to effectively access justice.



Walter Ray Vernon, Jr., Board President



Victoria A. Coyle, Executive Director

Client Victories/Areas of Legal Help

Preserving Your Home:

"I think I was unlawfully evicted from my apartment and I don't know what to do," a visibly distraught man said as he entered one of the offices of NPLS. During his initial interview, the man confided in one of NPLS's paralegals that he was depressed and overweight as a result of losing his job. Through an hour-long consultation, the NPLS advocate not only provided the client with legal services but also acted as a social worker—a role the staff often plays.

Ultimately, the NPLS advocate provided the client with five different and significant results-NPLS delayed his eviction, found him another place to live, improved his mental health through a referral, provided him with resume writing and other job retaining skills, and referred him to another agency that helped him learn how to maintain a healthy weight. According to the client, NPLS' involvement helped him to feel good about himself which in turn motivated him to get a part-time job.

Populations with Special Vulnerabilities:

Bob was a hardworking man. He spent 30+ years employed as a truck driver until he developed a severe stomach problem. A faulty corrective surgery left Bob with more physical problems, pain, medical bills, and required countless other surgeries. Though he tried to work through his illness, he was ultimately let go from his job.

Bob persevered and enrolled in courses in the hopes of finding a new career to support himself and his family. However, that endeavor was unsuccessful—he had no money to start his own business and his health had declined to the point where he was unable to work. Running out of options and on the verge of losing his home, Bob was left destitute.

Unsure of what to do, he turned to NPLS for help. Our advocates assisted Bob in receiving Social Security disability benefits. With that, he was able to obtain food stamps, income from Medicare for his on-going condition, and keep his family intact by preserving his home.









Support for Families:

A prior custody order gave Mary guardianship of her daughter while granting the children's father custody of their son, Michael. Michael desperately wanted to live with his mother, but his father was strongly against it. Suffering from depression, Michael tried to commit suicide twice—once at home and once at school. He claimed his father didn't understand him, let alone talk to him. Fearing for her son's life and well being, Mary fought to obtain custody of Michael. With the help of NPLS, Mary was awarded primary custody of both children.

Safety:

Janet's eight year old daughter, Sarah, claimed her stepfather (Janet's husband) sexually assaulted her. Although Janet's husband was not Sarah's father, the two shared a three year old son. Janet immediately filed a criminal complaint with the state police. Children and Youth investigated the claims and issued a report in favor of the child.

Janet's husband continually denied the allegations and wanted to acquire visitation/custody of their son. Horrified, Janet turned to NPLS where one of our advocates assisted Janet in filing a Protection from Abuse (PFA) order on behalf of the two children. NPLS' advocate was also able to make sure that a temporary PFA stayed in place while police investigated the case. After more than two months, criminal charges were finally brought against Janet's husband for indecent assault, aggravated indecent assault, corruption of minors and endangering the welfare of the children. Janet was able to maintain custody of both children and the husband's visitation was denied.

Economic Stability:

Evanna first contacted NPLS because she was being sued by a credit card company for the amount of \$1,654.71. An attorney at NPLS quickly realized that there was a statute of limitation that should prevent the creditor from collecting from Evanna because the claim was stale. After contacting the bank's attorney, the bank agreed to discontinue the case with prejudice, meaning that it would not file a claim again later.













I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for every thing you did for us. We can't thank you enough, you've helped put a family back together again! We hope the rest of the year is good to you, enjoy the upcoming holidays!

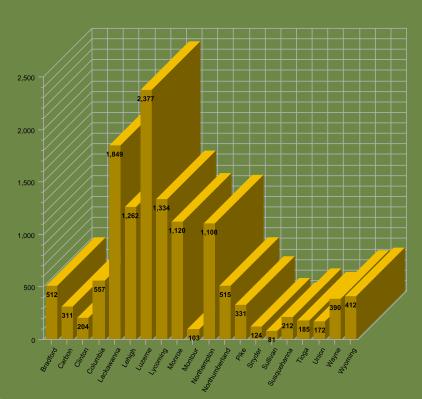
Thank you again!
Diane, Mike and Sarah

Thank you for all you are doing for Dominick and George.

You are going the extra mile! Glad someone is!

Maria

Closed Cases by County









Thanks for sharing your expertise with my problem during my brief, unannounced visit recently. Your help eased the stress I was experienceing preparing for the hearing. Everything went well.

