

LEGAL AID CENTER Since 1958
of Southern Nevada



Southern Nevada
SLP
SENIOR LAW PROGRAM



A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.


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NOV 12 2021

ELIZABETH A. BROWN
CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
BY 
CHIEF DEPUTY CLERK

Statement from Nevada's Legal Aid Providers Regarding ADKT 0577

Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, Nevada Legal Services, Southern Nevada Senior Law Program, Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans, and Washoe Legal Services all support a grant program that puts MCLE reserve funds to use. We recommend that a substantial portion of the funding be used for legal aid, pro bono, and access to justice initiatives. The need for legal aid services is higher than ever, especially in areas of need such as housing, unemployment, debt, and domestic violence. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of additional people have fallen into poverty, and requests for aid, particularly in housing and unemployment issues, have skyrocketed. People with jobs continue to struggle to keep the roof over their heads and rebuild their lives. It's hard to concentrate on your job when your income is being garnished, putting you in danger of defaulting on your car payment and losing the vehicle that gets you to work. Our lower income community is facing legal problems that impede their well-being but unlike guaranteed representation in criminal cases, civil legal representation is not a right. Civil legal services have a critical role in helping our community rebound from a crisis. Legal aid assists the most vulnerable communities in our state, helping people stay housed, avoid financial ruin, and build better lives, while providing stability for their future. Funding and initiatives to help us do that are critical.

Providing resources to help legal aid, pro bono, and access to justice initiatives will help our communities of color. In Las Vegas, 1 out of 12 Latino individuals contracted COVID, compared to 1 in 20 white people. African-American Nevadans had the highest rate of hospitalizations – double the rate of white residents. In addition to these statistics, our unemployment rate is still extremely high: An estimated 9.4% of the valley's labor force was unemployed in July, the highest rate in the U.S. among metro areas with populations greater than 1 million, according to the latest report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Devoting resources to communities of color hit hardest by the pandemic and in greatest need for legal services will not only assist vulnerable and minority families, it will benefit the image of the Nevada Bar as it continues its role of service.

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