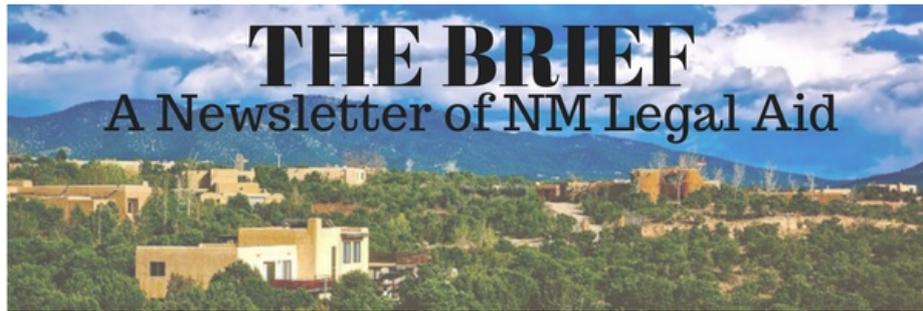


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"The opposite of poverty is not wealth, the opposite of poverty is justice."

-Bryan Stevenson

### An Introduction: from Executive Director Ed Marks



Thank you for being a part of the launch of New Mexico Legal Aid's e-newsletter! We created this newsletter to fulfill four goals, all in brief form to respect our busy readers: share the impact of our work, provide easy access to information volunteers need, offer timely features about New Mexico's access to justice community, and share a moment or two of fun. Whether you are an attorney in private practice who volunteers at a legal clinic, a person with ties to New Mexico living out of state, or a donor who cares passionately about civil legal services' role in combatting poverty and injustice, we hope you will find in these editions information you need, learn from and enjoy.

Even those who know New Mexico Legal Aid well may be surprised by the scope of our statewide work or enjoy the chance to meet some of our newer staff. We welcome your questions and suggestions for future editions. Please communicate them to [Communications@nmlegalaid.org](mailto:Communications@nmlegalaid.org) or if you have questions specifically about activities of the Volunteer Attorney Program, please contact the program through Statewide Pro Bono Coordinator Aja Brooks at [ajab@nmlegalaid.org](mailto:ajab@nmlegalaid.org).

I was at a conference recently where Jim Sandman, president of the national Legal Services Corporation (LSC), offered a startling fact. He said the 2016 amount of federal dollars available for LSC to distribute nationwide to support legal aid programs such as New Mexico Legal Aid **equaled the same amount of money that Americans spent nationally that year on Halloween costumes – for their pets.** Most of us were left speechless. Maybe part of the reason legal aid isn't supported more, whether through government funding or privately, is that we are too quiet about the important work we do that empowers people to help themselves. This newsletter may be part of a solution. We may be daunted by the steep uphill battle that statistics like New Mexico having the third highest rate of poverty in the nation present for us. Rather than being overwhelmed, let me suggest we think instead of the quote from Bryan Stevenson: The opposite of poverty is not wealth, the opposite of poverty is justice. We – those of us engaged in the access to justice community – we can focus on closing the justice gap, one pair of hands at a time, joining together with others. As a unified network, we can form the will and build the ability to create change. Spread the word...

## VAP CORNER



### WHO WE ARE

The Volunteer Attorney Program's mission is to expand and support an active statewide network of volunteer attorneys, paralegals, and law students to meet the civil justice needs of low-income New Mexicans in all communities throughout the state. The VAP works closely with the State Bar of New Mexico, the New Mexico Supreme Court's Commission on Access to Justice, local Judicial District Pro Bono Committees, the UNM School of Law, private bar partners, courts and other legal services providers to plan and coordinate the delivery of high-quality pro bono legal services through direct representation, individual client counseling, community legal fairs and other innovative strategies.

[SIGN UP TODAY!](#)

### Volunteer Spotlight **Carlos N. Martinez**



Mr. Martinez recently spent an afternoon volunteering at LawLaPalooza, a quarterly program of NMLA where community members can receive free legal advice. Born and raised in Albuquerque, he feels drawn to give back to the city that he loves so much. No matter where clients are in their legal journey, he enjoys stepping in to educate, alleviate concerns, and give advice to people who have nowhere else to turn.

When asked what he wishes other potential volunteer attorneys knew, Carlos said volunteering takes less time than you may think, and spending a few hours of your time is rewarding for everyone involved. Thank you Carlos, and all of our amazing volunteers!

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Find out more about volunteering with NM Legal Aid or October Pro Bono Month through the links below or by contacting Aja Brooks at [ajaB@nmlegalaid.org](mailto:ajaB@nmlegalaid.org).



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[VAP Sign-Up Form](#)

[Get Involved: Current VAP Events](#)

[Coming Up: Real ID Workshop](#)

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