



Hi, I am Dori Streit, the Executive Director at Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota (LASNEM). At LASNEM, we believe equal justice under the law is a right and not a privilege. Our mission is to provide comprehensive and compassionate legal services to Northeastern Minnesota's low-income communities.

When I joined the team at LASNEM in 2017, I learned right away that like many nonprofits with busy staff and limited resources, LASNEM's story wasn't being told. Telling the story is critical so that you, our partners in service, understand LASNEM's services and incredible impact.

I'm excited to begin this conversation by sharing information about legal aid, the services at LASNEM, and our latest news about new opportunities for attorneys to join the mission of making legal service a possibility for all who need it.

What is Legal Aid?

Civil legal aid is the assistance of counsel and legal advocacy for people living at or near poverty in legal matters that fall outside of the criminal justice system. For people facing civil legal challenges, such as unlawful evictions, foreclosure, domestic abuse, or wrongful denial of government assistance, navigating the justice system without a lawyer can be impossible.

Civil legal aid assures fairness for all in the justice system, regardless of how much money you have. It provides access to legal help for people to protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families. Civil legal aid makes it easier to access information — whether through easy-to-understand forms, including online forms; legal assistance or representation; and legal self-help centers — so people can know their rights.

Civil legal aid also helps streamline the court system and cuts down on court costs. We need programs like civil legal aid to ensure justice for all, not only for the few who can afford it.

What is LASNEM?

Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota (LASNEM) has been the legal aid provider to the northeastern region of Minnesota for 67 years. In that time, it has become an integral part of the justice system and a cornerstone of the community's commitment to the proposition that equal access to justice is a basic human right.

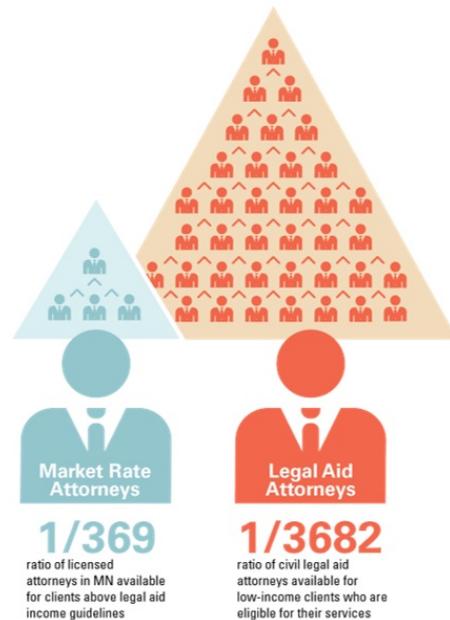
LASNEM is a non-profit regional law firm. Its offices are in Duluth, Virginia, Grand Rapids, Brainerd and Pine City. LASNEM's service area encompasses Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Crow Wing, Itasca, Kanabec, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, and St. Louis Counties.

LASNEM opens the doors of the justice system to the most vulnerable in our community. Our staff provide critical legal representation to people in poverty in matters that impact their security, safety, and well-being. To learn more about our team, programs, and to apply for services, please [check out our website](#).

CIVIL LEGAL AID & PRO BONO CASE TYPES



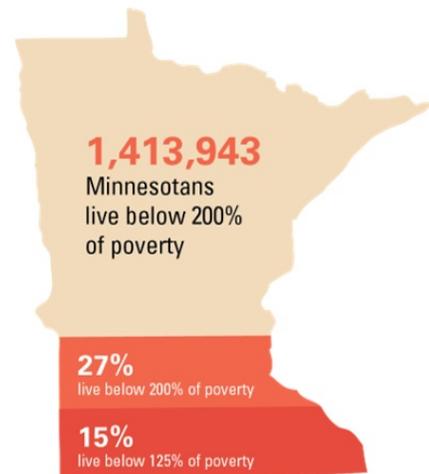
27% Family
24% Housing
12% Consumer
12% Immigration
9% Income/
Health Benefits
17% Other



Recent News – New Volunteer Attorney Program at LASNEM

LASNEM is pleased to announce the expansion of its services to include a new Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) program. LASNEM's new PAI program follows the dissolution of the Volunteer Attorney Program (VAP).

LASNEM and VAP, which have operated as separate nonprofits for nearly 40 years, both provide low-income individuals in Northeastern Minnesota with civil legal services. LASNEM achieves its mission through its staffed lawyers and support staff, and VAP achieves this mission by engaging private attorneys to provide pro bono assistance. LASNEM will now house both objectives under one roof to improve the client



experience, save money, and create additional capacity to help more people.

Working together with VAP on this transition ensures that LASNEM can provide increased services for more people who truly need help. LASNEM is creating one easily accessible point of entry to receive help, and our staff will work quickly to provide the level of service needed. We are building capacity to decrease the justice gap in our region.

LASNEM's PAI program is primarily funded through the State of Minnesota, but also receives significant funds through the federal legal aid program, and through independent foundations. With limited resources available to fund these programs, this move consolidates regional resources to more effectively support people in need.

To each of you who have supported the efforts of VAP over the years, either by offering your time and energy through pro bono legal services to those less fortunate, or by singing your heart out at the annual fundraiser -- we say **Thank You**. Thank you for your commitment to providing legal assistance to those who desperately need it. When public interest attorneys and the private legal community work together, we have the best chance for success in bridging the justice gap. The continued support of our local Northeastern Minnesota legal communities is critical to working towards justice for all.

LASNEM and VAP invite attorneys to contact LASNEM to learn more about volunteer opportunities, including legal clinics, community education, and representation on cases in areas of the attorney's interest. Benefits for volunteers include CLE credits for pro bono hours, recognition through the Minnesota State Bar Association, recognition from regional justice partners and free CLE training opportunities.

LASNEM is currently staffing its PAI program, and will be the exclusive PAI program operating in the region by October 31, 2019. Attorneys interested in volunteering can email the LASNEM's PAI Program at: pai@lasnem.org. Individuals in need of legal services can visit www.lasnem.org or call the office at 800-933-1112.



Meet the Staff of LASNEM

This issue spotlights:

Dori Streit, Executive Director

Dori Streit is the Executive Director of Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota (LASNEM). Dori has dedicated her legal career to building effective and sustainable legal services programs to ensure access to justice for all. Her passion for public interest law began while clerking for nonprofits such as the Minnesota ACLU and Standpoint while she attended Hamline University School of Law. She began her practice as a staff attorney at Indian Legal Assistance Program, a small but busy nonprofit in Duluth, Minnesota, that provides civil and criminal law services to the indigent and Native American communities. In 2011, Dori was hired as the Executive Director of the Volunteer Attorney Program (VAP), where she worked to revitalize the pro bono commitment of the private bar in the Northeastern region. In 2017, Dori began as Executive Director of Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota (LASNEM), where she is focused on strengthening and growing access to civil legal services in the northeastern region. Dori has received recognition for her leadership and commitment to public service: the Bernard P. Becker Award from the Minnesota State Bar Association, (2016); a 20 Under 40 Honoree from the Duluth News Tribune (2014), and the Arthur T. Pfefer Memorial Award from the Twin Cities Cardozo Society (2008).



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