



Department of  
Public Interest

# 2024 Partnership Conference

Tuesday, September 24 - Friday, September 27, 2024  
Albany Capital Center – Albany, NY

*Pearls of Wisdom:  
30 Years of Partnership  
Past, Present and Future*

**NYSBA.ORG**

# 2024 Partnership Conference

## *Welcome to Albany*

The New York State Bar Association is pleased to host the 2024 Legal Assistance Partnership Conference. The Conference is co-sponsored by the Committee on Legal Aid and the Department of Public Interest of the New York State Bar Association. The theme of this year's Conference is "Pearls of Wisdom: 30 Years of Partnership Past, Present and Future" The conference will feature twenty-five programs – all of which are MCLE accredited – in critical areas of law affecting low-income and vulnerable populations.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all attendees for making this the premier legal services conference in New York State.



**Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:** NYSBA welcomes participation by individuals with disabilities. NYSBA is committed to complying with all applicable laws that prohibit discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of its goods, services, programs, activities, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations. To request auxiliary aids or services or if you have any questions regarding accessibility, please contact Eunice Bencke at [ebencke@nysba.org](mailto:ebencke@nysba.org).

### **MCLE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW YORK ATTORNEYS**

For the most comprehensive choice of MCLE program topics and convenient locations, no other New York State organization can match the New York State Bar Association. For more than 50 years, we have been providing the finest legal educational programs in New York State.

**Newly admitted attorneys** must complete a minimum of 32 credit hours of accredited transitional education within the first two years after admission to the Bar. In each of the first two years, 16 accredited hours must be completed as follows: 3 hours of ethics and professionalism; 6 hours of skills; 7 hours of law practice management and areas of professional practice.

**All other attorneys** must complete a minimum of 24 credit hours of accredited continuing legal education each biennial reporting cycle. Of the total, at least 4 credit hours must be in ethics and professionalism, and one credit must be in diversity, inclusion and elimination of bias.



# A WORD OF THANKS

Thank you to this year's Partnership Conference Steering Committee members, whose expert guidance was critical to the planning of this year's conference, including twenty-five programs, The Plenary on Amplifying Legal Services Client Stories to Support Policy Reform and Advocacy, and the Denison Ray Civil Awards and Phil Dailey Award Ceremony.

Thank you to our exhibitor NYSARC Trust Services and to our Section sponsors, the Commercial & Federal Litigation Section, the Dispute Resolution Section, the 50+ Section, and the Young Lawyers Section for their generous contributions.

## **Steering Committee Co-Chairs:**

Heidi Dennis, Executive Director, Rural Law Center of New York  
Hon. Edwina Martin, Public Administrator of Richmond County

## **Steering Committee Members:**

Michaela K. Rossettie Azemi, Cornell Law School

Clare Degnan, Executive Director, Legal Aid Society of Westchester County

Tanya Douglas, Director, Disability Advocacy Project Legal Services NYC

John D. Feerick, Dean Fordham University School of Law

Gretchen Gonzalez, Executive Director, ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project

Sarah Beth Hedden, Center for Elder Law & Justice

Rezwanul Islam, Deputy Executive Director, Nassau Suffolk Law Services

Anne Malak, Managing Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York

Pat Malone, Pro Bono Net

Kelly McGovern, Director of Pro Bono Affairs, Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.

Abja Midha, Executive Director, Volunteers of Legal Service

Rebecca Antar Novick, The Legal Aid Society

Jill Paperno, Empire Justice Center

Amy E. Schwartz-Wallace, Empire Justice Center

Erica Zimny, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY

## **NYSBA Staff Liaison**

Eunice Bencke, Public Interest Program Manager

## **Sponsors, Exhibitors, and Supporters**

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Barber Medical Legal Nurse Consulting, LLC

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### **Exhibitors**

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# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## Wednesday, September 25, 2024

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Sign In – Registration
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	LawHelp New York Advisory Committee Meeting
10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Opening Plenary
11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Wednesday – Session One Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leveraging Law School Students to Combat Veteran Homelessness</li><li>• DAP 1: Building Good Working Relationships with Clients Who Have Mental Health Concerns</li><li>• Public Housing and Public Health: How Public Policy Perpetuates Chronic Health Conditions Among Public Housing Residents</li><li>• Get to Know the NYS Permanent Commission on Access to Justice Co-Chairs (Non-CLE)</li></ul>
2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Break
2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Wednesday – Session Two Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DAP 2: Advocacy for Immigrant and Refugee Communities</li><li>• Marked Present: Applying a Healing-Centered Lens to Chronic Absenteeism, School Avoidance, and Exclusionary Discipline</li><li>• Limited Scope, Legal Information, Legal Advice and More: Managing Ethical Requirements for Innovative Legal Services Delivery Programs</li><li>• IOLA's Presentation on the Justice Infrastructure Project (Non-CLE)</li></ul>
3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Break
3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Wednesday Session Three Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Racial Disparities in Low Level Traffic Stops – New Approaches to and Old Problem</li><li>• Mortgage Foreclosure: Navigating Settlement Conferences</li><li>• New Medicaid Dental Coverage Rules</li><li>• Empowering Legal Aid through AI: Tools, Challenges, and Future Directions (Non-CLE)</li></ul>
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Denison Ray Reception
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Denison Ray Civil Awards Ceremony and Dinner

