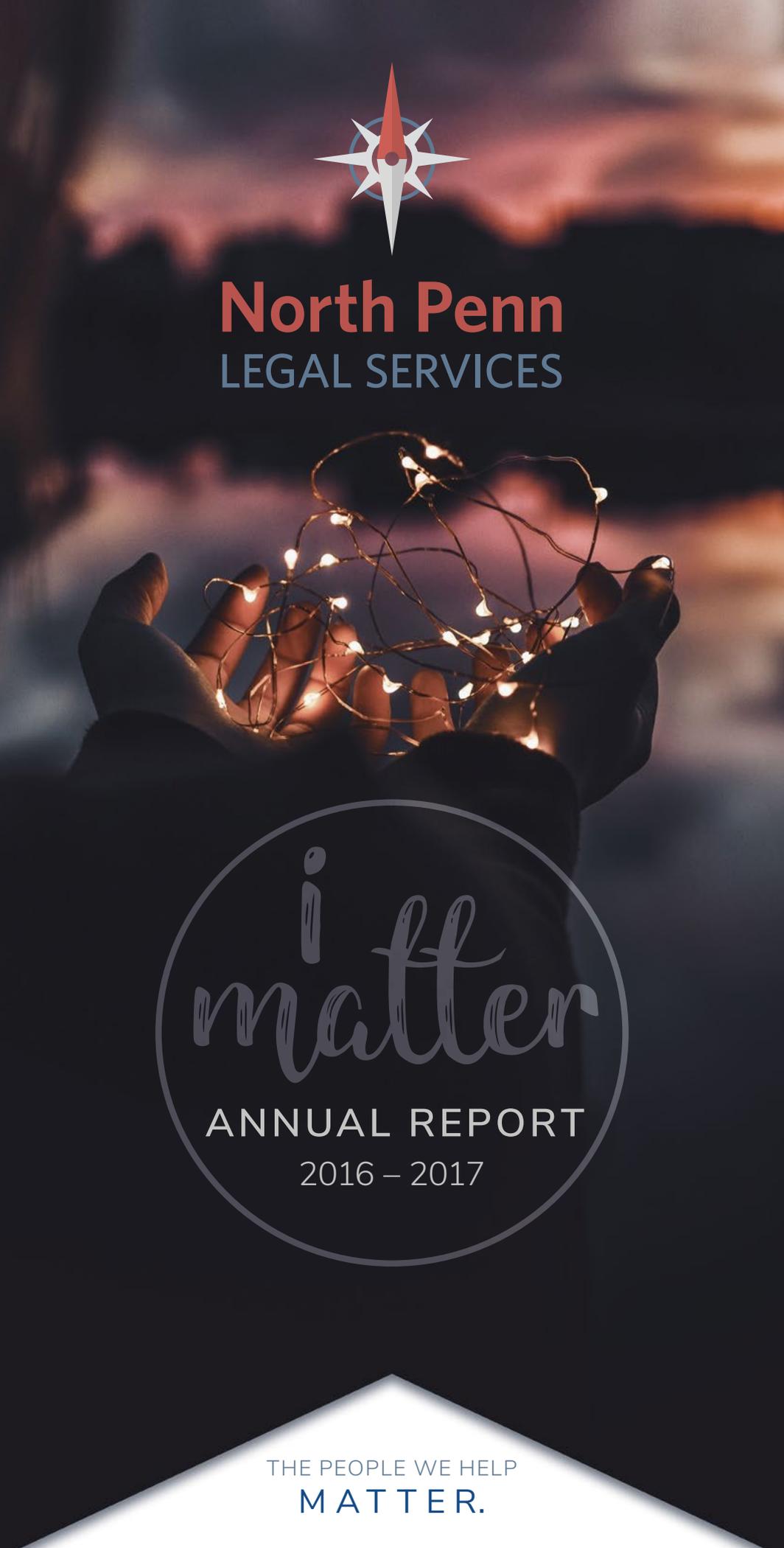




**North Penn**  
LEGAL SERVICES



*i*  
*matter*

ANNUAL REPORT

2016 – 2017

THE PEOPLE WE HELP  
**MATTER.**



For NPLS and the people we serve, “i matter” gets to the heart of our mission which is to provide civil legal representation to low-income people and ensure equal access to justice for ALL. For us, the “i” stands for individual and the message that each person is important and valued.

