

Legal Aid celebrates Pride Month with renewed commitment to LGBTQ+ community

Community Legal Aid's Board of Trustees kicked off Pride Month by adopting a new set of policies aimed at expanding the organization's capacity to be a safe space for LGBTQ+ clients, staff, and volunteers.

The Board voted on these updated policies at their quarterly meeting on Wednesday as part of Legal Aid's ongoing efforts on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

"We're taking the critical steps to improve our commitment to DEI," Board President Dionne Dowdy said. "It's about reflecting the values of our organization in the daily work. It's about walking the walk."

Steven McGarrity, Legal Aid's executive director, explained that the new policies will guide and govern the way staff and board members interact with clients and with each other.

"These policies act as a roadmap for how we as a team live out our organizational values, like diversity, empathy, and respect," he said.

In addition to updating the organization's policies, McGarrity shared that Legal Aid has been taking steps toward becoming a Safe Zone organization, a multi-pronged process that includes an extensive review of daily operations and cultural

competence among staff.

“Our entire 60+ person team went through the Safe Zone training last year, and we’ve been doing the follow-up work in the months since,” McGarrity said. “We’re making modifications to our intake and client management systems and reviewing our marketing and educational materials to ensure that both our processes and our language are inclusive.”

McGarrity said he expects the organization to complete that work in the coming months.

“Our goal is to be a fully Safe Zone before the end of the year,” he said. “But this is just one step. This type of work is ongoing, and we're committed to continuing to be introspective and always improving how we serve our community, and LGBTQ+ specifically.”

For more information on Legal Aid’s LGBTQ+ work, visit www.communitylegalaid.org/pride.

Sidebar:

Need legal help? Apply at www.communitylegalaid.org/apply or call (800) 998-9454.

About Community Legal Aid

Community Legal Aid is a 501(c)3 non-profit law firm serving the legal needs of low-income

individuals in central and northeast Ohio. Legal Aid believes that all individuals, including those who are impoverished, should have opportunities to control, improve, and enrich their lives and community. Dedicated to this vision, Legal Aid

uses legal advocacy - through education and representation - to transform the lives of its clients, increasing opportunity, fairness, and stability for a stronger community and justice for all. The non-profit law firm serves clients in Columbiana, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Trumbull and Wayne counties

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