



# MidPenn Legal Services

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Dear Friend of MidPenn,

In hard times, you have to work more for everything. Life has gotten more difficult for everyone. Imagine how it is for those at the bottom of the ladder. The Census Bureau says that 10% of Central Pennsylvanians are living below the poverty level. That is nearly 300,000 people in our 18 county service area. It is no longer an unfortunate few - it is one in ten of our families. Legal aid is a lifeline for these families to stay afloat and help themselves. Last year MidPenn experienced a 23% increase in demand for services. Please take a moment to learn about the crucial work that MidPenn is doing in your community. We need your help.

## **Critical Help for Critical Moments - Helping People, Case By Case**

- Manny Martinez's stroke robbed him of his voice. MidPenn fought to get him the device he needed to communicate on a most basic level.
- Mesha Rogers lost her nursing license after driving without a driver's license. MidPenn fought for her and got it back. She has returned to her nursing position.
- Larry Mohn was disabled and about to lose his home due to a tax sale. MidPenn got him fair value and found him an assisted living apartment.
- Ray Swackhammer is battling foreclosure. MidPenn is fighting to give his family a chance to keep their home.

## **In for the Long Haul: 40 Years of Legal Aid – Experience Counts**

Experience counts when it comes to providing efficient solutions to community problems. MidPenn has been in your community for 40 years! We know the lay of the land. And we are working hard. We handled more cases last year despite a funding reduction. MidPenn has 14 staffers with over 30 years experience and another 17 with over 20 years service. Two top advocates have been with us for the entire 40 years! Your assistance can help support these experienced advocates - who get things done. Experienced advocates stretch the value of your charitable giving.

We are transparent and accountable. Note your local poverty population figure in your local office fact sheet - all of these people are eligible for legal aid! As the "emergency room of the legal profession" we handle only the most critical cases. Family law is still our area of strongest demand. Money problems tear families apart. Access to the system for fair and peaceful resolutions allows our children to grow up in stable households.

This year we have had an 83.4% increase in unemployment compensation cases as workers everywhere struggle. Our foreclosure cases have increased 111.5%. MidPenn has a team of advocates addressing this issue. Everyone loses when a homeowner can not keep the family home. More than ever before, our neighbors are facing serious difficulties. We are working to stay up with the demand but we need your help.

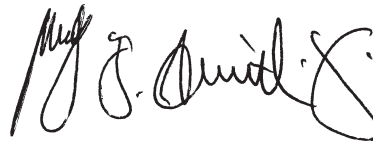
## Helping More Than One Person - Finding Systemic Solutions

- In Lebanon County, a MidPenn case went to the Pennsylvania Superior Court and established statewide standards for the defense of “reasonable accommodation” for a disability under the Fair Housing Act.
- In Berks County, a Federal Court decree in a MidPenn case resulted in a policy change guaranteeing Section 8 residents a fair hearing when claims are made.
- In York County, MidPenn worked with the bench and bar for an expedited system to waive filing fees in some custody filings. What took six weeks, now takes three days.
- In Dauphin County, MidPenn questioned how Magisterial District Judges handled certain matters. The President Judge recommended a seminar for the judges with a MidPenn attorney as a lead presenter.
- The MidPenn Consumer Team coordinated the submission of an amendment to court rules which was adopted by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court - protecting directly deposited social security funds from garnishment.
- In Blair County, MidPenn advocates, along with local attorneys, assist at “Credit Card Court” to help handle a deluge of credit card default lawsuits.
- In Lancaster County, the advocacy of the Medical Legal Partnership has resulted in the City of Lancaster drafting a proposed new ordinance to combat lead poisoning.
- In Franklin County, the President Judge has requested MidPenn assistance with designing a foreclosure diversion program.

You can't lose \$1.2 million of a \$7 million budget and not feel the impact. Lagging interest rates have battered our budget - Interest On Lawyers Trust Accounts fund (IOLTA) was an important funding source. We need your help! Our clients have no where else they can turn. Please consider a gift of \$200 or any amount you can afford. You know people who need this help. Please help us to get their lives back on track. Your contribution will stay in your community to help your local office.

Ten percent living below the poverty level is not just a number – these are our neighbors. To have stable communities, we must give them access to solutions. We read about food banks in crisis and funding drives of all sorts falling short. More than ever, our clients need your help. Please join us in our fight for fairness as our experienced advocates provide the needy with emergency legal care. Supporting legal aid is an investment in your community and a wise use of resources. With best wishes for the holiday season, I am

Very truly yours,



Donald F. Smith, Jr.  
President  
MidPenn Legal Services  
Board of Directors

P.S. Help us deal with the shockingly high poverty rate in our area. MidPenn is marking 40 years of service this year and they have many experienced advocates. Two members have been with us the entire 40 years! They believe in what they are doing. Please review the Annual Report to see how they make their experience count. Join them in their efforts. No other program does this work.