Thanks, Lori I so very kindly appreciated your trying to help me with your time and effort and kindness.

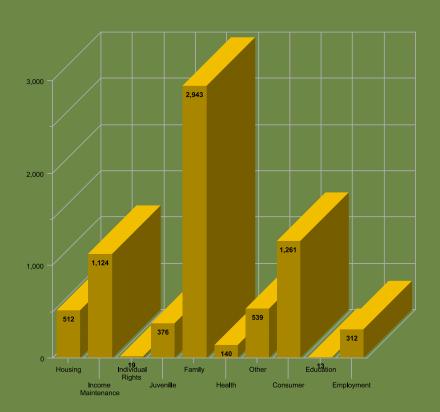
Take good care of yourself.

God bless you! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cindy

Closed Cases by Major Case Types



Financial Position

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2009 (with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2008)

	2011	2010
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$700,438	\$625,683
Client escrow funds	11,391	1,350
Accounts receivable		
PLAN	375,276	703,783
Other Prepaid expenses	266,960 105,113	156,072 90,449
Property and equipment - net	295,381	298,973
Troperty and equipment. Het	273,301	
Total assets	\$1,754,559	\$1,876,360
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$177,385	\$376,130
Accrued compensated absences	117,247	113,591
Client trust deposits	11,391	1,350
Total liabilities	306,023	491,017
Net		
Net assets Unrestricted	738,360	808,702
Temporarily restricted	710,176	576,587
	1,448,536	1,385,289
Total liabilities and net assets	\$1,754,559	<u>\$1,876,360</u>
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS		
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	\$63,247	\$362,161
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets		
to net cash and cash equivalents provided by		
(used in) operating activities Depreciation and amortization	68,071	50,836
(Increase) decrease in	00,071	50,030
Account receivable	217,619	(203,421)
Prepaid expenses	(14,614)	(45)
Increase (decrease) in:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(198,745)	167,455
Accrued compensated absences Refundable advances	3,656	(3,859) (342,687)
Neturidable advances		(342,007)
Net cash equivalents provided by		
(used in) operating activities	139,234	38,158
Cash flows from investing activities	((4.470)	(2/9 472)
Purchases of equipment	(64,479)	(268,473)
Net cash and cash equivalents		
(used in)z investing activities	(64,479)	(268,473)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	74,755	(230,315)
Cash and cash equivalents		
Beginning of year	625,683	855,998
End of year	\$700,438	\$625,683
		

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total 2011	Total 2010
Revenues and other support	Officied	Restricted		
Contracts and grants	\$5,901,223	\$61,589	\$5,962,812	\$6,088,188
Contributions				
In-kind	196,329	_	196,329	217,497
Other	45,700	_	45,700	38,830
DAP equitable payments	93,304	_	93,304	94,346
Interest income	2,636	_	2,636	3,232
Other income	2,281	_	2,281	1,740
Net assets released				
from restrictions	(72,000)	72,000	-	-
Total revenues and				
other support	\$6,169,473	133,589	6,303,062	6,443,833
Expenses				
Program services	5,443,433		5,443,433	5,118,404
Management and general	736,139		736,139	904,129
Fundraising	60,243		60,243	59,139
Total expenses	6,239,815		6,239,815	6,081,672
Change in net assets	(70,342)	133,589	63,247	362,161
Net assets - beginning	808,702	576,587	1,385,289	1,023,128
Net assets - ending	\$738,360	\$710,176	\$1,448,536	\$1,385,289

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

	Program	Management		Total	Total
	Services	and General	Fundraising	2011	2010
Salaries	\$ 3,054,703	\$ 477,408	\$ 38,391	\$ 3,570,502	\$3,519,657
Fringe benefits	1,207,872	123,230	15,394	1,346,496	1,165,488
Consultants and contracto	rs 161,915	32,234	-	194,149	181,986
Travel	48,018	19,443	_	67,461	59,360
Space costs	418,929	16,797	-	435,726	386,830
Consumable supplies	64,694	8,842	_	73,536	94,655
Equipment rental					
and maintenance	25,022	4,755	_	29,777	39,763
Other	402,748	44,891	6,458	454,097	371,137
Depreciation and					
amortization	59,532	8,539		68,071	50,836
Total expenses	\$5,443,433	\$736,139	\$60,243	\$6,239,815	\$6,081,672

