# NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT 1956-2016 60 Years of Service

S.N.C.

EGAL SERVICES

# A Message from LSNC's Executive Director and Board President

In 2016, LSNC marked its 60th anniversary by providing critical legal services to tens of thousands of needy and vulnerable individuals, while also engaging in complex, sophisticated advocacy--through litigation, legislation, administrative advocacy, and community development work--which had a significant positive impact for our entire client community in the areas of affordable housing, public benefits, health, education, and civil rights.

Notwithstanding the shadows cast on the future of publicly-funded legal services for the poor in the current political climate, LSNC's strong voice will continue to speak out forcefully, in 2017 and beyond, on behalf of our low-income clients and communities. As Executive Director and Board President, we are extremely proud of the accomplishments of all of our staff and volunteers, and we are very grateful to all who supported our work and mission in 2016.



Gary F. Smith Executive Director



Kern Kjølmsen

Kevin R. Johnson Board President





Who We Are	For 60 years, Legal Services of Northern California has been the local non- profit legal aid organization providing free legal help to older adults, people who are low-income, and people with disabilities in 23 counties in northern California.								
Our Mission	To provide quality legal services to empower the poor to identify and defeat the causes and effects of poverty within their community by efficiently utilizing all available resources.								
Our Substantive Priorities	Preservation of Housing	Healtl	h Care	Civil Rights					
	Enhancing Economic	Stability	Serving Populations with Special Vulnerabilities						
	Support for Families		Safety & pility	Education					
LSC America's Partner for Equal Justice Legal Services of Northern California is a									
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION Legal Services Corporation program.									

#### **Casework at a Glance** 1,709 Senior Cases 3,573 Special Non-Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Cases 5,146 HICAP Cases 12,948 LSC Cases 23,376 Total Cases 12,948 6,871 LSC Casework LSC Cases Housing **Breakdown** 923 53% in Housing 11% in Health **Consumer Rights** 9% in Income 156 1,370 **Maintenance Employment Law** Health 9% in Individual **Rights** 707 45 **7%** in Consumer **Other Matters** Education Law 150 1,144 **5%** in Other Juvenile Law Income Maintenance **Matters** 3% in Family Law 373 1% in Employment Family Law 1% in Juvenile 20161,209 Law **Individual Rights 1%** in Education

# Preservation of Housing

## **Mitigating Homelessness**

In 2016 LSNC's eight field offices prioritized addressing and mitigating homelessness throughout our 23 county service area.

Our Ukiah office represented a group of local community based organizations that wanted to provide an emergency winter shelter in response to the rise of people experiencing homelessness in their communities. LSNC helped the collaboration become a California non-profit



corporation and helped it develop its policies and procedures for the emergency shelter. With LSNC's assistance, the group was able to open its emergency winter shelter in 2016 and begin providing temporary housing.

In Yolo County, LSNC assisted a coalition of concerned individuals who feed and support community members experiencing homelessness, to establish a nonprofit corporation. The coalition formed after the community's only local provider of services for families experiencing homelessness lost their building in a fire. The coalition is now operating as a non-profit corporation and providing services to families and individuals experiencing homelessness.

## **Preservation of Mobile Home Parks**

Throughout LSNC's service area, mobile home parks are a source of affordable home ownership for many low-income families and individuals. A resident owns her or his own mobile home and rents the space of land the home is located on in a mobile home park. LSNC prioritizes cases that seek to preserve mobile home parks as affordable housing.

In Solano County, LSNC successfully stopped the closure of a mobile home park providing housing at affordable rents to low-income and elderly mobile home owners. A local business owner bought the mobile home park and wanted to close it down to expand his business' parking lot. He applied to the city to close the park, and LSNC represented a group of tenants to oppose the closure due to the lack of alternative affordable housing



in the community. The owner decided to not close the park, but shortly after this decision he raised the rents on the mobile home owners by more than 30%, in violation of the local jurisdiction's mobile home ordinance. The rent increase was not affordable for the low-income and elderly mobile home owners and they faced displacement from their long-time homes due to the proposed rent increase. LSNC successfully represented the mobile home owners to challenge the rent increases. The rents continue to be affordable and the park remains open, providing affordable housing in the community.



## **Foreclosure Prevention Project**

In 2016, LSNC received funding to continue its Foreclosure Prevention Project. LSNC's eight field offices assist low- and moderate-income homeowners facing foreclosure to keep their homes - typically their only financial asset - when they get behind on their mortgage payments after a financial hardship, such as divorce or becoming disabled or temporarily unemployed. In most of LSNC's 23 counties there are no other local resources for homeowners in distress.

### Theresa\*

Theresa\*, a young widow with children, came to our office after her husband died unexpectedly. Theresa lived in a home she and her husband owned, but only her husband was a borrower on the loan. After her husband's death, Theresa got a few months behind on the mortgage payments because she was not sure of who to pay, how much to pay, and because she was busy dealing with grief and the impact of her husband's death. However, she could afford the monthly payment and



could afford to get caught up on the loan. Theresa called us after attempting to call the loan servicer to find out how much was owed and where to make payments. Since she was not

a borrower, the servicer refused to talk to her and initiated the foreclosure process. A LSNC attorney helped Theresa contact the servicer and educated the servicer on its obligation to provide Theresa information about the loan and to accept her payments. Theresa was able to get caught up on the loan and she is no longer at risk for foreclosure.

# **Yolo County Shriver Project**

The Yolo office of LSNC successfully applied under the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act to operate a housing court pilot project in 2009, to address the disparity in representation between landlords and tenants. At the time of the initial application, nearly all residential landlords were represented in eviction cases while only a handful of residential tenants had legal counsel. The imbalance created lopsided results, with judgments almost always being in favor of residential landlords and settlements with terms benefiting only the landlord.

Now in its sixth year of operation, the Shriver Project is balancing the playing field through legal representation, self-help services, and mediation for low-income tenants. Data suggests that most Shriver Project cases are resolved by settlement and had some sort of positive financial outcome, which helps tenants find new housing if the settlement involved a move out. Tenants receiving full representation by LSNC in an eviction case usually avoided a negative impact on their credit.



# Charles\*

Charles\* is a disabled older adult who lives in subsidized housing for special needs populations in a city with extremely low vacancy rates and a five-year waiting list for affordable units. He received a notice to terminate his tenancy for being noisy. He sought assistance from the Yolo Shriver Project. LSNC attorneys informed him that the property was required to state in the notice that he has ten days to request a meeting with

property management to discuss the alleged lease violation and that he has an opportunity to request a reasonable accommodation. The notice did not contain the required language. LSNC attorneys attempted to negotiate a settlement, but the management company refused to enter into an agreement that would enable Charles to maintain his tenancy. LSNC represented him at trial and a judgment was entered in his favor because the notice was deficient. The management company declined to serve a new notice on Charles and community providers report that Charles is doing well. Due to LSNC's advocacy, the apartment complex changed their notices to terminate tenancy to comply with the law by including the required language about a tenant's right to request a meeting to discuss alleged violations and the right to request a reasonable accommodation.

# Serving Populations with Special Vulnerabilities

# **Senior Legal Hotline**

In 2016, Senior Legal Hotline provided legal advice, assistance, representation and legal education to adults 60 years of age and older in Sacramento County. Clients received assistance with preservation of housing, consumer law issues, advance/estate planning issues, income maintenance (including Social Security) and elder abuse concerns.

Program services were provided by staff and volunteer attorneys, and a volunteer paralegal, with support from the managing attorney, office manager and receptionist. The hotline is located at 12th and E Streets in downtown Sacramento. This office location is convenient for many of our most vulnerable seniors who rely on public transportation or who access services from other service providers located nearby.

Hotline advocates conduct intake via telephone, walk-in visits, and outreach events, including regular intake appointments at senior centers. Hotline attorneys also provide community legal education presentations at a variety of locations. The hotline provides language interpretation and translation to permit us to better serve seniors with limited English proficiency.

Shirley\*

Shirley<sup>\*</sup>, who is in her late eighties, received a notice of termination of tenancy from a public housing authority (PHA). Shirley lives alone and uses a wheelchair to assist her mobility. In its notice, the PHA alleged that Shirley's unit violated cleanliness rules set forth by the lease. A Senior Legal Hotline attorney visited Shirley's rental unit and determined the PHA's allegations to be largely without merit. The hotline attorney helped Shirley draft a request to meet with PHA representatives, and submitted this request to



the PHA on her behalf. Upon receiving the hotline attorney's letter, a PHA representative rescinded the termination notice.

