

Shakarian, Melanie A.

From: brennan_center.ls@nyu.edu
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2007 2:59 PM
To: Legal Services
Subject: Legal Services E-lert -- September 28, 2007

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

1. **Workers' Rights Will be Focus of Program Launched by Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, Ohio**
2. **Foster Kids Not Getting Promised Reforms, Say Washington Legal Aid Attorneys Who Return to Court to Compel State to Honor Settlement**
3. **Senior Tenants in Federally Subsidized Apartments Struggle to Stay in Their Homes**
4. **LSC Receives GAO Report, Begins Implementing Reforms**
5. **Guyana Launches Children's Legal Aid Pilot Project to Provide Legal Advice to Juveniles and Their Parents**
6. **CUNY School of Law's Community Legal Resource Network to Initiate "Incubator for Justice" Program**

THIS WEEK'S STORIES**FEATURE STORY**

1. **Workers' Rights Will be Focus of Program Launched by Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, Ohio**

[Sherry Gavanditti, Crain's Cleveland Business, September 17, 2007](#)

LSC-funded Legal Aid Society of Cleveland is launching a new program aimed at improving working conditions and wages after continuously encountering clients with employment problems. As [Crain's Cleveland Business](#) reports, "For Colleen Cotter, executive director of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, stories of workplace troubles . . . are all too familiar. So familiar, in fact, that Ms. Cotter's organization is targeting the issue with a pilot program called the Cleveland Wage Project The immigrant community is a focus of the program, which is keying in on workplace abuses such as wage theft, discrimination and unsafe working conditions"

LEGAL SERVICES ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS***Children***

2. **Foster Kids Not Getting Promised Reforms, Say Washington Legal Aid Attorneys Who Return to Court to Compel State to Honor Settlement**

[The Columbian \(Washington\), September 19, 2007](#)

According to [The Columbian](#), "Washington state's foster care system is heading back to court, with lawyers for a group of foster kids saying the state hasn't done enough to make promised reforms. The pending court action is the latest twist in a landmark lawsuit known as the Braam case, in which 13 foster children sued the state for bouncing them around foster homes without adequate services"

Representation for the foster children is provided by Columbia Legal Services, which is arguing that the state has not met the terms of the Braam settlement reached in 2004. Specifically, the attorneys claim that the state is: i) not completing health and education screenings in 90 percent of its cases, ii) not reducing the number housing transfers experience by foster children, and iii) not decreasing the caseloads for foster care caseworkers.

Elderly**3. Senior Tenants in Federally Subsidized Apartments Struggle to Stay in Their Homes**

[Susan Palmer, Register-Guard \(Oregon\), September 15, 2007](#)

As the [Register-Guard](#) reports, "Several low-income senior citizens living in subsidized housing faced a scare this month when their landlord tried to triple their rent and then threatened to evict them if they didn't pay After getting the letter [from their landlord], many residents contacted Oregon Housing and Community Services, the state agency that distributes the federal [subsidy] money. They were told they didn't have to pay the increased rents"

The landlord claims that he issued rent increases because the government did not pay him for the seniors' rental units in September 2007. The government claims that, over the past six years, the landlord has failed to comply with federal housing regulations and was warned that unless he fixed the problems he would be penalized. Some of the tenants, who are stuck in the middle of this duel between their landlord and the government, are seeking legal advice from Lane County Law and Advocacy Center (LCLAC). LCLAC has told the tenants that they cannot be evicted unless a judge issues a court order saying that their eviction is legal.

LEGAL SERVICES STRUCTURE***Beltway Bulletin*****4. LSC Receives GAO Report, Begins Implementing Reforms**

[LSC Updates, Legal Services Corporation, September 26, 2007](#)

In August 2007, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) published *Legal Services Corporation: Governance and Accountability Practices Need to Be Modernized and Strengthened*. GAO indicated in the report that it was written in response to a Congressperson's request, but did not identify the Congressperson. LSC has embraced the report and the set of proposed reforms that it contains, and has already begun implementing the reforms. Helaine Barnett, LSC's President, and Frank Strickland, the Chair of the Board of Directors, released a statement saying: "We take the GAO's report on LSC governance and accountability very seriously and are moving diligently to implement the report's recommendations with regard to both governance and management." LSC has, among other changes, begun reviewing Government Accounting Board standards to determine the appropriate financial reporting standard for LSC. Additionally, LSC will: i) provide new LSC board members with an intensive orientation, ii) either create a separate Audit Committee or assign the auditing function to the board's Finance Committee, and iii) formalize the functions of board committees by adopting charters for them.

INTERNATIONAL**5. Guyana Launches Children's Legal Aid Pilot Project to Provide Legal Advice to Juveniles and Their Parents**

[Frank Anthony, Stabroek News \(Guyana\), September 22, 2007](#)

[Stabroek News](#) states, "The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport [in Guyana] in collaboration with the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic and UNICEF yesterday launched the Children's Legal Aid pilot project According to Johannes Wedenig, UNICEF representative (Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) this new facility is expected to provide legal advice and services for juveniles and their parents. Wedenig noted that with the launch of the service the rights of children would not be overlooked as they pass through the judicial system" The Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic is a Guyana-based legal aid program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**6. CUNY School of Law's Community Legal Resource Network to Initiate "Incubator for Justice" Program**

Beginning on October 1, 2007, the Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) at the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law will launch its new Incubator for Justice program. The program, which is modeled after incubator projects created for small business owners and micro entrepreneurs, will be the first project of its kind for lawyers. CUNY law graduates chosen to participate in the incubator will commit to using their law practices towards increasing access to

justice through providing affordable legal services to low-income communities throughout New York City and the surrounding areas. The incubator is designed as a fully functioning law firm and will serve as a home office for seven CUNY law graduates for 18 months. Participants will have access to an in-house lawyer with over twenty years of experience, and have access to learn from CLRN's network of hundreds of attorneys. After the 18-month period, participants will be able to use their work experience and continuing support from the CLRN network to continue to provide affordable legal services to underserved New Yorkers. [Read](#) more about CLRN.