## Thursday, September 26, 2024

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Thursday – Session One Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RPAPL §753: Equitable Justice in Landlord Tenant Proceedings</li><li>• Rising to meet the challenge: legal service providers' strategies to provide legal services to asylum seekers across NYS</li><li>• Discharging Student Loan Debt in Bankruptcy</li></ul>
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Thursday – Session Two Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Workers</li><li>• Current Legal Issues in Accessing Medicaid Long Term Supports and Services</li><li>• How to Chart a Repair Path: Article 7-C v. Article 7-D of the RPAPL</li><li>• Empowering Legal Aid through AI: Tools, Challenges, and Future Directions</li></ul>
11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch

# ESSENTIAL ATTORNEY RESOURCES.

# INCREDIBLE SAVINGS.

**BEGINNING THE 2025 MEMBERSHIP YEAR,  
MEMBERS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO ALL NYSBA  
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A SINGLE FEE UNDER OUR BRAND-NEW  
MEMBERSHIP MODEL!**



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thousands of hours  
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New York State  
Bar Association

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Thursday – Session Three Programs

- Language Justice for New Yorkers
- Disparities in Education: Discipline and Discrimination and Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline with Holistic Representation
- Public Benefits Training for Housing Attorneys

2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Break

2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Thursday – Session Four Programs

- Culturally Competent Lawyering for LGBTQ Clients
- Access to Justice for Gender-Based Violence Survivors with Developmental Disabilities
- Expansion of Cash Assistance and Medicaid Eligibility for Non-Citizens

3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Break

4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Thursday – Session Five Programs

- Expanding Special Education to Age 22: Where are we now?
- Best Practices in Telephonic Fair Hearings
- Building Partnerships to Improve Safety Outcome for Victims of Technology Abuse

## Friday, September 27, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

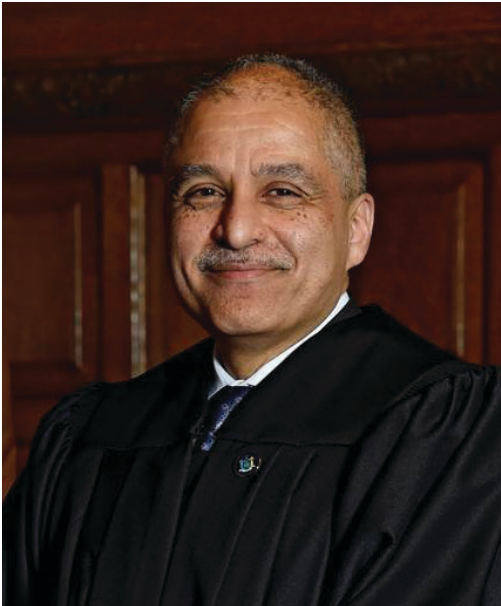
- Housing Task Force Meeting – (NYSBA Great Hall)



# 2024 Partnership Conference

## *Opening Plenary*

### **Hon. Rowan D. Wilson, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals**



Rowan D. Wilson, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, was born in Pomona, California in 1960, and grew up in Berkeley, California. He received his A.B. degree from Harvard College in 1981, and his J.D. degree from Harvard Law School in 1984. He was admitted to the bar of the State of California in 1985, and the bar of the State of New York in 1987. From 1984 to 1986, he served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable James R. Browning, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, based in San Francisco, California.

In 1986, he joined the firm of Cravath, Swaine & Moore in New York City as an associate, and was elected to partnership there in 1991, in which position he continued until February 2017. On January 15, 2017, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo nominated Judge Wilson to serve as an Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals, and the New York State Senate confirmed his nomination on February 6, 2017. On April 10, 2023, Governor Kathy Hochul nominated Judge Wilson to serve as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York. The New York Senate confirmed his nomination on April 18, 2023. While in private practice, Judge Wilson served on the boards of several charitable and not-for-profit organizations and handled numerous pro bono matters.

### **Domenick Napoletano, President New York State Bar Association**



Domenick Napoletano is a practitioner focusing on complex commercial litigation and appellate work while maintaining a busy general practice. Several of his cases have appeared in published decisions, many involving real property and tenancy and occupancy issues. He has spearheaded state and federal class action lawsuits, including notably against the New York City Department of Finance for its imposition of "vault taxes." He is admitted in the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as the Southern and Eastern District of New York and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. He has been a member of the New York State Bar since 1981.

