

Unified program will allow low-income Brooklyn residents to more easily access legal services

March 24, 2016, BROOKLYN, NY—**Legal Services NYC**, the largest civil legal services provider in the U.S., announced today that its three Brooklyn programs have officially merged into one program: **Brooklyn Legal Services**. Legal Services NYC's Brooklyn programs provide vital civil legal services to address the pressing needs of Brooklyn's diverse, low-income communities. Brooklyn Legal Services now has offices in Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York, Clinton Hill, Brighton Beach, and downtown Brooklyn near the courts.

With over 110 staff members, Brooklyn Legal Services helps more than 23,000 people each year across a wide range of practice areas, including housing, foreclosure, family, employment, health, immigration and education, among others. The program provides legal representation to address the immediate needs of low-income individuals and families and supports communities in addressing the systemic racial, social and economic injustices that perpetuate poverty.

“For nearly 50 years, our Brooklyn programs have served as lifelines for low-income borough residents,” said **Raun Rasmussen, Executive Director of Legal Services NYC**. “By bringing these programs together, we are making our comprehensive services more readily available to all Brooklyn residents.”

The three Brooklyn programs, South Brooklyn, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Brooklyn Branch, originally were opened to serve specific neighborhoods and populations. In 2012, to save money and improve the coordination of services, Legal Services NYC made the decision to officially merge the programs. The merger was made official on March 5, 2016, upon approval by the New York State Attorney General and Secretary of State.

The Legal Services NYC leadership team and a member of the New York State Senate share their thoughts on the merger:

“Our Brooklyn offices have worked incredibly hard to serve their local communities,” said **Betty Staton, President of Brooklyn Legal Services**. “This merger represents an important step forward and makes available to poor and low-income residents throughout Brooklyn access to additional legal services that are the basic needs of all citizens.”

“Bringing our Brooklyn advocates together has allowed us to both expand our services and improve access for communities,” said **Meghan Faux, Acting Director of Brooklyn Legal Services**. “Together, we can more effectively address the individual needs of low-income people and support communities in achieving racial, social and economic justice.”

“We have a long history of assisting low-income people in Brooklyn,” said **Celeste Morris, Chair of the Brooklyn Legal Services Board**. “This merger will allow us to be even more effective in advocating for the most vulnerable populations in the borough.”

“America is often called the land of opportunity, and that phrase is true, as far as it goes,” said **Velmanette Montgomery, New York State Senator**, who played an instrumental role in facilitating the merger. “But unfortunately, everyone may someday find themselves in need of an attorney, and for many of us that poses a serious financial problem. That is why I have always been a champion of the services provided to the less well off by Legal Services NYC. Now that all their Brooklyn offices share the name of Brooklyn Legal Services, they will be easier than ever to find when you need to speak with them. I am very grateful to **Attorney General Schneiderman** for approving this merger.”

We encourage low-income Brooklyn residents who are experiencing civil legal problems to contact Brooklyn Legal Services at 718-237-5500 or seek further information on our website www.legalservicesnyc.org.

About Legal Services NYC

Legal Services NYC fights poverty and seeks racial, social and economic justice for low-income New Yorkers. For nearly 50 years, we have challenged systemic injustice and helped clients meet basic needs for housing, access to high-quality education, health care, family stability, and income and economic security. LSNYC is the largest civil legal services provider in the country, with deep roots in all of the communities we serve. Our neighborhood-based offices and outreach sites across all five boroughs help more than 80,000 New Yorkers annually. For more information, please visit www.legalservicesnyc.org.

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