Getting Results:

North Penn Legal Services Outcomes for 2010-11 Program Year

- Handled 13,467 cases. The most significant increases were in employment, housing, and juvenile cases.
- Closed 9,084 cases, in which we provided direct services that helped nearly 19,431 people:
 - Litigated 2,642 cases in court, and 628 in administrative tribunals.
 - Enhanced our clients' economic security by obtaining awards totaling \$2.1 million, primarily in disability cases, plus \$300,156 in monthly benefits, and relieving clients of \$5.87 million in debt though bankruptcy, litigation defense and negotiation.
 - Obtained 659 Protection From Abuse Orders and 600 custody and visitation orders.
 - Provided counsel and advice or limited action to **5,464** clients.
- Turned away 26,659 applicants, most of whom were financially eligible for services.
- In an attempt to reach eligible applicants we were otherwise unable to serve, we developed self-help materials, distributed 3,276 informational pamphlets and conducted outreach events to 2,368 people. Materials were also made available on our website and the website itself received 116,187 page views.

outreach social worker communication outreach social worker communication outreach social worker communications. Resource Company Women's Resource Company of the Interest On Lawyers Trust Accompany of the Interest On Lawyers Trust Accompany

County Offices

Luzerne County

Wilkes-Barre 570.825.8567

Carbon County

Jim Thorpe 877.515.7628

Monroe/Pike Counties

Stroudsburg 800.532.8282 | 570.424.5338

Lehigh/Northampton Counties

Bethlehem 610.317.8757

Lackawanna County

Scranton 800.982.4387 | 570.983.3075

Wyoming/Sullivan Counties

Tunkhannock 877.515.7738

Bradford County

Towanda 877.515.7732

Wayne County

Honesdale 877.515.7465

Lycoming/Clinton Counties

Williamsport 800.326.7436 | 570.323.8741

Columbia/Montour Counties

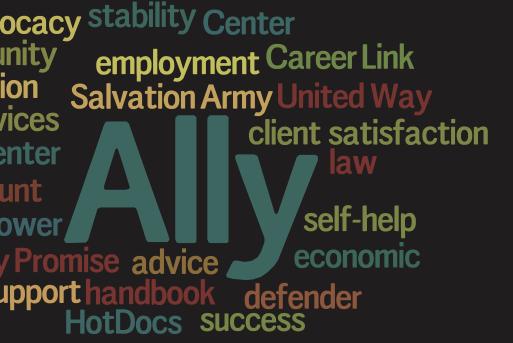
Bloomsburg 570.784.8760

Northumberland/Snyder/Union Counties

Sunbury 570.286.5687

Tioga County

Mansfield 877.515.7643



The Power of Pro Bono

Total number of attorneys who provided case services

Total number of cases accepted by pro bono attorneys

Total number of open pro bono cases pending

Total number of hours of services provided

Estimated expenditures on pro bono training, coordination and oversight

Dollar value of services provided (valued at \$150.00/hr.)

Pro Bono Volunteers

Attorneys accepting Pro Bono referrals 7/1/2010-6/30/2011

Nancy Gaspar Aaroe John Aciukewicz Rita Alexyn Kassandra P. Aristide John M. Ashcraft III Geoff Ayers David M. Backenstoe Warren Baldys Carol Baltimore Deborah Barr Patrick Barrett Brandie Belanger Dean C. Berg Joseph C. Bernstein Donald Blackwell Brian Bluth James L. Bobeck David Bogaczyk John Boileau Christie Bower Patricia Bowman Eleanor M. Breslin Steve Bresset Jonathan Butterfield William Carlucci Irene Chiavaroli Johns Jason Christman Melissa Clark Lori Colgan Michael H Collins Mark Combi Larry Coploff Jodi Cordner Joseph A. Corpora III

Michael F. Corriere Robert Cronin Richard Cruz Robert M. Davison Deborah Jean DeNardo Michael C. Deschler Jane Detra Davenport Michelle DeWald John Dewitsky Christina Dinges Michael Dinges Jeffrey Dohrmann Jennifer Dougherty William Doutt Robert Elion Sandor Engel Meghan Engleman Young Douglas Engleman Amy Ershler Peter Facey Kimberly Fedrigon Brian Feese John Felix Chrystyna M. Fenchen-Hawrylak Timothy B. Fisher Martin Flayhart Leonard Frawley Kerry Freidl Matthew Galasso Robert Gallagher Scott Gardner

