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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***LEGAL AID WELCOMES FALL 2019 CRIMINAL DEFENSE  
PRACTICE CLASS***

(New York, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society** welcomed its fall 2019 Criminal Defense Practice (CDP) class yesterday, which includes 48 public defenders - graduates of law schools from around the country. After eight comprehensive weeks, the fall 2019 group will begin representing clients in the New York City Criminal Court, start work in Legal Aid’s Parole Revocation Unit, and join other teams across CDP. This class will also be the first to be trained and to practice the systemic changes to New York’s criminal discovery, bail, and speedy trial laws that become effective in January 2020.

Legal Aid’s intensive and holistic eight week training course includes a comprehensive overview of these new bail, discovery and speedy trial provisions, intensive workshops on the rules of evidence, effective cross examination and creative defense trial strategies; introduction to investigative techniques through shadow days with Legal Aid’s investigators and other staff; effective strategies for confronting racial inequities and pursuing racial justice; panel conversations with former Legal Aid clients; and field trips to arraignment court and Legal Aid’s borough offices.

“We are excited to welcome our newest public defender colleagues to The Legal Aid Society,” said **Tina Luongo, Attorney-In-Charge of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “Public Defenders are critical to justice and are often the only people standing up unequivocally for clients. I am so proud to welcome them to our organization and look forward to the incredible advocacy and litigation they will provide our clients.”

“This class is unique because it begins just weeks before sweeping changes to New York’s pretrial laws take effect,” said **Peter Mitchell, Director of Training for the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “This is an exciting time for public defenders in New York State, especially with these transformational reforms that will help secure justice and fairness for our clients in a system that has always been unbalanced.”

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>*