Philadelphia Legal Assistance Awarded $240,305 Pro Bono Innovation Grant to Create Medical-Legal Community Partnership

WASHINGTON – The Legal Services Corporation announced today Philadelphia Legal Assistance as the recipient of a 24-month $240,305 Pro Bono Innovation grant to create a Medical-Legal Community Partnership driven by law student pro bono.

Philadelphia Legal Assistance will use the network of existing neighborhood public health centers and law student volunteers to create the partnership, which aims to improve access to comprehensive and coordinated health and legal care for low-income clients. Law student volunteers will also participate in "Skills Lab" sessions and weekly group supervision to hone their legal skills and collaborative problem-solving.

People who live in poverty disproportionately experience legal and health problems from homelessness, substandard housing, being uninsured and having to choose between food or heat. These "socio-legal needs" can affect the health of low-income families and the efficacy of medical services, as even the best care is undermined by unmet legal needs.

"I congratulate Philadelphia Legal Assistance on their innovative medical-legal partnership model that is helping to ensure that low-income families in our community have their medical and social service needs met more effectively," Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-02) said. "This grant will help PLA sustain and amplify the Medical-Legal-Community Partnership, while continuing to help provide and expand legal assistance to thousands of Philadelphians. I am proud to have pushed for the creation of the Pro Bono Innovation Fund in Congress so programs like this can continue the pursuit of equal access to justice."

Philadelphia Legal Assistance is one of 11 inaugural recipients of LSC’s $2.5 million Pro Bono Innovation Fund, a competitive grant that invests in projects that identify and promote replicable innovations in pro bono for low-income legal aid clients.

"We are grateful to Congress for funding this new competitive grant program to increase pro bono support for civil legal aid," LSC President Jim Sandman said. "As a former antitrust lawyer,
I believe that competition promotes innovation. The number and quality of the applications for our new Pro Bono Innovation Fund grants proves the point."

Legal Services Corporation (LSC) was established by the Congress in 1974 to provide equal access to justice and to ensure the delivery of high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income Americans. The Corporation currently provides funding to 134 independent non-profit legal aid programs in every state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories.