

Legal Services NYC (LSNYC) prides itself on using a legal-social work interdisciplinary framework that employs a **holistic, trauma-informed collaborative advocacy model**.

For over 20 years, social workers have been changing the way we provide comprehensive legal services to our clients. Social workers at LSNYC collaborate with attorneys and other advocates to ensure that our clients' basic needs are met and they are able to thoughtfully participate in their legal cases. We believe that by addressing our clients' non-legal needs, we are able to receive better legal outcomes for our clients.

Our Licensed Master Social Workers (LMSW) and Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) are at the forefront of forensic social work in New York. We collaborate with our clients' legal team to develop the best legal strategy; advocate and accompany clients to court and offsite locations; provide emotional support and counseling; testify in court and hearings; provide crisis support and safety planning; engage in home visits; write psychosocial evaluations, affidavits and letters of support; and provide appropriate resources and referrals.

In addition to direct client work and legal collaboration, our social workers have spearheaded the following projects at LSNYC, and across New York City:

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the social workers helped to develop, fundraise for, and administer the [LSNYC Emergency Client Fund](#), which distributed over \$192,115 in emergency cash grants to 287 immigrant families over six months;
- We routinely develop trainings to LSNYC staff, other legal services organizations and law schools on important topics such as vicarious trauma, attorney-social work collaboration, domestic violence, suicidality, trauma-informed interviewing, de-escalation, and Know-Your-Rights workshops;
- We have participated and contributed to various impact litigation suits, including our Language Access, NYPD & NYCHA lawsuits that have helped create macro-level policies and reform within institutions like the Department of Education;
- We run various support groups for clients, often in collaboration with some of our partner organizations, to help clients better understand the legal system and create peer-to-peer support;
- We host interns and fellows from social work programs across the city and country including Columbia University, Lehman College, Hunter College, Fordham University, New York University, The College of Staten Island and the University of Chicago;
- We testify at City Council hearings and lobby days in Albany, coordinate the Social Work Taskforce, and sit on the Steering Committee of various coalitions and task forces;
- We regularly speak on panels and present at local and national conferences surrounding forensic social work and legal-social work collaboration

Currently, our directors of social work and staff social workers collaborate with many practice areas at LSNYC, including Education, Family & Domestic Violence, Immigration, Housing, Disability & Public Benefits. LSNYC continues to explore ways to expand its social work staff within and across legal practices and fortify the work and outcomes that benefit from this collaboration.