Napoletano's involvement in New York State Bar Association activities are numerous and include being the past chair of the General Practice Section and co-chair of the Committee on Civil Practice Law and Rules. He previously co-chaired the Emergency Task Force for Solo and Small Firm Practitioner. He has served on many association committees, including Finance, Leadership & Development, Bar Leaders of New York State, Animals in the Law, co-chair of the President's Committee on Access to Justice, the Task Force on the Evaluation of Candidates for Election to Judicial Office, the Task Force on Mass Shootings and Assault Weapons, the Gun Violence Committee, the Executive Committee, chair of the Working Group on Facial Recognition Technology, and as liaison to the

Leadership & Development Committee along with the working group on Puerto Rico, the Non-Resident Subcommittee and the Corporate Counsel Section.

Napoletano has served on the association's Executive Committee, as vice president, from the 2nd Judicial District and the House of Delegates representing the Brooklyn Bar Association. Napoletano was recently appointed by presiding Justice Hector D. LaSalle to the Second Departments Task Force on Artificial Intelligence.

Napoletano has been involved his entire legal career in local and minority bars. He is the past president of the Brooklyn Bar Association and has served on the Board of Directors of its Foundation. He is the chairman of the Brooklyn Bar Associations Part 137 Attorney Fee Arbitration Committee. He has served as past president and chairman of the board of the Columbian



# GUEST SPEAKERS

Lawyers Association of Brooklyn. He is the past President of the Confederation of Columbian Lawyers of the State of New York, and President of the Catholic Lawyers Guild of Kings County. He has served as the treasurer and member of the board of directors of the Bedford Stuyvesant Legal Services Corp., as well as past vice president of the Bedford Stuyvesant Foundation for Civil Justice. He has served as a member of the Grievance Committee 2nd, 11th, and 13th Judicial Districts.

Napoletano has received awards in recognition of his distinct service, including the Boy Scouts of America, the Stars & Stripes Democratic Club Community Service Award, Kings County Democratic Party Distinguished Honoree, the Catholic Lawyers Guild Distinguished Service Award, the St. Thomas Moore Award, and the President's Award in addition to Man of the Year Van Westerhout Cittadini Molesì for promoting the welfare of Italian-Americans, the Hofstra Law School's Alumni of the Month, the Brooklyn Bar Association award for distinguished service twice, and in 1980 the Student Merit award as its first white member of the Hofstra chapter of the Black American Law Student Association (BALSA).

His dedication includes memberships in a variety of other organizations where he will often appear or has been asked to lecture on CLE. They include the Nathan R. Sobel Inns of Court, Kiwanis Club, Hofstra University Law School Diversity Admissions Committee, Lay Advisory Committee Diocese of Brooklyn/Queens and as a past advisory board member for Investors Bank, member of the board of directors for the Volunteer Lawyers Project Board, committee member for the Brooklyn Borough President's Legal Task Force, and on the American Bar Association Gun Violence Advisory Commission.

Napoletano earned his law degree from Hofstra University School of Law and his undergraduate degree from Brooklyn College. While in college, and throughout law school, Napoletano worked for then-New York State Assemblyman Michael L. Pesce, retired presiding justice of the state Supreme Court Appellate Term for the 2nd, 11th, and 13th Judicial Districts.

## *Denison Ray Civil Awards and Phil Dailey Award Dinner* *Special Guest Speaker*

### **Hon. Edwina G. Richardson, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, Office for Justice Initiatives**



Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina G. Richardson leads the New York State Unified Court System's Office for Justice Initiatives (OJI), which is tasked with ensuring meaningful access to justice for those appearing in all New York State courts regardless of income, background, or ability. Judge Richardson was appointed to lead OJI in 2017. Under her leadership, OJI has grown to house six focus areas: Access to Justice, Child Welfare & Family Justice, Civic Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion, Policy & Planning, and Youth & Emerging Adult Justice. Additionally, Judge Richardson and OJI provide programmatic oversight of the Judiciary Civil Legal Services grant. This grant provides nearly \$125 million for legal assistance to underserved communities to ensure the essentials of life.

Under Judge Richardson's guidance, the Division of Policy & Planning (DPP) provides guidance and support in commercial and residential foreclosure matters and elder justice endeavors. DPP also supports the nearly 350 problem-solving and accountability courts (PSCs) throughout New York. PSCs enable judges and court staff to better respond to individual, family, and community needs by looking into the underlying issues leading to court involvement and employing innovative approaches to address those issues, such as treatment and rehabilitation. The New York State Unified Court System currently has the following types of PSCs: community, drug treatment, family treatment, human trafficking, mental health, opioid, and veterans treatment courts. DPP also

provides support to our state's Domestic Violence, Integrated Domestic Violence and DWI accountability courts.

OJI also leads the court system's Equal Justice in the Courts Initiative, which implements the recommendations to combat racism in the courts contained in the October 2020 Report of the Special Adviser on Equal Justice, as well as the recommendations in the November 2020 Gender Survey report from the Honorable Betty Weinberg Ellerin Committee on Women in the Courts. Judge Richardson and OJI also support endeavors to make New York courts fair and accessible for the LGBTQ+ community.

