

NYLS 8/20/12 P.1

©2012 ALM MEDIA PROPERTIES, LLC.

142

Legal Services Provider Decides To Consolidate Brooklyn Outpost

BY ANDREW KESHNER AND JEFF STOREY

WITH FUNDING shrinking, Legal Services NYC has decided to consolidate four Brooklyn programs, a step that could have a major impact on the delivery of civil legal services to low-income people in the borough.

"We are in a dire financial situation and can no longer afford to have four separate programs in Brooklyn," said an outline of the proposed reorganization, which was approved Aug. 14 by the Legal Services' board only a month after the plan was released.

LSNYC, the country's largest exclusive provider of civil legal services, has a single program in each borough except Brooklyn, which had been divided up by zip code among Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services, Brooklyn Legal Services Corp. A, Legal Services NYC Brooklyn Branch and Southern Brooklyn Legal Services. Previous efforts to merge the programs had foundered on the rock of community opposition.

LSNYC says that the replacement of the independent programs with a single entity will save money by slashing duplication and improving efficiency. The group initially anticipated it would save \$1 million annually in a \$60 million budget by eliminating about 10 managers. At the same time, it hoped to preserve the jobs of 10 "advocates"—attorneys and paralegals.

Raun Rasmussen, the executive director of the organization, promised in an interview that services to clients would not be cut. Some Brooklyn residents would even be eligible to receive additional help if they had lived within the territory



Brooklyn Legal Services Corp. A has decided to remain an independent agency after Legal Services NYC merges its Brooklyn programs.

By the Numbers Legal Services NYC's Caseload for 2011

Program	Number Of Cases	Number Of Adults	Number Of Children	Total People Helped
Brooklyn A	1,781	2,872	2,337	5,209
Brooklyn Branch	1,322	2,002	1,349	3,351
Bed Stuy	1,041	1,569	820	2,389
South Brooklyn	5,132	8,774	4,378	13,152
ALL OF BROOKLYN				24,101

CITYWIDE	23,206	36,361	22,682	59,043
----------	--------	--------	--------	--------

SOURCE: LSNYC

of an agency that did not handle certain matters. "Every one of our offices will be offering a full range of services," he said.

However, the impact of the consolidation became complicated on

Aug. 9 when the board of Brooklyn Legal Services Corp. A in Williamsburg, East New York and Bushwick voted to have the group go its own way after more than 40 years as part of LSNYC.

» Page 2

Expert Counter -and-Frisk Testimony

HAMBLETT

NEW YORK CITY will be able to call on an expert to counter the testimony of a plaintiffs' expert in its action challenging the New York Police Department's stop-and-frisk policy.

Shira Scheindlin on Aug. 14 argued that Dennis Smith, an associate professor of public policy at the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Administration at New York University, is not allowed to critique some, but not all, of the analysis in the plaintiffs' testimony.

Co-Lawyer for Jeffrey Fagan, who is arguing the test in a lock-down case will hear



Judge Scheindlin

u. NYC, 08 Civ. 1034, where she has charged that the NYPD is committing widespread and systemic violations of the Fourth Amendment right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures and the 14th Amendment right to be free from discrimination based on race.

In April, Judge Scheindlin granted plaintiffs' motion to allow testimony of Fagan, who has argued that blacks and Hispanics are significantly more likely to be stopped and frisked than whites. He reached that conclusion after studying a database of 2.8 million NYPD worksheets documenting stops-and-frisks between 2004 and 2005.

Fagan was criticized by the city as an unqualified witness who used