

LAS Receives \$13,000 Grant for SNAP Advocacy

NASHVILLE, Tenn. July 6, 2015 – Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland announced today that MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger has awarded Legal Aid Society a \$13,000 partnership grant to support MAZON’s anti-hunger efforts. This is the second year Legal Aid Society has received the grant funding, which will be used to continue its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly known as food stamps) benefits advocacy.

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

“Thousands of individuals across Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland Plateau depend on SNAP to meet their basic nutrition needs,” said Gary Housepian, Legal Aid Society’s executive director. “Unfortunately, the process to obtain these benefits can often be challenging and easily misunderstood. We’re thankful to partner with MAZON once again in our efforts to work with families, individuals and our government organizations to secure benefits for those who need them and advocate for systemic improvements to our state’s SNAP program.”

In recent years, Legal Aid Society attorneys successfully advocated for 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 DHS at the time of the adverse decision. Legal Aid Society attorneys successfully negotiated with the DHS General Counsel that SNAP administrative hearings were meant to determine a

family's eligibility for benefits and, therefore, all relevant information should be admissible.

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. Learn more at www.las.org or by following the firm on [Facebook](#).

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