*(Continued on next page)*

# 2024 Partnership Conference

Judge Richardson is an active Judge on the Court of Claims. She first joined the court system as a Court Attorney-Referee in Queens County Family Court after representing clients in New York City Housing Court, Family Court, and Supreme Court. Judge Richardson became a Family Court Judge in 2003, the Queens County Supervising Family Court Judge in 2008, and the Administrative Judge of all New York City Family Courts in 2009.

Judge Richardson earned her law degree from CUNY Law School and holds a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from the CUNY Graduate Center. She maintains active membership and leadership positions in bar associations, judicial associations, and court committees seeking to improve our legal system's delivery and quality of justice services.



## Wednesday, September 25, 2024

### Opening Plenary

#### **Amplifying Legal Services Client Stories to Support Policy Reform and Advocacy**

*1.0 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

The program will address considerations for amplifying legal services clients' stories to support policy reform and advocacy. It will focus on the development of a qualitative research project to explore the stories of immigrant survivor clients illustrating how legal work authorization improved financial and housing security, family stability, mental health and well-being, and access to help from other systems of justice, and will showcase the final report from the project, *Stories from Immigrant Survivors of Gender-Based Violence: The Impact of Work Authorization*. The program will also describe ways in which advocates have leveraged the qualitative research findings to support policy reform and advocacy, and considerations for centering the narratives of impacted individuals in these efforts.

#### Speakers:

Rachel Braunstein | Her Justice  
Susanna Saul | Her Justice

#### **Leveraging Law School Students to Combat Veteran Homelessness**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

Syracuse Law School's Veterans Law Clinic and Cornell Law School's Veterans Law Practicum were inaugural recipients of the US Department of Veterans Affairs Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness Grant in August of 2023. This CLE will cover the grant specifics, how it encourages outreach to underserved populations. It will also discuss ethical competency issues related to working with the Veteran client population and approaches to pedagogy in this area. The CLE panelists will share how the grant enables the schools to partner with local agencies and organizations to deliver legal services to thousands of Veterans in upstate New York through law student pro bono legal work, with a particular focus on civil legal services that support accessing government benefits, navigating family law, ensuring access to safe housing, and assisting with debt – all critical to resolving or preventing homelessness.

#### Speakers:

Michaela K. Rosettie Azemi | Cornell Law School  
James R. Hardwick | Adjunct Professor of Law  
Elizabeth G. Kubala | Professor, Executive Director of the Betty and Michael D. Wohl Veterans Legal Clinic at Syracuse University College of Law  
Elizabeth Mao, JD '25 | 3L Student in Cornell Law's Veteran Law Practicum  
Laurie Coffey, JD '25 | 3L Student in Cornell Law School Veteran Clinic

#### **DAP 1: Building Good Working Relationships with Clients Who Have Mental Health Concerns**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Skills*

This panel examines typical signs and symptoms of mental disorders and the diagnostic criteria for the most common mental disorders we see in disability and other legal services cases. We will also describe specific strategies for how to quickly recognize significant mental health and cognitive symptoms exhibited by our clients. Finally, we will share tips on how to effectively communicate with these clients, to set boundaries when needed, and to build effective working relationships.

#### Speakers:

Sarah Baek | Social Worker  
Ann Biddle | Urban Justice Center  
Matthew Canuteson | Empire Justice Center  
Evelyn Compton | Mobilization for Justice Government Benefits Project  
Mary Grace Ferone | Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

# 2024 Partnership Conference

## **Public Housing and Public Health: How Public Policy Perpetuates Chronic Health Conditions and Impacts Public Housing Tenants' Rights**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Professional Practice*

Decades of state, federal, and local policy have created living conditions in public housing apartments and surrounding neighborhoods that directly lead to chronic health conditions and simultaneously set up barriers to residents advocating for those conditions to be remediated. Through this lens, this program will examine litigating conditions and repairs cases for public housing tenants, as well as the intersection of these chronic health issues and eviction defense for public housing tenants and best practices for combatting these issues holistically.

Speakers:

Marcie Kobak | Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

Anna Luft | New York Legal Assistance

## **Get to Know the NYS Permanent Commission on Access to Justice Co-Chairs (Non-CLE)**

Meet the Judicial Co-Chairs, Hon. Shahabuddeen Ally and Hon. Christina Ryba and learn about the Commission's ongoing efforts to expand access to civil legal services.

## **Wednesday Session Two**

### **DAP 2: Advocacy for Immigrant and Refugee Communities**

*1.5 MCLE Credits in Professional Practice*

This panel examines several aspects of advocating for immigrant clients in their Social Security and SSI disability appeals. We will cover eligibility rules, and special concerns, including language access and how immigrant and refugee communities are often unequally affected by economic, social, and other obstacles to health and healthcare. Attendees will learn how to navigate Social Security's rules for immigrant claimants, including documentation and technical eligibility. We will also explore strategies and resources for proving disability.

Speakers:

Violeta Arciniega | Legal Aid Society

Emilia Sicilia | Empire Justice Center

Michelle Spadafore | New York Legal Assistance Group

Grace Zaiman | Refugees Helping Refugees

## **Marked Present: Applying a Healing-Centered Lens to Chronic Absenteeism, School Avoidance, and Exclusionary Discipline**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

This program will share information and strategies on how to combat chronic absenteeism in the context of school avoidance and exclusionary discipline, both through direct service work and systemic advocacy.

