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LAS Receives Grant for SNAP Advocacy

A national nonprofit organization, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, has awarded Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland a \$13,000 partnership grant to support MAZON's anti-hunger efforts.

Legal Aid Society will use the grant money to continue its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits advocacy.

In 2013, Legal Aid Society attorneys were able to successfully advocate major policy changes in SNAP services. One such change eliminated a restriction on the use of new evidence during a SNAP administrative appeal hearing. In the past, no evidence was allowed at an appeal that was not within the possession of the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) at the time of the adverse decision. Legal Aid Society attorneys successfully negotiated with the General Counsel for DHS that SNAP administrative hearings were meant to determine a family's eligibility for benefits and, therefore, all relevant information should be admissible.

"Legal Aid Society fights for justice in the impoverished corners of our community, where many individuals rely on SNAP benefits to feed their families," said Gary Housepian, executive director of Legal Aid Society. "We frequently find that our clients are not getting all the stamps they are entitled to get or that they have not applied at all because they do not know if they are eligible. When we represent our individual clients, we frequently discover systemic issues with respect to food stamps that we can resolve for the benefit of all Tennesseans who need food stamps.""

Each year, SNAP advocacy efforts are led by a core group of experienced Legal Aid Society attorneys. Russell Overby (Nashville office) has 40 years of experience advocating for SNAP recipients before state and federal agencies and will work with DHS on several critical SNAP issues. Katie Evans Moss (Nashville office) has been working on benefit cases with Legal Aid Society since 2008. Finally, Theresa-Vay Smith (Oak Ridge office) has worked in East Tennessee to secure food stamp benefits for our clients for over 16 years.

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger is a national nonprofit organization working to end hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds in the United States and Israel.

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland advocates for fairness and justice under the law. The non-profit law firm offers free civil legal representation, educational programs and advice to ensure people in its region are able to protect their livelihoods, their health and their families. It serves 48 counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge, and Tullahoma. [Legal Aid Society](#) is funded in part by United Way.

Last updated on July 21, 2014.

[Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland; LASMTC; LAS; Legal Aid Society](#)

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