

EQUAL ACCESS

May 2026

TOGETHER
FOR JUSTICE
**50 YEARS IN
THE MAKING**

**PROVIDING
HOPE**
AND A SECOND
CHANCE



PRAIRIE STATE
LEGAL SERVICES

PSLEGAL.ORG

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Denise E. Conklin

Dear PSLS Friends and Supporters,



On May 31, PSLS celebrates 49 years of service to our communities. In many cases, PSLS is our clients' last line of hope. We take this responsibility and privilege seriously, providing access to justice and hope for nearly 50 years.

Last year, PSLS provided high-quality legal services to more than 11,500 Illinoisans in our key impact areas of financial stability, housing and safety. Keep an eye out for our annual report, the 2025

Impact Report, which will be released in the coming months. We are excited to share PSLS' successes with you as we keep working hard to make access to justice a reality in our communities.

My very best to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Denise E. Conklin'.

Denise E. Conklin
PSLS Executive Director

WHY OUR WORK MATTERS



Meet Marilyn, a woman in her 50s in search of a better opportunity to provide for her family. Marilyn's past choices led to a criminal record that made it challenging for her to secure employment. Marilyn reached out to PSLS for a second chance. PSLS helped Marilyn navigate the legal process of expunging her criminal records. PSLS staff got to work, researching her records to come up with a plan to understand which records were eligible for sealing or expunging. PSLS walked the legal journey with Marilyn and successfully helped her vacate multiple prior felony convictions and expunge those court and arrest records under Illinois law. Today, Marilyn's previous decisions are no longer a barrier when searching for job opportunities to better provide for herself and her family!

Name was changed to protect client confidentiality.

TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE – 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING



Since 1977, PSLs has stood beside Illinois families navigating their most difficult moments – helping them find safety, financial stability, housing and a fresh start.

PSLS' Together For Justice (TFJ) Team carries that legacy forward, and we want **you** to be a part of it!

TFJ unites professionals, donors and community leaders across 36 counties to ensure families across Northern and Central Illinois have access to free civil legal aid. We are celebrating 50 years of access to justice in 2027 – and we are looking for 50 dedicated people to help us make it count. TFJ members show up, open doors, make introductions and give. Your time, talent and support can change lives. There has never been a better moment to step up for justice in Illinois. The entire TFJ Team meets quarterly to receive updates and information from PSLs leadership and the following committees meet between quarterly meetings to work on special projects.

TFJ has the following committees:



Corporate Outreach Committee

This committee engages the corporate legal sector including corporate foundations, legal departments and law firms.



Events Committee

This committee organizes and implements PSLs events across 36 counties including Strike A Chord, Strides for Justice and PSLs' upcoming 50th Anniversary celebrations.



Social Fundraising Committee

This committee works with peer to peer and crowdfunding fundraising models to increase awareness and 'friendraise' funding for PSLs.

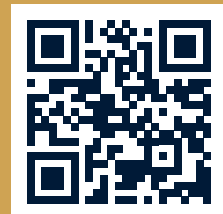


Strategic Giving Committee

This committee will focus on coordinating strategic partnerships across PSLs' impact areas of safety, housing and financial stability, including philanthropic giving circles.

JUSTICE
BEGINS
WITH
YOU!

Scan the QR code
to sign up for a
TFJ committee and
find meeting dates.



pslegal.org/TFJ

PROVIDING HOPE AND A SECOND CHANCE

PSLS works hard to provide opportunities for our neighbors in need of a second chance. An opportunity for a safer life, to find a better home environment, or expunging and sealing criminal records — fresh starts matter. April was Second Chance Month, which shines a light on the services offered by organizations to pave paths to a second chance. PSLS works year-round to provide hope and opportunity for individuals in our communities to move past their criminal records, helping them become more financially stable and contribute to the economic development of their communities. PSLS recently co-hosted the sixth Second Chances Summit with Illinois State Senator Steve Stadelman. The event in Rockford in late March provided nearly 80 eligible community members an opportunity to receive free legal help from pro bono attorneys to seal or expunge their criminal records. Through the high-quality legal services provided this year at virtual sealing and expungement clinics, PSLS has helped dozens more individuals in our communities. Thank you to our volunteer attorneys who partner with us to make a difference in our communities!



Nathaniel Bovell, PSLS Community Resource Specialist



(L-R) Ligia Mendez, PSLS Pro Bono Supervising Attorney, and Brett Cummins, PSLS Senior Criminal Records Relief Attorney



(L-R) Lakeshia Sykes, PSLS Pro Bono Coordinator, Wendy Crouch, PSLS Senior Pro Bono Coordinator, and Ligia Mendez, PSLS Pro Bono Supervising Attorney



(Front) Attorney Paul Cain and Professor at NIU School of Law (Back L-R) Attorney Rod Kimes and Dejah Smith, NIU Law Student

