

The Legal Aid Advocate

January 2016



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Client Story: Legal Aid Society Seeks Justice After Wheelchair Ramp is Denied

“John” came to Legal Aid Society with a fair housing issue. Because of a medical issue, the only way John’s wife could get inside their home was to have family members or friends carry her up the stairs, or she would slowly crawl up the steps. They desperately needed a wheelchair ramp, but the couple’s landlord denied John’s request to build one for his wife—even though a non-profit organization offered to build the ramp free of charge.

A Legal Aid Society attorney worked closely with a local pro bono attorney and the two became John’s devoted advocates. They contested the legality of the ramp denial. Because of their efforts, and even after John’s wife passed away and the family no longer lived in the apartment, a judge found that the landlord unlawfully discriminated against John and awarded him a \$10,000 judgment, based on his harm from watching the mistreatment of his wife and being unable to stop it.

Legal Aid Society Kicks off 2016 With Three New Grants

Legal Aid Society is honored to receive three grants from foundations committed to providing justice for the underprivileged:

The West End Home Foundation: The West End Home Foundation’s mission is to improve quality of life of seniors through support of non-profit organizations that provide advocacy, food,



housing health and transportation services to seniors. The Foundation's contribution to Legal Aid Society will support our HELP program, which provides educational seminars and legal services related to health care issues, long-term care options, advanced care directives and Powers of Attorney, especially for seniors.

The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee: The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee's grant of \$5,500 also will help provide free civil legal services and education to seniors for health care, long term planning and other issues. Among hundreds of applications, Legal Aid Society was selected by The Lillian G. and Dave Bogatzky Fund, the Martha Jean Dorris Helping Hand Fund and the Elizabeth Jonas Jacobs Advised Fund of The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee.



Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA): Continued support from the Tennessee Bar Foundation's IOLTA program helps us provide free services to low-income individuals and families. This year's grant provides us with \$112,936 to support our efforts advancing equal access to justice across Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland Plateau.



Tennessee Bar Foundation

We rely on awards like these, as well as donations, to carry out our mission. Without the help of our community, we would be unable to advance, defend and enforce the legal rights of vulnerable families who lack the basic necessities of life. Thanks to ALL of our donors.

New Educational Materials

Legal Aid Society has published a new legal self-help brochure on Time Limits for SNAP Food Stamps. Please use and share our [brochure](#) to answer common questions regarding this concept.

We have also updated brochures on Injured Spouse Claim, Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit; all can be found in English and Spanish. These revised brochures can be downloaded for free [here](#).

What You Need to Know About the New Time Limit Rules for SNAP Food Stamps



Food Stamp rules changed on January 1, 2016. Now adults can only get 3 months of Food Stamps in 3 years. The 3 years start January 2016 and end December 2018. Is this true for all adults? No. Some adults can get an exception. An exception means the 3 month rule doesn't apply to you.

The 3 month rule may not apply to you if:

- You are under age 18 or age 50 or older
- You live with your child who is under age 18
- You live with someone else's child who is under age 18
- You have a physical or mental disability
- You are in a drug or alcohol treatment program
- You are pregnant
- You are taking care of a person that can't take care of himself
- You are a half-time student in school or a training program
- You work 80 hours or more a month 
- You make an average of \$217.50 a week
- You volunteer 80 hours or more a month
- You are in an Employment or Training program
- You are doing Families First work activities
- You applied for unemployment and are following all the unemployment work program rules
- You are getting unemployment pay
- There is a good reason why you can't work, like being homeless

Are NONE of these true for you?

Then your Food Stamps may be cut off after 3 months.

IMPORTANT! Did you apply for Food Stamps after the 1st day of the month? Then it doesn't count as a month.

Is 1 of these true for you?

Then the 3 month time limit doesn't apply to you. If you show proof, your Food Stamps should not be cut off after 3 months.

Is 1 of these true for you? Did you still get a letter saying you can't get Food Stamps?

