



TO: Dylan Feik, Calistoga City Manager

FROM: Jaclyn Piñero, Development Director, Bay Area Legal Aid

DATE: July 12, 2016

RE: Bay Area Legal Aid's Client Services Report

Through a merger of Legal Aid of Napa Valley into Bay Area Legal Aid at the end of 2015, BayLegal completed the FY 15-16 City of Calistoga funding agreement that was originally entered into with Legal Aid of Napa Valley.

BayLegal's services provide a powerful approach to ensure that the basic building blocks of health and well-being—food, housing, healthcare, and safety—are met. Equality before the law is a constitutional right, but access to a lawyer in civil issues is not mandated as it is for criminal cases. Providing free legal assistance to poor households significantly influences how they fare in the justice system and how successfully they maintain access to basic needs. BayLegal is the only provider of free civil legal aid in Napa County, including the City of Calistoga, crossing five areas of law that most directly affect low-income household's safety, stability and self-sufficiency:

- **Housing and Homelessness Prevention:** BayLegal strives to prevent homelessness and to preserve and expand affordable housing by enforcing housing laws and regulations. BayLegal represents County residents facing evictions, foreclosures, housing discrimination, substandard housing, and other housing rights violations.
- **Domestic Violence Prevention:** BayLegal helps survivors of domestic violence navigate the various legal, housing, and income options available to them as they strive to end the abuse and create safe environments for themselves and their children. Survivors receive legal assistance with obtaining protective restraining orders, divorce, safe custody and visitation plans, child and spousal support orders, residence exclusion orders and priority transfers within public housing, and immigration relief.
- **Economic Security:** BayLegal attorneys secure basic income and support services for individuals, families and at-risk youth seeking to improve their self-sufficiency. BayLegal assists clients with unlawful terminations or denials of Supplemental Security Income, General Assistance, Food Stamps (CalFresh), In-Home Supportive Services, and CalWORKs.
- **Health Care Access:** BayLegal assists clients with enrolling in, maintaining coverage, and obtaining services from health insurance programs including Medicare, Medi-Cal, through



the Affordable Care Act and California's Health Care Exchange, and county care programs.

- Consumer Law: BayLegal assists clients with issues related to removing financial impediments to housing, income, healthcare, and economic self-sufficiency for low-income consumers.

The FY 15-16 Calistoga funding agreement set forth the following goals:

- Provide free civil legal services to at least 50 low-income Calistoga senior residents who will receive one-on-one legal representation;
- At least 100 Calistoga seniors will be educated through community presentations;
- Provide at least 25 low-income Calistoga immigrant residents with one-on-one legal representation;
- At least 50 Calistoga immigrants will be educated through community presentations.

As of the end of the contract period, June 30, 2016, the following services were provided to Calistoga residents:

- 276 low-income Calistoga residents received legal assistance. Of these cases:
 - 112 cases were opened for senior residents (aged 60 and over) of Calistoga. 52 of these seniors were also immigrants. Through this work BayLegal achieved 224% of the contract goal to assist at least 50 low-income Calistoga senior residents.
 - 164 cases were opened for non-senior Calistoga residents, of which 66 were immigrants. BayLegal assisted 118 immigrants during the reporting period, achieving 472% of a goal to serve 25 immigrants.
 - Of the 276 cases: 16 were for consumer issues; 9 were for employment issues; 17 were for family law issues; 6 were for benefits or a health related issue; 17 were for a housing issue; 124 were for an immigration issue; 72 were for advanced care directives, will or trust issues; and 15 were for other civil rights issues.
 - As of 6/30/2016, there remains 40 cases opened that BayLegal staff will continue to provide legal assistance and representation.
- Through various community presentations across Calistoga, including UpValley Calistoga, Rancho de Calistoga, the Farmworker Center, and the Calistoga Apartments, BayLegal staff educated 111 Calistoga seniors (of which 40 were immigrant seniors) on their legal rights. This represents 111% of the goal to educate 100 Calistoga seniors. BayLegal also provided



legal information and education to an additional 27 immigrants, for a total of 67 immigrants receiving legal information and education.

The following client story illustrates the impact that BayLegal's assistance has on the lives of vulnerable Calistoga residents (client name has been changed to protect confidentiality):

Lydia, an immigrant to the U.S. from Mexico, was terrified by her husband's violent and irrational behavior. Over the past four years he began accusing her of having an affair, harassed her at work, and blamed her for their financial difficulties arising from him being fired from several jobs. Often he would beat her in front of their two children, even while they were crying for him to stop.

Fearful for her safety and that of her children, Lydia called the police and sought help from a violence prevention agency that referred her to Bay Area Legal Aid. BayLegal helped Lydia file a restraining order and obtain full custody of the children, not allowing visitations from her husband unless he enrolled in a batterer's treatment program. BayLegal also referred Lydia and her children to a therapist to cope with the trauma of the abuse, and helped her apply for permanent residency in the U.S. through the Violence Against Women Act.

With BayLegal's help, Lydia is beginning to feel empowered and believes that she can become self-sufficient and support herself and her children. She has obtained a job with better pay, and found new housing for her family. Currently, BayLegal is representing her in divorce proceedings.

BayLegal thanks the City of Calistoga for providing funding to support the provision of free civil legal services to vulnerable Calistoga residents. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact me directly at 510-250-5229 or jpinero@baylegal.org.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Piñero

Jaclyn Piñero
Development Director