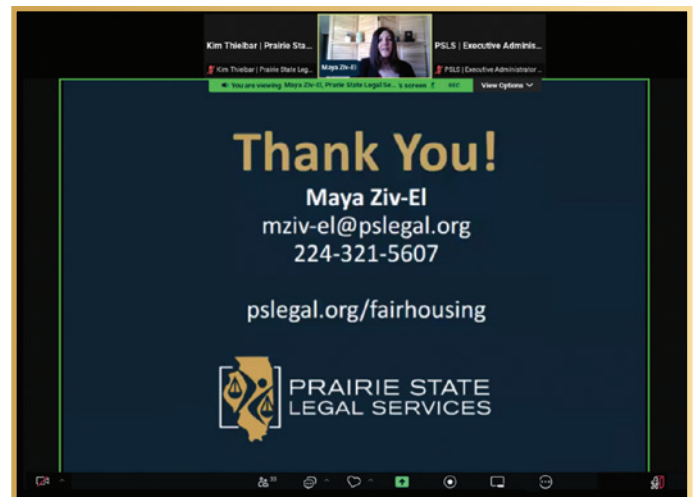
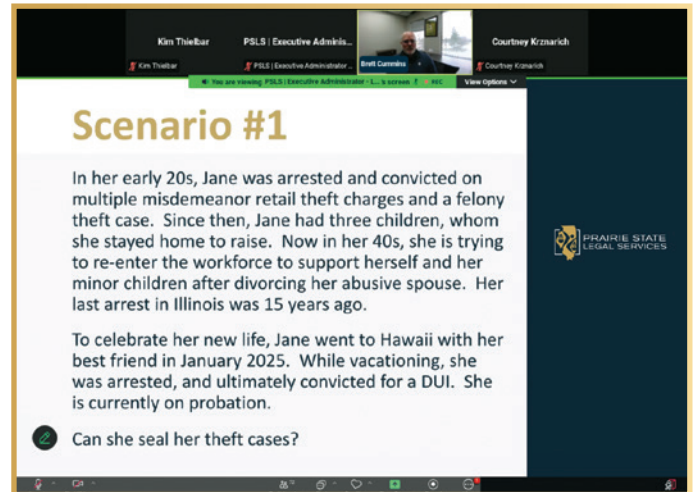
SPRINGING INTO PRO BONO WITH PSLS



Thank you for joining PSLS at our second Spring Into Pro Bono Series. During this year's series, we were excited to train volunteer attorneys in the following topics they may experience while volunteering with PSLS' pro bono team, as well as in their private practice:

- Fair Housing Discrimination
- Illinois Clean Slate Act
- Advance Directives
- Bankruptcy Basics
- Minor Guardianships
- Language Access in Legal Practice

Attorneys who attended a training are expected to commit to a short-term or extended representation opportunity through an individual case referral or within one of our projects: Eviction Negotiation Project, Family Law Advice Clinic, Criminal Records Relief, Advanced Directives for Seniors and Telephone Advice. We look forward to partnering with the attorneys who participated to help more PSLS clients!



THANK YOU, SPRING INTO PRO BONO SPONSORS!

Torchbearer



WYLDER CORWIN KELLY LLP

Pacesetter

Anonymous

HAVE YOU SEEN PSLS' BILLBOARDS?

PSLS recently displayed billboards across some of the communities that we serve in Northern and Central Illinois. These strategically placed billboards meet people where they are, and are a vehicle for creating more public awareness about the existence of the free high-quality legal services offered by PSLS.



LIVING WITH HIV IS HARD

FREE LEGAL HELP IS AVAILABLE

PRAIRIE STATE LEGAL SERVICES
FAMILY LAW | HOUSING | MEDICAID

Apply | 800-531-7057
pslegal.org

Over the winter and early spring, a billboard about the civil legal aid available to individuals living with HIV/AIDS was displayed in communities served by the Joliet, Ottawa, Waukegan, West Suburban and Woodstock Offices. Thank you, Chicago Department of Public Health, for funding this billboard.



YOUR PAST SHOULDN'T DEFINE YOUR FUTURE.

FREE LEGAL HELP IS AVAILABLE

PRAIRIE STATE LEGAL SERVICES
CRIMINAL RECORDS RELIEF

Apply | 800-531-7057
pslegal.org

Also in the winter and early spring, a billboard about PSLS' criminal records relief services was displayed in communities served by the Moline, Ottawa and Rockford Offices. The messages spread awareness of the possibility of a fresh start through free legal help sealing and expunging records. Thank you, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, for funding this billboard.



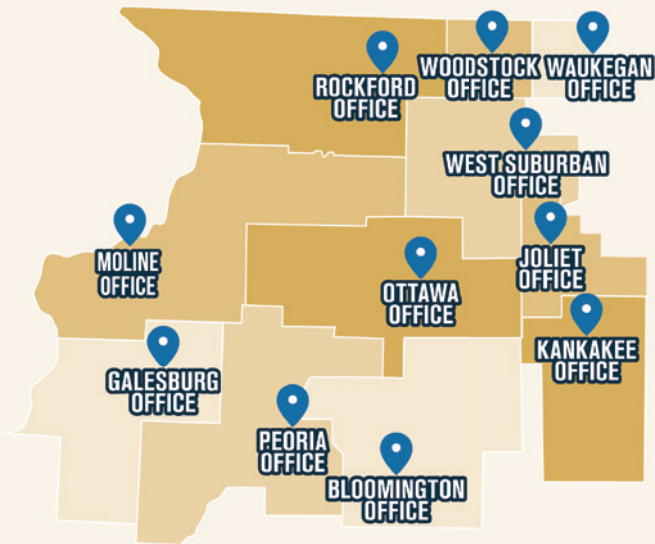
YOU ARE MORE THAN YOUR RECORD.

FREE LEGAL HELP IS AVAILABLE

PRAIRIE STATE LEGAL SERVICES
CRIMINAL RECORDS RELIEF

Apply | 800-531-7057
pslegal.org

A similar billboard about PSLS' criminal records relief will be displayed in the Kankakee Office service area throughout the spring and summer. Thank you, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, for also funding this billboard.



PSLS OFFICES

BLOOMINGTON

Serving Livingston, McLean and Woodford Counties
 Phone: 309-827-5021
 Toll Free: 800-874-2536

GALESBURG

Serving Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren Counties
 Phone: 309-343-2141
 Toll Free: 800-331-0617

JOLIET

Serving Will County
 Phone: 815-727-5123
 Toll Free: 877-315-4472

KANKAKEE

Serving Iroquois and Kankakee Counties
 Phone: 815-935-2750
 Toll Free: 800-346-2864

MOLINE

Serving Henry, Lee, Mercer, Rock Island and Whiteside Counties
 Phone: 309-794-1328
 Toll Free: 800-322-9804

OTTAWA

Serving Bureau, Grundy, LaSalle and Putnam Counties
 Phone: 815-434-5903
 Toll Free: 800-892-7888

PEORIA

Serving Fulton, Marshall, Peoria, Stark and Tazewell Counties
 Phone: 309-674-9831
 Toll Free: 800-322-2280

ROCKFORD

Serving Boone, Carroll, Jo Daviess, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties
 Phone: 815-965-2902
 Toll Free: 800-892-2985

WAUKEGAN

Serving Lake County
 Phone: 847-662-6925
 Toll Free: 800-942-3940

WEST SUBURBAN

Serving DeKalb, DuPage, Kane and Kendall Counties
 Phone: 630-690-2130
 Toll Free: 800-690-2130

WOODSTOCK

Serving McHenry County
 Phone: 815-344-9113
 Toll Free: 877-480-3020

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PSLS is proud to have 100% Board giving in 2025.

PRESIDENT

William Beckman

VICE PRESIDENT

Kenneth E. Davies

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Rebecca Lee

SECRETARY

C. Garrett Bonsell

MEMBERS

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 Ciera Muñoz
 Julie O'Rourke
 Randa Salinas
 Ambrea Samuels
 Leila Siena
 Scott J. Smith

PSLS

HELPLINE NUMBERS

General Telephone Counseling
800-531-7057

Fair Housing Project
855-347-7757

Domestic Violence Legal Advice Line
844-388-7757

Legal Assistance for Older Adults
888-965-7757

Low-Income Tax Clinic
855-829-7757



**PRAIRIE STATE
 LEGAL SERVICES**



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PURSuing JUSTICE. RESTORING HOPE.

CONNECT WITH US! TO SUPPORT OUR WORK, VISIT [PSLEGAL.ORG/DONATE](https://pslegal.org/donate).

DO YOU NEED LEGAL HELP?

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation manages four state-funded programs that offer free legal help, advice and information to people who can't afford a lawyer.



25 YEARS ★
**Powering Legal Aid,
Championing Justice
for All**



FOR HELP WITH ISSUES SUCH AS FAMILY LAW, CONSUMER FRAUD, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

Cook County Residents
Call **CARPLS Legal Aid Hotline** at 312-738-9200
Northern and Central Illinois Residents
Call **Prairie State Legal Services** at 800-531-7057
Central and Southern Illinois Residents
Call **Land of Lincoln Legal Aid** at 877-342-7891
Anyone in Illinois can visit IllinoisLegalAid.org to find simplified legal information, forms and other resources.



FOR HELP WITH EVICTION-RELATED ISSUES

Illinois tenants and landlords can contact Eviction Help Illinois to see if they qualify for free legal help.

Call 855-631-0811 | Text 'Eviction' to 85622 Visit evictionhelpillinois.org

Reply 'Stop' to cancel or 'Help' for help. Message and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies.



FOR HELP WITH VETERANS LEGAL ISSUES SUCH AS DISCHARGE UPGRADES AND BENEFITS

Illinois veterans, active-duty military and their families can contact the Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network (IL-AFLAN) to see if they qualify for free legal help.

Call 855-452-3526 | Visit ilaflan.org



FOR HELP CLEARING CANNABIS RECORDS

Illinois residents can register with New Leaf Illinois to find out if they qualify for cannabis expungement.

Call 855-963-9532 | Visit newleafillinois.org

Civil Legal Aid Programs, the Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network and New Leaf Illinois are funded through the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. Eviction Help Illinois is funded through the IL Department of Human Services.