Matt Golden

Allan B. Goodman Anthony Grieco Stuart Hall T. Max Hall Melody Hanisak-Protasio Paul J. Harak Kevin Hardy Melinda A. Harrigan Gary Harris Craig Harris Thomas L. Heimbach Dawn Herb Brad Hillman Fred Holland Richard M. Hughes III John Humphrey Dave Irwin Christopher Jones Christian Kalaus Tiffani Kase Jeffrey Kash Eugene C. Kelley Wilfred Knecht William Knecht Terra Koernig Jacqueline Kramer Steve Krawitz Eric Ladley Benjamin E. Landon Howard Langdon Jose Legaspi Todd Leta David Lindsay

Alyssa A. Lopiano-Reilly Christian Lovecchio Norman Lubin Robert Lugg Hilary M. Mack Thomas Marshall David Martino Donald Martino Nicholas Masington III Daniel Mathers Susan A. Maza Joy McCoy Richard McCov Joel McDermott Scott McKeel Frank Miceli Sasha Miller Jeff Mitchell Mildred A. Molino David Morgan Michael Morrone Corey Mowrey Nicholas Noel, III Frances O'Connor Jeffrey Osmond Robert Pandaleon Matthew Parker Rebecca Penn Kristina Petronko Andrew Phillips Lisa Pierotti John Pietrovito Mark Primrose

Jeffrey Loomis

190	<u>6</u>
26	<u>.</u>
14	<u>8</u>
1,320	<u> </u>
\$141,62	5 -
\$198,08	<u>4</u>

James Pruyne Andrea Pulizzi James Rague David Raker Robin Read Rebecca Reinhardt Barbara O'Neill Reinhart Lori Rexroth Daniel J. Rheam Clifford Rieders Michael E. Riskin Kim Roberti Sean Roman Rocco Rosamilia Vincent Rubino Melissa P. Rudas Kyle Rude Paul Ryan John W. Rybak Nicholas R. Sabatine III Chad Salsman Richard Schluter Nancy T. Schneiderman Victor E. Scomillio Randy Sees Andrew J. Shaw David Shipman Pamela Shipman Patricia Shipman Richard J. Shiroff

Tiffany Shoemaker

John Smay Fred Smith Bret Southard Christopher T. Spadoni Lisa M. Spitale Jill Spott Gregory Stapp Lewis Steinberg Phil W. Stock Neis Tabor Mark Taylor Bruce A. Thomas Ronald Travis Randall Turano Mari Van Wie Tom Waffenschmidt Priscilla Walrath Thomas Walrath Kevin M. Walsh Kristine Waltz C. Scott Waters Gary Weber Paul Welch J. Michael Wiley David Wilk Christopher Williams

Scott A. Williams

Scott T. Williams

Dennis W. Winegar

Heather Willis

Jeffrey Yates

John Zurich

Our Funders

AIDSNET

American Recovery Reinvestment Act

Bradford County Dependency

Bradford/Sullivan/Susquehanna/ Tioga Counties Area Agency on Aging

Interest on Lawyers Trust Account

Lackawanna County Juvenile Justice

Legal Services Corporation

Legal Services Corporation Technology Initiative Grant

∟ehigh County Area Agency on Aging

Lehigh County Community Development Block Grant

Luzerne County Guardian Ad Litem Grant

Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Area Agency on Aging

Monroe County Area Agency on Aging

Northampton County Area Agency on Aging

Northampton County Community Development Block Grant

OVW Recovery Act Transitional Housing Assistance Grant "A Safe Place Project"

