

ED Update: Kicking off another year

It's hard to believe 2018 is already here and that next month, I'll celebrate my first full year at Legal Aid's Executive Director. It's been a fun, scary, crazy, amazing ride these past 11 months, and I'm excited for what's to come this year.

New projects we're launching

This month, Legal Aid is kicking off **strategic planning**. This isn't just your run-of-the-mill strategic plan; we're looking at everything, down to our mission, vision, and values, to make sure that we have a strong foundation and goals that will have a high impact for our clients. I look forward to unveiling our new strategy and vision later in the year.

We're launching a new **virtual office** program. After months of testing, we will be using video and voice software that will allow clients in community partner offices' to speak to a Legal Aid advocate live, from where they are. This exciting new program transforms how we're using not only technology, but also our collaborative relationships, to best reach clients and use our limited resources effectively. We will be piloting this project in Wayne County this month.

Things we're expanding

Last year, we kicked off our **Neighborhood Law Project** in Youngstown. Funded by a special grant from the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, NLP has helped us reimagine our role as attorneys by embedding us within specific neighborhoods where residents need our help. On-site office hours, clinics during community events, and other activities have helped us become true "community lawyers" in Youngstown, and we're excited to apply what we're learning to the other counties we serve.

Our medical-legal partnership has brought us many cases about kids' access to high-quality education, especially for **children with disabilities**. We are looking to expand this work and are currently examining funding streams to meet this critical need. Our hope is to educate and empower parents to advocate for the appropriate support their child needs to be successful in school.

Save-the-date

We invite you to join us at the following events this year. Please mark your calendars and watch for details online at www.communitylegalaid.org/events.

Legal Aid Open Houses: Evening events open to all to join for light hors d'oeuvres and drinks, and to meet staffers and leadership. RSVP to jconnolly@communitylegalaid.org.

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

- May 15th - Youngstown
- May 17th - Warren
- May 22nd - Canton
- May 24th - Akron

66th Anniversary Celebration: Annual awards ceremony with heavy hors d'oeuvres and open bar. RSVP to jconnolly@communitylegalaid.org.

5:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Sept. 6th at Greystone Hall in Akron.

Pancakes for Pro Bono Volunteer Recognition Breakfasts: Breakfast served by celebrity chefs - our local judges! We'll also have an opportunity for those interested to volunteer that morning with HelpLine calls. RSVP to vlsp@communitylegalaid.org.

8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

- Oct. 3rd - Akron
- Oct. 10th - Canton
- Oct. 17th - Youngstown
- Oct. 24th - Warren

Ways you can get involved

Simply staying connected is so important! Sign up for our quarterly e-newsletter and **email list** here www.communitylegalaid.org/connect

Looking for something a little more hands-on? Learn more about **volunteering as a pro bono attorney** at www.communitylegalaid.org/vlsp

As always, I'd love to hear from you if you have thoughts or interests in our work. Please feel free to call or email me anytime. I look forward to seeing you throughout this year!

Happy New Year,



Steven McGarrity, Esq.

Executive Director, Community Legal Aid

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[Print](#)

Table of Contents

NEWS

News & publications

The news about recent activities for needed peoples.

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