# **Health Care**

LSNC houses two special programs devoted to health care rights advocacy - a programwide health law unit (LSNC-Health) and the Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP) which serves Medicare beneficiaries. Thanks to a contract with the California Department of Managed Health Care and Covered California, LSNC-Health serves all health care consumers regardless of income. The two projects work jointly on direct services to clients, community outreach and education, and policy and systemic advocacy intended to improve access to and the quality of health care for Californians.

# **LSNC-Health**



LSNC-Health provides free legal services to patients with employer-based, private and public health insurance to challenge denials of medically necessary care; screening for all available insurance options; advising on medical debt; and assisting with non-health related legal barriers preventing patients from maintaining or improving their overall health. LSNC-Health has a 32 county service area,

which includes our 23 traditional LSNC counties as well as Inyo, Mono, Alpine, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Sutter, Ventura, and Yuba. LSNC-Health advocates are housed in several of LSNC's field offices, but its main health line rings in Sacramento. LSNC-Health also engages in many alternative service delivery models, such as neighborhood legal clinics, outreach presentations to community groups, community-based organizations, and other service providers, and medical-legal partnerships. LSNC-Health partners with several other legal aid organizations and support centers as part of the Health Consumer Alliance, which collectively provides consumer advocacy statewide. In 2016, LSNC-Health focused especially on increasing access to mental health services for children and increasing access to primary and specialty care for rural northern Californians.

## **Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program**

HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program) offers free information and advocacy for Medicare beneficiaries. HICAP volunteer counselors provide in-person counseling for Medicare beneficiaries on a range of topics, including their local Medicare health and drug plan options, programs that may help low-income beneficiaries reduce their health care and prescription costs, and navigating access to health care and services. HICAP also provides information and representation for Medicare beneficiaries in filing appeals and grievances when they are denied coverage or services.

# Mildred\*

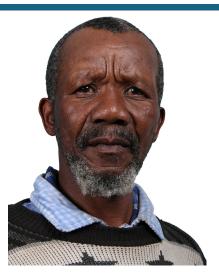


Mildred\*, a Placer County Medicare beneficiary in her seventies, was unable to afford two brand name prescriptions. Mildred called HICAP for assistance on alternatives. The HICAP counselor called Mildred's Medicare Part D prescription drug plan to ask for an expedited request for a tiering exception, which if granted would provide the drug at a lower cost. The counselor also contacted Mildred's doctor to ask the doctor to submit documentation supporting the

request. The client's Medicare Part D plan agreed to the tiering exception for both drugs, and then Mildred was able to afford her needed medications.

# Frank\*

LSNC-Health assisted Frank\*, an older adult living in Tehama County, with an access to health care issue. Frank was enrolled in a Medi-Cal managed care plan. He was formerly homeless and had only recently been able to secure housing. During the time that he was homeless, Frank utilized the emergency room (ER) to access health care. However, the ER staff was not able to treat two of his serious conditions: Hepatitis C with advanced liver damage, and a serious foot injury involving broken glass lodged in his skin. A LSNC-Health attorney advised Frank to seek care from a primary care provider within his health plan's network. A search of the health plan's network revealed that there were no local



in-network providers willing to accept new patients. The attorney assisted Frank by filing a complaint with the health plan regarding the lack of providers (network adequacy) and timely access to care, and subsequently elevated the issue to the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC). Once DMHC became involved, the health plan moved quickly to locate a local provider for Frank, scheduled an appointment, and authorized appropriate specialty care appointments.

# Enhancing Economic Stability

# **Public Benefits**

LSNC continued to achieve outstanding results for clients in its local and statewide public benefits advocacy in 2016, prevailing in two statewide lawsuits challenging unlawful policies. LSNC successfully challenged a United States Department of Agriculture regulation barring people who had their SSI benefits suspended from receiving CalFresh benefits, even though they were no longer getting SSI. LSNC also succeeded in obtaining a writ of mandate ordering the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide state-only foster care benefits to families with an out-of-state guardianship when the guardianship is registered in California. LSNC settled a case that resulted in six major reforms of a county General Assistance program, and negotiated major reform in General Assistance programs in three other counties. LSNC also settled several In-Home Supportive Services cases that resulted in severely disabled clients obtaining the services they need to continue living independently in their homes. LSNC attorneys also filed four appeals in federal court in Social Security cases, contending the clients were improperly denied or discontinued from Social Security benefits.