**We want the people we help to know that they matter!**

## WHAT WE DO

As a regional provider of civil legal aid for 52 years, North Penn Legal Services helps low-income people throughout 20 counties in Northeast Pennsylvania. NPLS has nine offices with a staff of 70, including 29 attorneys and 15 paralegals. The staff's goal is to provide access to the justice system. Services include individual representation, information and advice, community legal education, and support for those clients who take direct responsibility for handling some or all aspects of their legal problem.



# North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**326,439** – That’s the number of people within NPLS’ 20-county service area who meet our income guidelines and are potentially eligible for free legal help. The annual challenge to NPLS is a constant—how do we strategically evaluate and plan service delivery to ensure that direct legal aid and resources are available to as many people as possible within the vulnerable population we serve? Board and staff are charged with analyzing funding, expenses, population data, and other resources available to our clients in order to develop priorities that we can apply to calls for service. We all want to do everything for every applicant, but the demand is overwhelming. Look at the “Justice Gap” study—found here: [www.palegalaid.net/sites/default/files/TheJusticeGap-ExecutiveSummary.pdf](http://www.palegalaid.net/sites/default/files/TheJusticeGap-ExecutiveSummary.pdf). This report confirms what we know, which is that we turn away too many people. Data from Pennsylvania programs shows that we accept one out of every three clients who are eligible for service. These are just the people in that 326,439 number who call us. Many others who need help don’t reach out.

We need to do so much more, but at the same time, I’d like to focus on the fantastic work we have been able to do for clients who get in our door, because each of those individual clients matters and they are important to us. The stories in this report are real and compelling. Look at the data showing how much work we have done and the impact we have had in the communities we serve as we continue to broaden the scope of our services—and thus our systemic impact—by collaborating with hospitals and funders to form unique partnerships. We just finished a full year of our new Medical-Legal Partnership with Lehigh Valley Health Network, and almost a full year of our Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) project which serves domestic violence victims in the Lehigh Valley. These two innovative ventures have one thing in common—both engage the community and respond directly to an unmet client need. Clients who seek medical care at a local hospital experience a “warm handoff” from a health care provider to our legal advocates (lawyer and paralegal) whose office is just down the hall. Domestic violence victims with emergency family law needs receive a referral from Turning Point of Lehigh Valley to our advocates who have been specially trained in this area. The common denominator between the two projects is that they capture our clients when they are at their most vulnerable and in a way that we can partner with other providers to achieve the best possible outcome. These projects focus resources on individual clients to show them that they matter.

We also focused this year on reaching more clients by holding more clinics. In Stroudsburg and Pittston this form of education enabled us to serve clients who might have been turned away as “non-priority” cases. Clinics covered a variety of topics ranging from criminal records expungement, custody, housing, and consumer law. This delivery model is a good way to involve our local Bar Association partners and pro bono attorneys.

I encourage you to educate yourself on how access to justice works in your community. If we hear from you, it will help us to identify gaps in services, aid in the development of self-help materials, and become a better educated provider. We are committed to focusing our efforts on achieving the best possible results for our clients and by serving each individual with dignity and respect.



Victoria A. Coyle  
Executive Director



## LEGAL AID WORKS *In Northeast Pennsylvania*

### KEVIN

Kevin is a 49-year-old subsidized housing resident with disabilities which cause him to use a wheelchair. He contacted NPLS for assistance because he believed a stain in the carpet of his housing unit was making him ill. When we met Kevin, we learned that his apartment was not wheelchair accessible. He did not want to move as he loved his apartment, despite having extreme difficulties maneuvering and utilizing certain areas. He was unaware that he could ask for reasonable modifications and that it was not his obligation to pay for them in this instance. The landlord would be responsible for the cost associated with the modifications because the property was covered by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

After discussing with Kevin his specific needs, NPLS requested the Housing Provider make some reasonable modifications on his behalf: (1) replace the stove with a unit that had knobs on the front; (2) remove carpet and replace with linoleum flooring; (3) install a sidewalk from his back door to another sidewalk connected to the parking lot to assure a safe secondary exit for him; and (4) install a roll-in shower. The modifications were made and Kevin enjoys the dignity of being able to safely care for himself in his own home.