Talk to your caseworker. Tell your caseworker you think the rule doesn't apply to you. Your caseworker should help you get proof that the rule doesn't apply to you. 

Did you talk to your caseworker? Did the caseworker still say that you can't get Food Stamps anymore? Then call Legal Aid. They can help you find out if the 3 month rule applies to you.

Legal Aid Society
of Middle Tennessee and the Carolinas
1-800-238-1443
It's a free call.
On the internet at www.las.org

This fact sheet is not meant to take the place of legal advice. If you have a legal problem, consult a private attorney or call your local legal aid office at 1-800-238-1443.

Campaign Update

2015 was a record breaking year for the Legal Aid Society campaign. With your help, to date we have received \$815,953 – more than \$28,000 higher than we have ever received in one year. We still have outstanding pledges for 2015 and ask that you pay as soon as possible so we can close out our books. To do so, please go online to www.las.org or send a check payable to Legal Aid Society to 300 Deaderick Street, Nashville, TN 37201.

The 2016 Campaign for Equal Justice is off to a great start. As of January 25, we have raised \$481,819 toward our goal of \$827,000. We are pleased to have the following Nashville-area attorneys and judges join 2016 Campaign Chair Trey Harwell in soliciting funds for this year's campaign:

- Dewey Branstetter (Sherrard & Roe) and Katie Edge (Butler Snow), Large Firm Co-chairs
 - Jonathan Farmer (Farmer Purcell White & Lassiter) and Emily Shouse (Patterson Intellectual Property Law), Small Firm Co-chairs
 - Judge Lynda Jones (General Session Court Div IX) and Judge Philip Smith (20th Judicial Dist., Div. IV), Judges co-chairs
 - Bob Watson (Metro Nashville Airport Authority), Government attorneys chair
 - Laura Tidwell (Nashville Electric Service), Corporate attorneys chair
 - Joanie Abernathy and Virginia Story (both of Story, Abernathy & Campbell), Williamson County co-chairs
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New Leadership Cabinet Members Join Campaign for Equal Justice

We would like to welcome **Berry & Tudor; Neal & Harwell; Ortale, Kelley, Herbert & Crawford** and **Patterson Intellectual Property Law, P.C.** as new members to our 2016 Leadership Cabinet.

The Leadership Cabinet is the foundation of the Campaign for Equal Justice. The Cabinet is made up of law firms and in-house legal departments which contribute \$400 per attorney to Legal Aid Society. A complete list of those already making this commitment, can be found [here](#). It is not too late to be a part; If your firm would like additional information about joining please contact Cindy Durham at cdurham@las.org or 615-780-7125.

Shop With Amazon or Kroger? Support Legal Aid Society!



Looking for an easy way to support our work? When you shop at Amazon or Kroger, a portion of your purchases can go to support Legal Aid Society. To participate, sign up for [Amazon Smile](#) or [Kroger Rewards](#) (NPO # 98149), select Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands as your charity of choice and start shopping. A percentage of your eligible purchases will be donated to the organization at no extra cost to you!

Upcoming Clinics

We are pleased to host many clinics across Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland Plateau. These clinics are staffed by both Legal Aid Society and pro bono attorneys. If you would like to volunteer at one of the clinics, please contact Jarod Word at jword@las.org (or 615-780-7131) or call your local Legal Aid Society office.

You can see the list of upcoming clinics, hosted by Legal Aid Society and offered by partners, [here](#).

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands

1-800-238-1443 | 300 Deaderick Street | Nashville, TN 37201

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands advocates for fairness and justice under the law. We offer free civil legal representation, educational programs and advice to ensure people in our region are able to protect their livelihoods, health and families. We serve 48 Tennessee counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Nashville, Murfreesboro, Oak Ridge and Tullahoma. We are funded by Legal Services Corporation, the

Tennessee Bar Foundation, United Way in 16 counties, the State of Tennessee, foundations and donors. For more information about our services or how to donate and to download information about common legal issues, visit us online at www.las.org.

Donate now