The CalWORKs program is California's Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) program and provides cash aid benefits, child care and other assistance intended to help parents find and retain work. In one CalWORKs case, a county assessed a substantial overpayment because the client could not obtain a medical verification for a welfare-to-work exemption that the county previously said was not needed and was no

longer available. LSNC attorneys represented the client at an administrative hearing and won a decision preventing the county from collecting the alleged overpayment because the client relied on the prior instructions from the county.

In addition to these cases, LSNC advocates continued to represent clients in administrative hearings in a variety of public benefit programs, winning decisions that allowed our clients

to get and keep the subsistence benefits they rely upon. LSNC attorneys also participated extensively in state agency workgroups that proactively identify and resolve issues that arise in benefit programs, avoiding the need for time-consuming appeals and litigation. In the course of that workgroup participation, LSNC asked the CDSS to correct a policy that improperly implemented a new statute and would have wrongfully deprived about 3,000 recipients of several months of benefits. CDSS agreed and corrected the policy.

Overall, LSNC provided assistance, ranging from basic advice to representation in court cases, in more than 1,675 cases involving non-health public benefits in 2016.

## Macie\*



We helped Macie<sup>\*</sup>, get back onto Supplemental Security Income (SSI) after her benefits were suspended due to a finding that she had excess resources. Macie owned a motorhome and when she became sick, she went to stay with friends. Her SSI was terminated for owning a home that she was not living in. We helped Macie set up conditional SSI while she sold her motorhome, becoming fully eligible for SSI again.

### Thank you to our 2016 board members!

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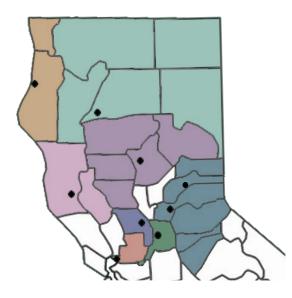
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<b>Statement of Activities</b>	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted		Permanently Restricted		Total	
Revenue and Support   Grants and contracts   Donated goods and services   Contributions   Other income   Rental Income   Attorney fee awards   Interest Income	\$ - 22,766 231,046 293,107 71,609 21,934	\$	9,509,478 403,318 65,757	\$		\$ 9,509,478 426,084 231,046 358,864 71,609 21,934	
Net assets released from purpose restrictions	16,261 9,788,575		(9,788,575)			16,261	
Total Revenue and Support	10,445,298		189,978		-	10,635,276	
Expenses Program services Management and general Fundraising	8,760,246 1,648,680 187,245					8,760,246 1,648,680 187,245	
Total Expenses	10,596,171		-		-	10,596,171	
Change in net assets before other income	(150,873)		189,978		-	39,105	
Other Income Gain on investments Change in net assets after other income	4,948 ( <b>145,925)</b>		189,978			4,948 <b>44,053</b>	
Net Assets Beginning of Year	3,003,884		930,539		405,330	4,339,753	
Net Assets End of Year	\$ 2,857,959	\$	1,120,517	\$	405,330	\$ 4,383,806	
Statement of Financial Position			2016		2015		
Assets Cash and cash equivalents Restricted cash Grants and contracts receivable Other receivables Prepaid expenses and deposits Investments Property and equipment		\$	3 736 13		\$	609,390 1,193 796,622 16,141 225,989 2,519,884 2,095,753	
Total Assets			6,291,	932	\$	6,264,972	
Liabilities and Net Assets							
Liabilities							
Accounts payable Accrued liabilities Notes payable Deferred revenue		\$	713 581 549	8,773 ,028 ,678 ,647	\$	68,458 601,397 631,049 624,315	
Total Liabilities		\$	1,908	,126	\$	1,925,219	
Net Assets Unrestricted Unrestricted board designated - endowment Unrestricted board designated - self insurance Unrestricted fixed assets, net of related debt Temporarily restricted Permanently restricted		\$	249 557 1,120 405	2,125 ,728 ,302 ),517 ,330	\$	2,303,654 124,124 248,640 327,466 930,539 405,330	
Total Net Assets		\$	4,383,		\$	4,339,753	
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		\$	6,291,	932	\$	6,264,972	



