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LEGAL SERVICES
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Fighting Poverty, Maintaining Dignity, Assuring Justice

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Free Civil Legal Services to Help Families Impacted by the Opioid Epidemic

The Center for Arkansas Legal Services (CALs) and Legal Aid of Arkansas have received a combined \$2 million in grant awards from the Health Resources and Services Administration to provide free legal services to families impacted by the opioid epidemic.

CALS and Legal Aid will launch 'Beyond Opioids – Breaking Legal Barriers for Families in Recovery', an initiative focused on the wide range of legal issues that can hinder a person's recovery. Beyond Opioids connects impacted individuals and families from rural areas with a free civil legal aid attorney. "This completes the loop for a holistic approach to client services by providing vital, statewide access to justice for individuals and families in recovery," said Lee Richardson, executive director for Legal Aid of Arkansas. The three-year project started on September 1 and will be providing direct legal services to the target population by the end of 2020.

At the heart of 'Beyond Opioids' is a statewide referral system composed of a network of community partners that provide treatment, recovery services, and prevention services. "The opioid patients that we treat, and opioid use disorder patients across the state, many of them have legal entanglements and would benefit greatly from the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid's assistance," said Dr. Michael J. Mancino, program director for the Center for Addiction Services and Treatment and professor at UAMS.

Project partners come from health, law enforcement, education, and state agencies. "Individuals recently released from prison face a number of hurdles to successfully re-enter society, including legal matters. Having a resource to refer the individuals to, under ACC supervision, for free legal assistance will be a great benefit to both the individuals and society as a whole," said Amber Schubert, general counsel, Arkansas Department of Corrections. This collaborative partnership addresses a justice gap by integrating legal support in Arkansas' prevention, treatment, and recovery strategy. "Connecting with our community partners is vital in reaching the individuals who need our assistance. These partnerships give Arkansans a chance for a successful progression from treatment, to recovery, to prevention, to helping reduce future substance abuse issues. Working with community partners is the key to fighting this

epidemic," said Jean Carter, executive director for the Center for Arkansas Legal Services.

Project partners include the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), Mid-South Health Systems, Inc. Affiliate of Arisa Health, Inc., Arkansas Department of Corrections - Division of Community Correction (ACC), Harbor House, Inc., ARVAC-Freedom House, Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care System (CAVHS), In His Wings Ministry, The Haven of Northeast AR, Inc., Breaking Bonds Ministries, Inc., Out of the Dark, Inc., Restoration House Ministries, Black River Area Development (BRAD), Committee Against Spouse Abuse, Inc. (CASA), Riverview Hope Campus, Arkansas Public Defenders Commission, Pulaski County Public Defender's Office.

To apply for civil legal assistance, call the Center for Arkansas Legal Service through the HelpLine at 501-376-3423 or call Legal Aid of Arkansas at 1-800-952-9243. For more information about 'Beyond Opioids-Breaking Legal Barriers for Families in Recovery', contact Helen Gratil, project director, at hgratil@arkansaslegalservices.org and (479) 326-7027.

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About the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas

There are only two organizations in Arkansas that provide free civil legal services, the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas. Together we serve all 75 counties in Arkansas. Find legal information and self-help forms at www.arlegalservices.org.

The Center for Arkansas Legal Services is a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income Arkansans with civil legal problems, including criminal record sealing, eviction defense, foreclosure prevention, consumer issues, housing, help for victims of domestic abuse, and representation in public benefits. To see if you qualify for legal assistance please call 501-376-3423 or visit www.ArkansasLegal.org.

Legal Aid is a nonprofit, public interest law firm that provides free legal services to low-income Arkansans with civil legal problems. To apply for assistance or for more information, call 1-800-952-9243 or visit www.arlegalaid.org.