You are now part of a statewide network of legal aid programs. These regional programs, including yours, provide a variety of support services to you and your clients through Legal Services State Support (State Support) and the Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP). The information below will acquaint you with the activities of State Support, designed to improve access to justice for all Minnesotans. See the LSAP brochure for information about its work.

**What is the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition?**

The Minnesota Legal Services Coalition (MLSC) is a group of seven regional legal aid programs providing comprehensive civil legal services to low-income and under-served Minnesotans in all 87 Minnesota counties. The regional programs are:

- Anishinabe Legal Services
- Central Minnesota Legal Services
- Judicare of Anoka County
- Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota
- Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota
- Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid
- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services

**What Does State Support Do?**

State Support's mission is to improve access to justice for all Minnesotans. State Support is a project of the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition and is managed by Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. State Support's unique role is to provide information, connections, and tools for the public and for advocates, and to support the civil legal aid programs who share our mission. Our strength is leveraging technology to provide this support broadly throughout the state. We are sustained by our relationship with MLSC programs and direct grants.

The following pages explain State Support’s projects and how you can get involved.

**First, Bookmark These Websites:**

- Legal Information & Referrals: [www.lawhelpmn.org](http://www.lawhelpmn.org)
- Advocate Resources: [www.projusticemn.org](http://www.projusticemn.org)
- MLSC News & Trainings: [www.mnlegalservices.org](http://www.mnlegalservices.org)
- Online Advice for Clients: [www.mnlegaladvice.org](http://www.mnlegaladvice.org)
What State Support Does:

I. Educate the Public About Legal Issues
II. Improve client referrals to providers
III. Strengthen the Advocate Community
IV. Expand Free Legal Services

I. Educate the Public About Legal Issues

People have more success navigating the legal system and solving their problem after learning more about their legal issue. We manage the www.LawHelpMN.org website for the public, which gets over half a million visits every year. LawHelpMN includes:

- fact sheets and booklets;
- guided interviews that help people create forms;
- other legal education materials like Q&As and links to partner websites;
- the LawHelpMN Guide, an interactive tool that helps users find a curated list of the above self-help information, as well as referral information to legal aid and other organizations that provide legal help; and
- LiveChat navigation assistance in partnership with the State Law Library.

State Support houses the Education for Justice program, which publishes hundreds of fact sheets in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali, and many in other languages. We use clear language to convey legal information in many areas of civil law including housing, government benefits, youth and education, seniors, consumer, family, immigration, work, and taxes. We also publish booklets about family, housing, and consumer topics with more detailed information. These resources are all available online and in print, and are used throughout the state by legal aid offices, courthouses, law libraries, and public libraries. You can find a list of all fact sheets by clicking the Fact Sheets link in the footer of LawHelpMN.

Each year we partner with subject matter experts like you to review and update all fact sheets and booklets.

How you can work with us:

- Go to LawHelpMN.org to find legal resources for your clients
- Give us ideas or help us write community legal education materials
- Help us during our annual review of fact sheets
- Use our LiveChat service if you need help finding something on LawHelpMN.org

II. Improve Client Referrals to Providers

Efficiently connecting clients with legal aid programs saves clients time and maximizes program resources. Our activities in this area include the Legal Organizations Online Network (LOON), online intake, a case placement tool on our advocate site, www.ProJusticeMN.org, and the LawHelpMN Guide and LiveChat navigation assistance mentioned above.

LOON is a centralized database of legal services in Minnesota. Each legal services organization keeps LOON up-to-date with the cases it takes, eligibility requirements, and clinic offerings. If you need to find
referral information for someone, go to LawHelpMN.org and click on the Providers & Clinics menu link. This will let you search the LOON database. Ask your supervisor who your LOON contact person is. If you see incorrect information about your organization, let your LOON contact know so they can update it.

The information in LOON also powers the LawHelpMN Guide. In step 1, the interactive tool helps users narrow their legal issue and presents them with the relevant self-help information. In step 2, users answer a few eligibility questions and receive information about organizations that might be able to help.

State Support’s online intake system currently includes all Coalition programs and a few additional programs. In the online intake system, users enter their county and legal issue and answer questions about eligibility, income, assets, and opposing party. When the user completes the interview, the system sends an electronic file with the intake information to the corresponding program. State Support is currently working on a pilot project to integrate the online intake system within LawHelpMN.

How you can work with us:

- Post cases needing volunteer assistance on ProJusticeMN.org/volunteer
- Find legal clinics or other legal providers for your clients by clicking on the Providers & Clinics menu link at LawHelpMN.org
- Tell your LOON contact if you notice incorrect or missing information when searching the Providers & Clinics database.