#### **Butte Regional Office**

(Butte, Plumas, Glenn, Tehama, and Colusa Counties) 541 Normal Avenue Chico, CA 95927 (530) 345-9491

#### Legal Services of Northern California

Executive Office 517 12th Street Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 551-2150 www.lsnc.net

#### Mother Lode Regional Office

(Placer, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Nevada, & Sierra Counties) 190 Reamer Street Auburn, CA 95603 (530) 823-7560

#### **Nevada County Satellite Office**

101 Providence Mine Road, Suite 106D Nevada City, CA 95959 (530) 470-8562

#### **Redwood Regional Office**

(Del Norte & Humboldt Counties) 123 Third Street Eureka, CA 95502 (707) 445-0866

# **Office Locations**

#### **Sacramento County Office**

515 12th Street Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 551-2150

#### **Shasta Regional Office**

(Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, & Trinity Counties) 1370 West Street Redding, CA 96001 (530) 241-3565

#### **Solano County Office**

1810 Capitol Street Vallejo, CA 94590 (707) 643-0054

#### **Ukiah Regional Office**

(Mendocino & Lake Counties) 421 North Oak Street Ukiah, CA 95482 (707) 462-1471

#### **Yolo County Office**

619 North Street Woodland, CA 95695 (530) 662-1065



LSNC Executive Office - Downtown Sacramento

# **Special Programs**

#### **LSNC** Health

Independent Assistance for Health Care Consumers (23 LSNC Counties + San Joaquin, Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Yuba, Sutter, Mono, Inyo, & Alpine) 515 12th Street Sacramento, CA 95814 Sacramento office: (916) 551-2150 Toll Free: 1 (888) 354-4474

#### **Senior Legal Hotline**

Telephone Access to Civil Legal Advice for Seniors 515 12th Street Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 551-2140 1 (800) 222-1753 Isnc.net/slh

#### **Tommy Clinkenbeard Legal Clinic**

Protecting the civil rights of homeless persons - A collaboration between LSNC and Loaves and Fishes PO Box 2161 Sacramento, CA 95812 (916) 446-0368

#### Western States Pension Project

501 12th Street Sacramento, CA 95814 (866) 413-4911

#### **Senior Legal Services Programs**

Mother Lode Region: (530) 823-7560 Butte Region: (530) 345-9493 Redwood Region: (707) 445-0866 Sacramento County: (916) 551-2140 Solano County: (707) 643-0054 Shasta Region: (530) 241-3565 Yolo County: (530) 662-1065

#### Voluntary Legal Services Program (VLSP)

LSNC's sister organization serving Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, El Dorado, & San Joaquin Counties 501 12th Street Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 551-2102 www.VLSP.org

#### Heath Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP)

HICAP provides information and counseling on health insurance and long term care issues for Medicare beneficiaries.

Central Office (916) 376-8915 505 12th Street Sacramento, CA 95814 www.hicapservices.net

# Melissa\*



Melissa\* is a survivor of domestic violence and has three children. She was terminated from CalFresh for failure to submit paperwork. Melissa submitted the paperwork and our advocate contacted the county to request a review. The county reviewed the paperwork and reinstated Melissa, but dropped the family from their \$171/month benefit to just \$16/month. LSNC requested a hearing and ultimately the county found that the reduction was in error and the family actually qualified for \$175/month, retroactive to April. The overissuance was voided and the County paid Melissa for the underissuance.



Legal Services of Northern California's 60th AnniverSary Celebration & Fundraiser

# Thank you to our donors, supporters and attendees!

With your support, LSNC raised more than \$15,000 to update the Sacramento Office waiting area.



Current and past LSNC Board Presidents recieving recognition for their service to LSNC

Thank you to the generous sponsors of our 60th Anniversary Celebration and Fundraiser!





LSNC supporter and past Board President Jay-Allen Eisen with LSNC supporters Jerry Scribner, Marian Johnston and the Honorable Ron Robie



Guest Speaker and City of Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson with LSNC Executive Directory Gary F. Smith and LSNC Board President Kevin R. Johnson

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