Speakers:

Hailey Cunningham | Manhattan Legal Services

Michaela Shuchman | Legal Services NYC

This program will share information and strategies on how to combat chronic absenteeism in the context of school avoidance and exclusionary discipline, both through direct service work and systemic advocacy.

With the current youth mental health crisis, chronic absenteeism has seen a large spike. Students of color, students with disabilities, and students who live in poverty are particularly at risk due to heightened levels of trauma in their lives and communities. When students miss school, it significantly heightens their risk of long-term health issues, school dropout, and incarceration.

The presenters will discuss concrete steps to support children's return to the classroom, including the importance of healing-centered representation for students who are suspended and early intervention for students who are experiencing school avoidance.

## **Limited Scope, Legal Information, Legal Advice and More: Managing Ethical Requirements for Innovative Legal**

## Services Delivery Programs

### *1.5 MCLE Credit in Ethics*

Legal advice helplines, help desks, clinics, and chat bots are tried-and-true methods of providing vital information to the public and serving as entry points to the legal system. However, this type of limited-scope service can raise complicated ethics questions in various scenarios. A sound understanding of New York State rules surrounding limited scope representation and the difference between legal information and advice can help programs implement these services in the safest way possible for practitioners and clients alike. Using our experience building and maintaining the Senior Legal Advice Helpline, the Surrogates Court Help Center, and the Annual Wills Clinics at the Center for Elder Law and Justice, we will educate participants about the ethics of limited scope representation. This includes a robust discussion of the ethical requirements on limited scope programs; determining whether and when an attorney needs to staff a program; addressing the limitations of limited scope models in providing certain services; and deciding whether a program should offer legal advice vs. when legal information alone is sufficient.

#### Speakers:

Erin Riker | Elder Justice New York

Amanda Warner | Elder Justice New York

## IOLA's Presentation on the Justice Infrastructure Project (Non-CLE program)

In this session, Christine Fecko (Executive Director of the NY IOLA Fund) and Neil Steinkamp (Project Manager and Consultant) will provide an update on IOLA's Justice Infrastructure Project – a generational opportunity to invest in the civil justice infrastructure in New York. Christine and Neil will describe the comprehensive process they undertook to learn from stakeholders across the state as well as quantitative analyses and surveys of New York residents. They will share their synthesis of key themes from those efforts and the impactful areas of investment IOLA is preliminarily considering.

#### Speakers:

Christine Fecko | IOLA

Neil Steinkamp

## Wednesday Session Three

### **Racial Disparities in Low Level Traffic Stops – New Approaches to and Old Problem**

#### *1.5 MCLE Credit in Diversity Equity & Inclusion*

PowerPoint presentation on the racial disparities in low-level, non-safety vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist stops, the history of these low-level non-safety stops (often called pretext stops), the harmful effects on those stopped and their communities, and how to reduce the racial disparities in who gets stopped and who gets searched. These stops impact the educational success, employment, and health of our civil legal services clients. This is an area that historically, both institutional criminal defense providers and civil legal services providers have been unable to address due to various restrictions or capacity. Empire Justice Center is now working to reduce - or eliminate - racial disparities in this area of policing. In addition to discussing pretext stops, we will also discuss the development of our proposals to respond to this issue, including formation of a coalition, education of the community and development of policy and legislative proposals. This program will also discuss the findings of our 2023 report, "Stop the Stops - The Disparate Use and Impact of Police Pretext Stops on Individuals and Communities of Colors," linked here: <https://empirejustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Stop-the-Stops-Preliminary-Report-Final-Final.pdf>

#### Speakers:

Katie Blum | Empire Justice Center

Jill Paperno | Empire Justice Center

## Mortgage Foreclosure: Navigating Settlement Conferences

### *1.5 MCLE Credit in Skills*

This program will provide an overview of the rules and laws governing the foreclosure settlement conference process and focus on federal loss mitigation options available to homeowners.

#### Speakers:

Kathleen Maher | Nassau Suffolk Law Services

Lisa Milas | Empire Justice Center

# 2024 Partnership Conference

## **New Medicaid Dental Coverage Rules**

### *1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

Oral health is essential to overall health. However, Medicaid coverage for dental services for adults in New York has historically been extremely limited. In 2023, The Legal Aid Society, Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer US LLP reached a settlement with the New York State Department of Health in *Ciaramella v. McDonald*, a class action challenge to New York's Medicaid coverage rules for root canals, crowns, replacement dentures, and dental implants. The new coverage rules went into effect on January 31, 2024. This training will begin with a brief introduction to issues in oral health care, oral health disparities, Medicaid concepts relevant to the issue, and the *Ciaramella* litigation. The training will go through the new Medicaid coverage rules resulting from the settlement. It will also address the types of denials and barriers that have arisen since January 31, 2024, and appeal options for denials of this care.

Speakers:

Belkys Garcia | The Legal Aid Society

Rebecca Antar | Legal Aid Society

## **Empowering Legal Aid Through AI: Tools, Challenges, and Future Directions (Non-CLE)**

This session explores cutting-edge AI tools, practical applications, and key management considerations to help legal professionals enhance efficiency, ensure compliance, and provide better client service.

Join us for an engaging and informative session designed for legal aid professionals and organizational leaders looking to leverage AI in their practice. This 75-minute session will touch on three key themes:

- **The Potential of AI:** This theme will explore the opportunities that AI presents, from automating mundane tasks to unlocking new insights.
- **The Future: Implementing AI in Legal Aid Organizations:** For legal aid organizations, implementing AI comes with unique considerations. This theme will cover the strategic approach to AI adoption, focusing on aligning technology with mission-critical objectives and overcoming the challenges specific to the legal aid context.
- **Guard Rails: Ethics, Security, and More:** The third theme will emphasize the importance of establishing clear policies and procedures as we embrace AI. It will address the need for guardrails to ensure AI is used responsibly, maintaining ethical standards, and adapting to the evolving legal and procedural landscape.

Speaker:

John Greiner | Just Tech

## **Thursday, September 26, 2024**

### **Session One**

#### **RPAPL §753: Equitable Justice in Landlord Tenant Proceedings**

##### *1.5 MCLE Credit in Diversity Equity & Inclusion*

RPAPL § 753 allows the court to account for many of the hardships tenants face when trying to find new housing and allow for additional time before a warrant of eviction is executed. Some examples of populations which may benefit under this statute include:

- Families with children in the school district.
- Tenants with disabilities require certain accommodation.
- Tenants with Section 8 Vouchers and other subsidized housing.
- Tenants with serious health issues
- Tenants who present with especially compelling stories (ex. living at the subject premises for an extended period)

Speakers:

Daniel Strafer | Nassau Suffolk Law Services

Marissa Luchs Kindler | Nassau Suffolk Law Services

## **Rising to meet the challenge: legal service providers' strategies to provide legal services to asylum seekers across NYS.**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Professional Practice*

This CLE will provide an overview of challenges, response, and innovations among legal service providers to assist the large number of asylum seekers arriving in the state in recent years. Faculty will discuss limited-scope legal clinics, friend of the court programs to guide asylees through the immigration court process, online community resources, self-help materials and support to help asylum seekers understand and navigate the law on their own behalf.

Speakers:

Emerson Argueta | Fordham Law School's Feerick Center for Social Justice

Karin Anderson Ponzer | Neighborhood Legal Services

Melissa Chua | NYLAG

Pat Malone | LawHelp New York, Pro Bono Net

## **Discharging Student Loan Debt in Bankruptcy**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

As the student debt crisis grows, more bankruptcy filers are seeking discharge of their student loan debt. Be prepared to assist clients burdened by student loan debt to get the fresh start they deserve. Discharging Student Loan Debt in Bankruptcy will explore pre-bankruptcy options and administrative remedies, repayment and forgiveness programs and the treatment of student loans in bankruptcy including determining the client's eligibility for discharge. This program will guide you through the process of litigating student loans in bankruptcy court from case evaluation and intake to trial and discuss the recent policy change designed to provide a more expeditious process for discharging student loan debt.

Speakers:

Natalie Jean-Baptiste | The Legal Aid Society

Nancy Nierman | Community Service Society of New York

## **Thursday Session Two**

### **Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Workers**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

Employees in New York are eligible for a growing array of benefits when they need time off work to care for themselves or their families. This panel will discuss New York State's benefit programs for paid sick time, temporary disability insurance, and paid family leave, as well as New York City paid sick time and the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act. Panelists will also discuss reinstatement rights and anti-retaliation protections.

Speakers:

Elizabeth Saylor | The Legal Aid Society

Nola Booth | Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.

Katherine Greenberg | A Better Balance

Allegra Fishel Gender Equality Law Center, Inc.

## **Current Legal Issues in Accessing Medicaid Long Term Supports and Services**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Professional Practice*

More than 300,000 New Yorkers rely on Medicaid Managed Care insurance companies to access needed home and community-based services to remain in the community and out of institutions. Yet, older adults and people with disabilities are routinely denied needed care and face myriad legal barriers to get and keep such services in place. In this training you will review the NYS Medicaid home care program, obtain updates on relevant changes to the law and policy, and learn advocacy strategies necessary to fight flimsy denials and reductions through fair hearings and external appeals to the Department of Financial Services.

Speakers:

Anna Arellano | New York Legal Assistance Group

Mul K. Kim | Queens Legal Services

Rebecca Wallach | New York Legal Assistance Group

# 2024 Partnership Conference

## **How to Chart a Repair Path: Article 7-C v. Article 7-D of the RPAPL**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Skills*

This CLE course will provide an overview of the warranty of habitability, dealing with repair issues outside of court, inside of court as a defense in a summary proceeding, and by filing a repair action under Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law (“RPAPL”) Article 7-C and/or Article 7-D. The CLE will cover the mechanics of filing the repair petitions and how to choose between the two proceedings.