### MICHAEL

Michael, a veteran living in Luzerne County, contacted NPLS with a housing problem. The intercom in his building did not work and the manager disregarded Michael's request to fix it for three months. Michael needed a regular prescription to manage a significant health condition. The medication came from a pharmacy in another state. The faulty intercom system was a barrier to Michael receiving his medication as he could not be notified of a delivery. In one instance, the medication was actually sent back to the out-of-state pharmacy, as the shipping service could not deliver it without making contact with Michael.

An NPLS Staff Attorney contacted the landlord and arranged for the intercom to be repaired. Michael began to receive his medication without interruption. He lives with much less stress knowing that his medication will be delivered on time.

## JOHN

John, a senior in his early 60s, contacted NPLS because his home was up for tax sale and his personal property was scheduled for execution sale. He had borrowed money two years earlier to keep up with his basic living expenses and ended up with a judgment in collection. The levy would result in the sale of his personal belongings, including his car and his guitars, which were very important to him. John owned his house free and clear – worth \$100,000. He applied for a reverse mortgage and an equity line of credit. John was denied the credit because he always paid cash. With no credit history, John's ability to obtain a loan or significant amount of credit was difficult. His income comes from disability payments, which does not cover the yearly tax bill.

NPLS staff filed an emergency Chapter 13 bankruptcy as John's home was listed for sheriff's sale in one week. By filing the Chapter 13 bankruptcy, John was able to keep creditors at bay while he figured out the best option in his situation. He decided to sell his home and, with court permission, was able to pay off his debts and keep the proceeds. John now lives in a home that he can afford and was able to keep his personal belongings.



# PARTNERSHIPS IN THE COMMUNITY *Close the Justice Gap*



## IN 2017, NPLS STRENGTHENED ITS PARTNERSHIPS TO CLOSE THE JUSTICE GAP.

2017 marked the sixth year that our annual Raise a Glass to Justice event raised \$15,000 for legal aid.

More than 28,850 people visited NPLS' website last year. Visitors to northpennlegal.org accessed helpful information such as our newly revised Employment Handbook, Self-Help Handbook for Tenants, Family Law Handbook and custody videos.

The number of people who applied for services online more than doubled to 2,398.

The 2017 Fair Housing Summit was sold-out.

One of our attorneys in Williamsport served as the liaison to Lycoming County's Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion project.

NPLS' Hot Docs Developer launched the Legal Services Corporation-funded project, Divorce Tracker in 2017.

NPLS' Systems Administrator was recognized by the Legal Services Corporation for considerable improvements to our information technology, which have had a ripple effect throughout the organization.





## THE POWER OF *Pro Bono and Judicare\**

Total number of attorneys who provided case services:  
**124 PRO BONO AND 24 JUDICARE**

Total number of cases accepted:  
**239 PRO BONO AND 134 JUDICARE**

Top three main benefits for 375 cases:  
**① OBTAINED PROTECTIVE ORDERS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. ② PROVIDED INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION. ③ OBTAINED OR MAINTAINED CUSTODY OF CHILDREN.**



Total number of hours of services provided:  
**849 PRO BONO AND 600 JUDICARE**

Dollar value of pro bono services provided (valued at \$150/hour):  
**\$127,275**

Dollar value of Judicare services provided (valued at \$75/hour):  
**\$45,000**

*\*Cases referred to private lawyers where staff is not available to help.  
Lawyers are paid by NPLS.*



# FINANCIAL POSITION

Year ended June 30, 2017  
(with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2016)

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Cash & cash equivalents	\$1,333,742	\$1,204,825
Client escrow funds	4,337	915
Accounts receivable:		
PLAN	105,304	193,547
Other	302,898	256,596
Prepaid expenses	114,014	95,361
Property & equipment, net	65,443	85,894
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,925,738</b>	<b>\$1,837,138</b>

## LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

### LIABILITIES:

Accounts payable & accrued expenses	\$79,446	\$164,432
Bank overdraft	—	140,169
Accrued compensated absences	110,084	110,084
Client trust deposits	4,337	915
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>193,867</b>	<b>415,600</b>

### NET ASSETS:

Unrestricted	1,268,365	1,033,501
Temporarily Unrestricted	463,506	388,037
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>1,731,871</b>	<b>1,421,538</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,925,738</b>	<b>\$1,837,138</b>

	Unrestricted 2017	Temporarily Restricted 2017	TOTAL 2017	TOTAL 2016
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## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