III. Strengthen the Advocate Community

State Support strengthens the advocate community in two ways: through skills-based & legal education, and through system-wide support.

a. Skills-Based & Legal Education

Providing advocates with continuing legal education and skills-based trainings enables them to better serve clients. Our activities in this area include:

- providing and supporting continuing legal education (CLE) trainings;
- a biennial statewide conference;
- coordinating listservs and practice groups; and
- managing a library of practice resources on our advocate website, ProJusticeMN.org.

Most of our trainings are via webinar, with some also offered in-person. You can see our upcoming trainings at www.mnlegalservices.org/upcoming-trainings. We also offer on-demand trainings that you can watch at any time for CLE credit at www.mnlegalservices.org/on-demand. We hope you will reach out with suggestions for trainings, or if your office is planning an internal training, to coordinate so we can extend the reach of that training. There is a form at our website to use for training requests: http://www.mnlegalservices.org/want-a-training.
Our statewide conference is held every other year and is open to all legal services programs. The next statewide conference will be held in 2022. State conference is a great way to connect with your colleagues across the state and get CLE credits in various areas of poverty law.

There are over 2,000 members of ProJusticeMN.org, including legal aid staff, pro bono attorneys, law students, and other advocates. The ProJusticeMN.org library has training materials, practice guides, trial manuals, sample pleadings, interview guides and settlement checklists, and other resources to help advocates representing low-income clients.

We run 11 active e-mail listservs through ProJusticeMN.org to foster knowledge- and information-sharing among statewide colleagues in similar practice areas:

- Consumer
- Family
- Housing
- Minnesota Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)
- Social Security
- Welfare
- Criminal Expungement
- Foreclosure Defense
- Immigration
- Seniors
- Volunteer Coordinators

**How you can work with us:**

- Find or post resources that might be helpful to you or your colleagues at ProJusticeMN.org
- Participate in the listservs through ProJusticeMN.org by sending questions about cases (no client names), issues you see in your practice, or other areas of concern
- Send us ideas for trainings
- Volunteer your services as a trainer – it’s a great way to share your knowledge with other advocates and practice your presentation skills

### b. System-Wide Support

Increasing coordination and preventing duplication across the system maximizes program resources. Our activities in this area include housing statewide volunteer resources on ProJusticeMN.org, coordinating bimonthly meetings of the legal aid provider network, publishing a blog and monthly e-newsletter with legal aid news, maintaining an online staff directory of all legal aid providers across the state, posting available legal aid positions, and supporting coordinated infrastructure projects like the statewide transition to LegalServer. Our program website, www.MNLegalServices.org, highlights our work in this area and serves as an umbrella site for the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition.

**How you can work with us:**

- Follow us on Twitter at @State_SupportMN
- Like Legal Services State Support on Facebook
- Subscribe to our blog at MNLegalServices.org to keep up with legal aid news
- Send us short case notes about your case success (no client names) to share with your colleagues
- Notify us when staff start or end a position at your office
- Provide job listings for us to publish and promote
• Share news with us about staff awards or news coverage for your program

IV. Expand Free Legal Services

By accessing brief legal services online, more clients get legal assistance to help them solve their problem. Our activities in this area include online document assembly tools and a statewide online legal advice website.

State Support offers document assembly interviews (including some in Spanish) guiding members of the public and attorneys through a series of questions to produce a legal document. These are available at www.LawHelpMN.org/forms. These interviews cover common issues regarding family law, health care, abuse and harassment, debt, housing, and government benefits. Each year, members of the public and attorneys assemble thousands of legal documents using these tools.

Minnesota Legal Advice Online, available at www.MNLegalAdvice.org, allows members of the public to submit a legal question online to be answered by a volunteer attorney. The online format removes geographic barriers, so members of the public across the state have access to legal advice from attorneys in the Twin Cities metro or other parts of the state. Hundreds of people receive legal advice through the website each year.

How you can work with us:
• Refer clients to our do-it-yourself document assembly tools on LawHelpMN.org
• Send us ideas for new document assembly tools on LawHelpMN.org or help us review them for accuracy
• Refer clients to volunteer legal advice on MNLegalAdvice.org
• Sign up as a volunteer and provide legal advice on MNLegalAdvice.org

Who Are the Staff at State Support?

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State Support is located at 2324 University Avenue West, Suite 101B, St. Paul, MN 55114.

Again, welcome to legal aid. Please let us know if there are other ways you think State Support can support your work and our clients. We look forward to working with you!