Speakers:

A.J. Durwin | Empire Justice Center

Christina Reilly | Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc.

## **Thursday Session Three**

### **Language Justice for New Yorkers**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

This year is the 60th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which establishes the federal right to language access. During this session, we will provide an overview of language justice concepts and current legal mandates. Building on the concepts and mandates we review, we will discuss opportunities for language justice advocacy at the state and local level, through the examples of Long Island and Monroe County. We also will hear from the NYS Office of Language Access about their work to oversee the efficient and effective implementation of the new language access law across state agencies.

Speakers:

Marlene Cortes | Empire Justice Center

Cheryl Keshner | Empire Justice Center

Margarita Larios | NYS Office of Language Access

Abja Midha | Volunteers of Legal Service

### **Disparities in Education: Discipline and Discrimination and Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline with Holistic Representation**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

Diverse students, including BIPOC students and LGBTQ students, often experience discrimination in school and are disciplined at statistically disproportionate rates. This workshop will inform attendees about rights and remedies for students, will review background statistics regarding disparities in discipline and discrimination.

Speaker:

Marie Mombrun | Legal Aid Society

### **Public Benefits Training for Housing Attorneys**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

Tenants represented by legal services advocates are often eligible for public benefits that could prevent eviction or assist households in relocating. This training will provide a brief overview of all public benefits and offer housing advocates the essential tools, tips, and rules to maximize benefits in the household and prevent evictions, with an emphasis on screening & intake to improve outcomes. The training will help housing advocates identify whether their clients facing eviction can obtain rental assistance for arrears and ongoing rent from their local Department of Social Services under the Emergency Assistance to Families, (EAF) program, Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA), Emergency Assistance to Adults (EAA), Diversion payments or other available rental assistance programs. The training will describe the eligibility criteria, including key budgeting rules, and the benefits available under each program.

Speakers:

Susan C. Antos | Empire Justice Center

Paula Arboleda | Bronx Legal Services’ Public Benefits Unit & LGBTQ Advocacy Project

Deborah Berkman | New York Legal Assistance Group

A.J. Durwin | Empire Justice Center

Haley Kulakowski | Empire Justice Center

Jack Newton | Legal Services NYC

Diana Proske | Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.



## Thursday Session Four

### **Culturally Competent Lawyering for LGBTQ Clients**

*1.5 MCLE Credits in Diversity Equity & Inclusion*

Join us for a presentation on enhancing legal practice for the LGBTQ community. This program is designed for attorneys of all backgrounds and experiences, however, we want specifically invite attorneys who do not have extensive experience working with the LGBTQ community to join us. Beginning with a foundational LGBTQ 101 overview, participants will gain foundational insights into identities, terminology, and cultural nuances crucial for building rapport with LGBTQ clients. Learn best practices for interviewing LGBTQ individuals, including tips for navigating sensitive topics with empathy and professionalism. Finally, the panel will discuss complexities of representing LGBTQ clients in litigation, addressing how to affirm client identities in court filings and during trial. Leave equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide inclusive and effective legal services, contributing to a more just and equitable legal landscape for all.

Speakers:

Lettie Dickerson | Empire Justice Center

### **Access to Justice for Gender-Based Violence Survivors with Developmental Disabilities**

*1.5 MCLE Credits in Professional Practice*

This training will provide an overview of the specific kinds of gender-based violence that are experienced by people with disabilities. This experience will be contextualized within a broader overview of this history of repression of the sexual and reproductive rights of people with disabilities and the way that this has resulted in systems that bolster and perpetrate gender-based violence against persons with disabilities. Participants will learn about the high rates of victimization and incarceration of people with disabilities and the barriers to justice. Participants can anticipate learning practical skills about how to represent an individual with a disability who has been subject to gender-based violence. Participants will be taught skills and strategies for executing retainer agreements, preparing your client for court appearances and providing/requesting accommodations. This training will also go beyond a rights-based framework to consider how a disability justice approach could increase access to justice for individuals who are multiply marginalized because of poverty, race, gender, and disability.

Speakers:

Prianka Nair | Assistant Professor of Clinical Law and Faculty Director of the Disability and Civil Rights Clinic  
Kelly Weiss | NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV)

### **Expansion of Cash Assistance and Medicaid Eligibility for Non-Citizens**

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

Civil legal aid advocates working in a variety of contexts (Immigration, public benefits, housing, health, family law) are often tasked with assessing non-citizen eligibility for benefits programs and issue spotting when a client is denied or discontinued. This training will help by new and seasoned immigration advocates, as well as benefits, housing, health, and family advocates, learn newly expanded (May 2023) PRUCOL (Permanently Residing Under Color of Law) immigrant eligibility rules for Cash Assistance and Medicaid and will include an overview of SNAP eligibility, and other recent updates. The training will also provide guidance on how to answer questions about common concerns raised by non-citizen applicants, including confidentiality and an immigration law issue called “public charge.”

