

# **LAS Receives Grant for Foreclosure Prevention & Community Redevelopment**

NASHVILLE, Tenn., March 2, 2017 - Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, Tennessee's largest non-profit law firm, has received a two-year grant from the Tennessee Bar Foundation to increase foreclosure prevention and community redevelopment legal assistance.

The Tennessee Bar Foundation, the administrator of funds generated through Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts ("IOLTA") in Tennessee, received part of a nationwide donation to IOLTA programs from Bank of America, as part of a settlement of claims with the Justice Department arising from the home mortgage crisis. They have awarded Legal Aid Society \$259,640 to give legal assistance to low-income people and seniors in their Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge and Tullahoma offices.

"Hundreds of individuals in our 48 county service area were adversely affected by actions of Bank of America (and other banks) related to the bank's conduct during the recent housing/financial crisis," said Gary Housepian, Legal Aid Society's executive director. "Many have been at risk of losing their homes through foreclosure because of the actions of the lender. This grant will allow us to expand legal assistance in matters that could affect the financial stability of the household. Foreclosures of homes have an adverse impact on property values, hurt a community and uproot families. We are grateful to this funding to enable our staff to save people's homes, stabilize households and strengthen a community."

With these funds, Legal Aid Society is hiring a new attorney and a new paralegal to provide legal assistance in its Murfreesboro and Tullahoma service areas and expand its foreclosure and consumer work in its Oak Ridge, Gallatin and Nashville service areas.

“The Tennessee Bar Foundation is pleased to be able to help the four, federally-funded legal aid organizations that are current IOLTA program grant recipients in Tennessee,” said Barri Bernstein, Foundation executive director. “Legal Aid Society has already demonstrated its ability to assist low-income and elderly people to maintain their homes. We welcome the opportunity to help Legal Aid Society expand those services.”

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