

LEADERSHIP

Our Board of Directors and advisory board include community members and other friends of CLSEPA, including executive directors of local non-profits (EPA CAN DO and the Community Development Institute), prominent attorneys and law professors, members of the East Palo Alto City Council and Rent Stabilization Board, and the first mayor of East Palo Alto.

STAFF

CAROLYN TUCHER

Acting Executive Director

MARY DUTCHER, ESQ.

Supervising Attorney, Immigration

SHIRLEY HOCHHAUSEN, ESQ.

Supervising Attorney, VAP & Anti-predatory
Lending Initiative

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Supervising Attorney, Housing

VICTOR RAMIREZ

Housing Paralegal

VALICIA SAUCEDO

Program Director

YADIRA GONZALEZ-ORTIZ

Office Manager

COLLABORATION

In order to provide the best possible services to our clients, CLSEPA collaborates extensively with community organizations, non-profit groups, government agencies, businesses, Stanford University and Stanford Law School. CLSEPA and the Stanford Community Law Clinic cooperate to provide services without duplication of effort, overlapping only in those areas where the needs of our clients exceed the capacity of either agency.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. MAKE A CONTRIBUTION
2. DONATE OFFICE EQUIPMENT
3. VOLUNTEER

OR ANY COMBINATION OF 1, 2 & 3!

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Community Legal Services has received extraordinary support from East Palo Alto and the surrounding communities. It is only through community backing that we are able to provide free legal services to those who need them.

CLSEPA has benefited from countless hours of volunteer service from our Board of Directors, VAP firms, individual attorneys, other professionals, law students, and community volunteers.

OUR SUPPORTERS

We express our gratitude to the following donors of time, goods, services and funds:

Alexander, Hawes & Audet LLP

Atkinson Foundation

Bank of America Foundation

Carpenters Union Local 217

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Legal Services Trust Fund Program (IOLTA)

The Morrison & Foerster Foundation

Palo Alto Area Bar Association

Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund

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VOLUNTEER LAW FIRMS

Bingham McCutchen LLP

Cooley Godward LLP

Dechert LLP

DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary US LLP

Fenwick & West LLP

Fernandez & Associates LLP

Morrison & Foerster LLP

Various individual attorneys

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU ARE INTERESTED
IN JOINING OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM!

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES IN EAST PALO ALTO



Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) provides free legal services to low-income and under-served people in East Palo Alto and the surrounding community. Our practice areas include housing, immigration, general civil litigation, anti-predatory lending, and juvenile justice.

Through the efforts of volunteer attorneys, law students, community volunteers and our dedicated staff members, we provide life-changing legal services to individuals and families in need.

CLSEPA opened in September 2002. We serve over 1,000 clients each year. We are a community-based organization funded by grants and donations from foundations, law firms, legal organizations and individuals.

CLSEPA is located on University Avenue in the heart of East Palo Alto.

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HOUSING PROGRAM

In a community with tremendous need for help with housing questions, CLSEPA turns no one away. Supervising attorney Jeanne Merino and paralegal Victor Ramirez see clients both at evening clinics and on a walk-in basis. They are assisted by Stanford Law School students who participate in our twice-monthly advice sessions, interviewing and counseling tenants under the direction of CLSEPA staff.

ADVICE & INFORMATION

CLSEPA advises clients on their rights and responsibilities regarding eviction and threatened eviction, habitability; rent levels, Section 8 housing, discrimination, retaliation, and security deposits. Our office helps tenants write letters and complete documents. We also attend inspections. Assistance from our office is on-going.

BRIEF SERVICES

CLSEPA writes demand letters, helps file answers in court, and negotiates with landlords and opposing counsel on behalf of clients. We frequently assist clients who represent themselves in unlawful detainer cases and in small claims court.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

CLSEPA is available to do presentations in English and Spanish on topics ranging from recovering a security deposit, to working with a landlord and other tenants in the building, to reducing habitability problems. In addition, CLSEPA offers regular outreach sessions to community residents.

VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY PROGRAM (VAP)

Through our Volunteer Attorney Program, Community Legal Services helps people with a wide range of legal problems, including consumer fraud, insurance, bankruptcy, car financing, contracts, and real estate issues.

Trained Stanford Law School students assist clients under the direction of supervising attorney Shirley Hochhausen. They conduct interviews, write legal memoranda, provide advice, advocate, and negotiate as appropriate in each case. Clients with more intractable legal problems are referred to attorneys from local firms who provide their services free of charge.

ANTI-PREDATORY LENDING INITIATIVE

Illegal and predatory home loans rob families of the home equity that could finance an education or a small business for a future generation. This systematic equity-stripping occurs across the Bay Area and keeps our most vulnerable communities in poverty. CLSEPA supervising attorney Shirley Hochhausen works in conjunction with the Fair Lending Consortium (FLC) and leading Bay Area law firms to assist borrowers in redressing illegal loans and accessing fair mortgages.

JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAM

In response to an expressed community need, CLSEPA offers advice sessions for juveniles with volunteer attorneys who specialize in criminal matters. CLSEPA presents panel discussions on the rights and responsibilities of young people under the criminal justice system. Organizations interested in hosting a panel should contact our office.

IMMIGRATION PROGRAM

CLSEPA provides reliable and effective legal assistance to immigrants that is much-needed in local communities. In East Palo Alto, two-thirds of the population is Latino or Pacific Islander, yet Supervising Attorney Mary Dutcher is the only agency-based attorney providing free immigration services on a full-time basis in San Mateo County and the mid-peninsula.

ADVICE & INFORMATION

Trained, supervised Stanford Law Students interview clients and relay advice to them on how to regularize their own or family members' immigration status. Bilingual information handouts on more than 20 immigrants' rights topics are available.

BRIEF SERVICES, APPLICATIONS & REPRESENTATION

We help clients with Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) claims, U-Visas, family petitions, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, green card renewals, political asylum claims and more.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

CLSEPA does presentations in Spanish and English on immigrants' rights, legislative updates, avoiding "notario" scams and getting a green card. These presentations have reached hundreds of people.

POLICY WORK & ADVOCACY

CLSEPA offers technical assistance and legal expertise for local leaders of immigrant groups, grassroots organizers, and law enforcement officials.

REFERRALS

CLSEPA refers individuals to social service agencies or private attorneys when additional assistance is needed.