

# Legal Aid to assist poor with program of Volunteer Lawyers

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The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland will launch its Volunteer Lawyers Program today, in an effort to provide more legal services to the poor.

The program enlists private attorneys in providing legal advice and representation to low-income families. It will have its first Law Firm Clinic from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. today at the society's downtown Cleveland offices, 1223 West Sixth St. The society has selected clients for the clinic.

The Cleveland office of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur will staff the clinic.

"In this community, there is a crisis facing low-income families in need of legal assistance," said Hugh McKay, partner-in-charge of the Porter Wright office. "Our lawyers need to not just talk the talk, but also walk the walk, and deal with this crisis."

The society will hold a Brief Advice & Referral Clinic at the St. Martin de Porres Family Center, 1274 East 123rd St. in Glenville from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

Attorneys from the Cleveland office of Jones Day will staff this clinic, which is open to anyone seeking legal assistance.

The clinics will handle legal problems related to housing, immigration, employment, income survival, bad business practices, family law and other issues. Other firms have volunteered to provide services throughout 2005. Legal Aid attorneys will serve as trainers and mentors to private attorney volunteers.

The Law Firm clinics will take place the last Wednesday of each month; the Brief Advice & Referral clinics the last Saturday on a first-come, first-served basis at neighborhood community centers. Special Focus Programs on issues such as landlord tenant matters or elder law will take place periodically.

The Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation and the Murphy Family Foundation are financing the program. The society is seeking more support, officials said.

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