

LEGAL AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES LIVING WITH HIV

The Bureau of Community Support Services oversees the Legal and Supportive Services for Individuals and Families Living with HIV (LASSIF) Initiative. Legal service programs are designed to provide comprehensive individual and family legal assistance including legal counsel and guidance in matters such as discrimination, hate crimes, entitlements, housing, health care, finance, and education. In addition, legal service providers will educate clients and provide active referrals for related services needed for the resolution of a legal issue. Legal services include preparation of wills, health care proxies and living wills. Family legal services focus on future care and custody, guardianship, standby guardianship, adoption and foster care for dependent children. Promotion of services is achieved through networking with case management and community-based health and human service providers serving PLWHIV/A. Legal service providers are required to establish collaborative working relationships with supportive service agencies and case management providers to address the issues that may impede individuals and families from completing legal plans.

Supportive services are intended to help families make care and custody decisions and enable the completion of necessary legal guardianship for the dependent children. Furthermore, supportive services address transition issues faced by new caregivers and children, and seek to stabilize the newly blended family following the death of an HIV-positive parent. Supportive services are not mental health services as defined by clinical practitioner guidelines. The short-term supportive services funded by this program may serve as a gateway to access other services for the family, such as mental health, case management and ongoing long-term supportive services.