### REVENUES & OTHER SUPPORT:

Contracts & grants	\$5,796,793	\$75,469	\$5,872,262	\$5,369,127
Contributions:				
In-kind	127,275	—	127,275	294,770
Other	68,411	—	68,411	108,567
Interest income	875	—	875	686
Other income	4,220	—	4,220	5,550
Net assets released from restrictions	—	—	—	—
<b>Total revenues &amp; other support</b>	<b>5,997,574</b>	<b>75,469</b>	<b>6,073,043</b>	<b>5,778,700</b>

### EXPENSES:

Program services	5,096,806	—	5,096,806	5,149,587
Management & general	636,283	—	636,283	648,666
Fundraising	29,621	—	29,621	17,316
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>5,762,710</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>5,762,710</b>	<b>5,815,569</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>234,864</b>	<b>75,469</b>	<b>310,333</b>	<b>(36,869)</b>

### NET ASSETS:

Beginning of year	1,033,501	388,037	1,421,538	1,458,407
<b>End of year</b>	<b>\$1,268,365</b>	<b>\$463,506</b>	<b>\$1,731,871</b>	<b>\$1,421,538</b>

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOW****2017****2016****CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:**

Change in net assets	\$310,333	(\$36,869)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash and cash equivalents provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	49,483	46,605
(Increase) decrease in:		
Accounts receivable	41,941	29,723
Prepaid expenses	(18,653)	(3,583)
Increase (decrease) in:		
Accounts payable & accrued expenses	(84,986)	71,715
Accrued compensated absences	—	162
Net cash & cash equivalents provided by operating activities	298,118	107,753

**CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:**

Purchases of equipment	(29,032)	—
Net cash & cash equivalents used in investing activities	(29,032)	—

**CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:**

Bank overdrafts	(140,169)	140,169
Net cash & cash equivalents provided by (used in) financing activities	(140,169)	140,169
Net Increase in cash & cash equivalents	128,917	247,922

**CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS:**

Beginning of year	1,204,825	956,903
End of year	<b>\$1,333,742</b>	<b>\$1,204,825</b>

	Program Services 2017	Management & General 2017	Fundraising 2017	TOTAL 2017	TOTAL 2016
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**STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES**

Salaries	\$3,009,854	\$367,355	\$12,997	\$3,390,206	\$3,541,760
Fringe benefits	996,027	127,405	4,974	1,128,406	1,122,207
Consultants & contractors	92,592	24,820	290	117,702	88,207
Travel	46,215	16,372	283	62,870	59,565
Space costs	361,169	44,866	1,840	407,875	388,686
Consumable supplies	97,132	15,021	509	112,662	63,555
Equipment repairs & maintenance	66,058	10,901	350	77,309	80,390
Donated services contract	—	—	—	—	68,300
Other	383,719	24,100	8,378	416,197	356,294
Depreciation	44,040	5,443	—	49,483	46,605
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$5,096,806</b>	<b>\$636,283</b>	<b>\$29,621</b>	<b>\$5,762,710</b>	<b>\$5,815,569</b>