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network

Pike County Area Agency on Aging

Jnited Wav of Greater Hazleton

United Wav of Wvoming Valley

Victim's Resource Center

Women's Resource Center

Donors

Melissa Baker	Linda Greenwald, Esq.	Murray Ufberg, Esq.	
Carol W. Baltimore, Esq.	Frances Gruber, Esq.	James P. Valentine, Esq.	
Paul G. Batyko III, Esq.	Thomas Kelley, Esq.	Joseph L. Vullo, Esq.	
Andrew D. Bigda, Esq.	Howard M. Levinson, Esq.	John T. Zelinka, Esq.	
Gary D. Bressler, Esq.	Timothy J. Maloney, Esq.		
Joseph D. Burke, Esq.	Kevin P. McAliney, Esq.	Cy Pres Awards-	
Hon. Thomas F. Burke, Jr.	Martha McMonagle	Anonymous	
Thomas J. Campenni, Esq.	Joseph L. Persico, Esq.	Legal Services Of Luzerne County, Inc.	
Kieran M. Casey, Esq.	Eileen A. Reilly, Esq.	Lehigh Valley Community Foundation	
David J. Ceraul, Esq.	Donald P. Roberts, Esq.		
Robert and Donna Decker	Bruce C. Rosenthal, Esq.	Mohegan Sun At Pocono Downs	
David C. Dickson, Esq.	Jonathan Russell	Northampton Community	
Thomas F. Dirvonas, Esq.	Victor F. Sawicki	College PALS Club	
John H. Doran, Esq.	Robert D. Schaub, Esq.	Northampton County Bar Association	
Robert N. Gawlas, Jr., Esq.	Jennifer Stull, Esq.	O'Donnell Law Offices	
Emmanuel S. Ghormoz	Matthew E. Turowski, Esq.		

Volunteers and Interns

Thank you to the volunteers and interns who helped low-income families with their civil legal needs from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.

Carol A. Anderson	Marissa Henrie	Janet Schulze
Maura Armezzani	Joshua D. Leaver	Gerry D. Scott
Brian Bayne	Melyssa Lindsey	Anaila Shakur
Stephanie Beller	Christel Lugo	Anmarie Souza
Jennifer Brito	Allen Macky	Michael Su
Jessica Brown	Anne Macky	Ashley Thomas
Georgina Burchell	Lindsay C. Mailia	John Torcivia, Esq.
Stephen Coccorese	Shayne McGrady	Nicholas Torres
Lisa Covington	Sasha Miller	Niti Z. Trikha, Esq.
William Fisher, Esq.	John J. Moody	Ray Vernon
Ajanique Green	John Novak	Virginia Welsford
Helen Grosso	Gina Oberto	Zachary Wilson
Melinda Harrigan, Esq.	Kristina Petronko, Esq.	Brian Wright
Alice Helfrich	David N. Schley	Lu Yajuan

Board of Directors

President

Walter Ray Vernon, Jr., Esq. Northampton County

Vice President

Holly Heintzelman, Esq. Carbon County

Treasurer

Robert V. Littner, Esq. Northampton County

Secretary

Gertrude T. Hastings Lackawanna County

Benjamin Apfelbaum, Esq. Northumberland County

Brunilda Cespedes Lackawanna County

Donald Frederickson, Esq. Lackawanna County

Kevin Grebas, Esq. Lackawanna County

Frances Gruber, Esq. Wayne County

Andrew Hutz, Esq. Bradford County

June A. Johnson Tioga County

Eugene C. Kelley, Esq. Luzerne County

Donald Lipson, Esq. Lehigh County

Steven Menn, Esq. Luzerne County

Ogden Moss Lackawanna County

Deanna Pealer, Esq. Columbia County

Lisa Pierotti, Esq. Luzerne County

John Pietrovito, Esq. Lycoming County

William C. Shilling, Esq. Monroe County

Jill Stefko Northampton County

J. Michael Wiley, Esq. Lycoming County

NPLS Administration

Victoria A. Coyle, Esq. Executive Director

Korie A. Traver, CPA Chief Financial Officer

Marlene Pell Program Accountant

Nancy Sosnowski Accounting Assistant

Anthony Davis
Director of Information &
Technology

Debbie Place Database Manager

Bonni J. Shelp, Esq. Director of Advocacy

Alison L. Norton
Director of Development ℰ
Communications

Betsy A. Grbenick, PHR Human Resources Manager

Tarah Sullivan Intake Supervisor Nonprofit Org. US Postage

PAID

Lehigh Valley, PA Permit No. 655

65 E. Elizabeth Avenue, Suite 800

Legal Advocates For
Low-income Families

NORTH PENN LEGAL SERVICES

Bethlehem, PA 18018

Your donation will make a difference!

Visit www.northpennlegal.org to find out how.