Speakers:

Abby Biberman | New York Legal Assistance Group  
Nikki Feit | Legal Services of the Hudson Valley  
Kent Trompiz | Legal Aid Society  
Susan Welber | Legal Aid Society

# 2024 Partnership Conference

## Thursday Session Five

### Expanding Special Education to Age 22: Where are we now?

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

The Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (“IDEA”) states that students can be eligible for special education supports and services starting at age 3 and “inclusive of age 21.” For decades, the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) interpreted that language as limiting eligibility until the end of the ten-month school year in which students turn 21. Students who turned 21 in July or August of the following school year received “extended” eligibility during those summer months. In July, 2023, NYSED issued guidance in response to A.R. v Connecticut Board of Education, 5 F.4th 155 (2d Cir. 2021), that instructed school districts to continue eligibility until age 22, and encouraging school districts to provide services to students until the end of the school year in which they turn 22, rather than terminating services on a student’s 22nd birthday.

In this session, we will review the legal basis for the A.R. decision, prior and pending cases in other districts that address the same age eligibility issue, the NYSED guidance letter and school district responses to it, and ongoing litigation in NYS and other jurisdictions.

Speakers:

Katherine Groot | Education Law and Disability Advocacy Projects  
Susan Horwitz | The Legal Aid Society

### Best Practices in Telephonic Fair Hearings

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Skills*

This program will bring together Medicaid and public benefits advocates to review and discuss best practices and new/developing issues in telephonic fair hearings. The program will address the ongoing shift from in-person to telephonic fair hearings since the beginning of the COVID pandemic and will cover best practices on a wide range of topics from submission of evidence, presenting effective oral testimony by telephone, limitations and challenges of the telephonic hearing platform (including language access and other accessibility issues), how best to prepare (yourself and your client), and what to do if something goes wrong. The program will also discuss recently filed litigation regarding Public Assistance and SNAP Fair Hearing delays, and policy changes and advocacy around Medicaid and home care hearings.

Speakers:

Rebecca Antar | Legal Aid Society

### Building Partnerships to Improve Safety Outcomes for Victims of Technology Abuse

*1.5 MCLE Credit in Areas of Professional Practice*

Tech abuse is hard to combat because it’s very difficult to prove and prosecute criminally. This is where the formidable NY Cyber Abuse Task force comes in!!! We will share innovative practices that have improved the safety outcomes of DV/IPV victims who are targeted by technology-facilitated abuse (“tech abuse”). The presentation will share specific tools that can be used by the civil legal aid community, where civil remedies can be leverages to close the loophole on this form of abuse that is often ignored by the criminal justice system.

Speakers:

Annie Seifullah | Incendii Law, Co-Chair of NY Cyber Abuse Task Force  
Lindsey Song |Sanctuary for Families



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## Mission

**exalt** is a New York citywide organization created in 2006 to elevate the expectations of personal success for court-involved youth aged 15-19.

**exalt** is committed to racial equity and justice for youth in three specific areas:

- 1

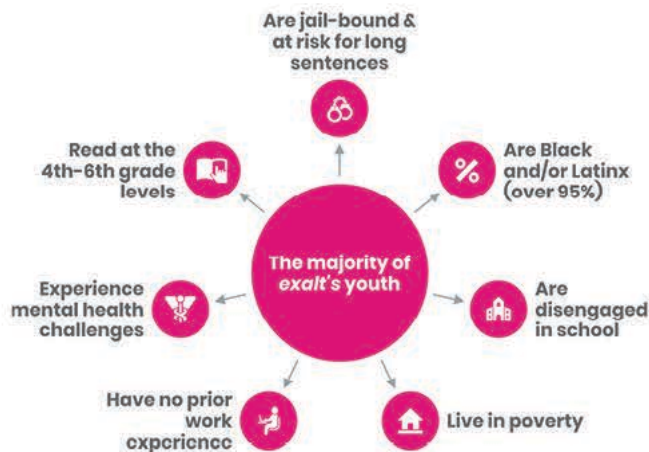
**Criminal Justice Avoidance**
- 2

**Academic Progression**
- 3

**Employability**

## Population Served

Today, **exalt** serves 1100+ young people from throughout NYC: **approximately 600 are new students and 500 are graduates.** They:



## Program Model

**exalt's** unique curriculum is recognized for its **cultural responsiveness and racial equity lens**, giving youth a platform to critically engage with the criminal justice system, race, economics, and social issues affecting themselves and their communities.



## Impact

**exalt's** consistent programming helps youth avoid the criminal justice system, progress educationally, and develop skills while earning a legitimate source of income.

# 95%

Do not recidivate within 2 years of graduation

# 98%

Are re-engaged in high school or GED programs and on track to graduate by age 20

# 75%

Achieve sentence reductions to prevent further educational and employment barriers

# 100%

Are matched with dynamic paid internship placements in high-growth sectors



January 14-17, 2025

# Annual MEETING

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