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matter



\$3.4 MILLION

AWARDED TO OUR CLIENTS,  
PRIMARILY IN DISABILITY CASES IN 2016-2017

16,819

PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH DIRECT SERVICES

10,376

CASES HANDLED

7,736

CASES CLOSED

4,935

CLIENTS PROVIDED  
WITH COUNSEL & ADVICE  
OR LIMITED ACTION

3,113

PEOPLE WITH  
HOUSING ISSUES  
HELPED BY NPLS STAFF

1,761

CASES LITIGATED IN COURT

585

PROTECTION FROM ABUSE  
ORDERS OBTAINED

453

CUSTODY & VISITATION  
ORDERS OBTAINED

214

CASES LITIGATED IN ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS

2,398

ONLINE INTAKES RECEIVED, A MORE THAN  
100% INCREASE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR

125,719

ONLINE PAGE VIEWS OF NPLS' RESOURCE MATERIALS

239

PRO BONO CASES  
ACCEPTED BY 124  
PRIVATE ATTORNEYS

134

CASES ACCEPTED  
BY 24 JUDICARE  
ATTORNEYS

getting  
RESULTS



## LEGAL AID WORKS *In Northeast Pennsylvania*

### RACHEL

Rachel came to our Medical-Legal Partnership Project as she entered a period of upheaval in her life. She had just found the strength to tell her abusive husband to move out. When he left, she realized that he had not paid household bills for months. The day before she came to the MLP office, she received a shutoff notice from her electric company. She also received an IRS notice regarding a balance due for federal taxes. She was overwhelmed with worry: that her husband was still running up bills in her name, that she would lose her home, and that she had no income or savings. The MLP staff stopped her utility shutoff by obtaining a protection from abuse order for her. The PFA allowed her to get a clean slate on her utility bills, and gave her piece of mind about her husband. They filed a 90-day fraud alert with the three major credit agencies to prevent the husband from incurring more debt in Rachel's name. They advised her about what debt collectors can and can't do when pursuing an unpaid debt. They negotiated a payment extension with the county over the unpaid property taxes so that she could sell her home clear of a lien. They filed a Request for Relief as an Innocent Spouse with the IRS based on her husband's abuse and Rachel's own educational and financial limitations. As a result, she was held not responsible for the federal tax liability. Once she had less stress surrounding her family and financial affairs, Rachel transformed into a more independent and confident woman.

### CATHERINE

Catherine, a widow, was at risk of losing her pension when she was terminated from employment. She had worked for her employer for more than twenty years. She contacted NPLS for help and our staff attorney represented Catherine at her unemployment compensation hearing. The staff attorney was able to demonstrate that Catherine was wrongfully discharged from employment. This meant that Catherine received unemployment compensation benefits and retained her twenty-year pension.



## ANGELA

Angela, a single woman in her mid-50s, faced a rent increase of nearly 250% when she contacted NPLS for help. Angela paid \$250 a month in rent for a second floor apartment. Her friends lived downstairs on the first floor. Her friends planned to purchase the house but, at the last minute, the landlord refused to sell. Her friends moved out at the end of the month. The landlord texted Angela with the news that as of the first of the next month, her rent would be raised to \$400 and that she was responsible for a \$141 water bill. Angela went to the local municipality to pay the bill directly and found out that it was only \$41. The Landlord sent her another text stating that he would raise the rent the month after that to \$800—a total increase of \$550.

Angela did not have the income to pay the new monthly rent of \$800. Our pro bono attorney negotiated a smaller and more affordable monthly rental payment which meant she could stay in the apartment, which was conveniently close to her worksite.



# NORTH PENN LEGAL SERVICES

## Locations

### **BRADFORD & SUSQUEHANNA COUNTIES**

Towanda Office 213 Main Street, Ste. 1, Towanda, PA 18848

P: 877-515-7732 ♦ F: 570-534-0976

### **CARBON & LUZERNE COUNTIES**

Hazleton Office 101 W. Broad Street, Ste. 713, Hazleton, PA 18201

P: 570-455-9512 ♦ Toll Free: 877-515-7628 ♦ F: 570-455-3625

### **CLINTON, LYCOMING & TIOGA COUNTIES**

Williamsport Office 25 W. 3rd Street, Ste. 400, Williamsport, PA 17701

P: 570-323-8741 ♦ Toll Free: 800-326-7436 ♦ F: 570-323-5256

### **COLUMBIA & MONTOUR COUNTIES**

Bloomsburg Office 168 E. 5th Street, Bloomsburg, PA 17815-2206

P: 570-784-8760 ♦ Toll Free: 877-515-7079 ♦ F: 570-784-4840

### **LACKAWANNA, LUZERNE, SULLIVAN & WYOMING COUNTIES**

Pittston Office 33 N. Main Street, Ste. 200, Pittston, PA 18640

P: 570-299-4100 ♦ Toll Free: 855-236-6405 ♦ F: 570-824-0001

### **LEHIGH & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES**

Bethlehem Office 559 Main Street, Ste. 200, Bethlehem, PA 18018

P: 610-317-8757 ♦ F: 610-317-8778

### **MONROE & PIKE COUNTIES**

Stroudsburg Office 10 N. 10th Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

P: 570-424-5338 ♦ Toll Free: 800-532-8282 ♦ F: 570-754-8508

### **NORTHUMBERLAND, SNYDER & UNION COUNTIES**

Sunbury Office 133 N. 2nd Street, Sunbury, PA 17801

P: 570-286-5687 ♦ Toll Free: 877-515-7730 ♦ F: 570-286-2203

### **WAYNE COUNTY**

Honesdale Office

Wayne County Courthouse 925 Court Street, Honesdale, PA 18431

P: 877-515-7465 ♦ F: 570-754-8510

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*In Northeast Pennsylvania*

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**North Penn**  
LEGAL SERVICES



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