



Legal Aid, Empire Justice Center, NYLAG, and Legal Services NYC Reimagines “Fair Hearing Help NY” Website, Offers Free Legal Resources for New Yorkers Navigating Government Benefit Hearings

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(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society, Empire Justice Center, New York Legal Assistance Group, and Legal Services NYC**, in partnership with **Columbia Law School’s Lawyering in the Digital Age Clinic**, have re-launched [Fair Hearing Help NY](#), a free, virtual legal resource for New Yorkers who are representing themselves at an administrative hearing with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). The new website will be hosted on [Empire Justice’s website](#), which is equipped to help people find and use the website via updated Google Analytics tools and Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Additionally, the redesigned website features simpler navigation, a Q&A section to guide users through the process, and accessibility features such as easier readability.

In June 2023, Fair Hearing Help NY launched to assist those whose benefits, such as SNAP benefits, are reduced, discontinued, or their application is denied and make the request for a Fair Hearing more accessible and less intimidating process. The website helps New Yorkers who are representing themselves in a Fair Hearing navigate the complex process of administrative legal hearings and offers information to allow them to more confidently participate in their Fair Hearings and exercise their due process rights.

Empire Justice Center is thrilled to host the relaunch of the Fair Hearing Help NY website which provides those representing themselves with access to free legal resources to navigate the Fair Hearing process,” **said Susan Antos, Managing Attorney of Empire Justice Center’s Public Benefits Unit**. “Fair hearings are appeals to administrative judges at the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to challenge the decision of a Social Services’ district to deny, discontinue or improperly calculate a person’s public benefits – such as food assistance, shelter, and access to medical care. The Fair Hearing Help NY website provides New Yorkers with the dignity and confidence to walk through this often emotional and vulnerable moment in their lives with ease and success.”

“By relaunching the Fair Hearing Help NY website with our legal services partners, more New Yorkers can more confidently seek and represent themselves in administrative fair hearings that could ultimately lead them to secure vital public benefits,” said **Abby Biberman, Associate Director of New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)’s Public Benefits Unit**. “Individuals and families who have disabilities, experience poverty, or face food or housing insecurity can more easily and effectively represent themselves in these fair hearings, particularly while they attempt to navigate the arcane process of securing and maintaining cash assistance and SNAP benefits without a lawyer by their side. This simple-to-navigate version of Fair Hearing Help NY breaks down a huge barrier to justice by putting free and trusted legal information into New Yorkers’ hands.”

Anne Callagy, Director of the Government Benefits Practice at The Legal Aid Society, said: “Everyone deserves a fair opportunity to access the benefits they are entitled to. Fair Hearing Help NY helps put that power in New Yorkers’ hands by making a complex legal process easier to understand and navigate. We are proud to partner with Empire Justice Center, NYLAG, Columbia Law School and Legal Services NYC-Bronx on this effort.”

"As New Yorkers face sweeping changes to SNAP benefits, Cash Assistance, and other public benefits, fair hearings are more important than ever, giving New Yorkers a way to challenge benefit denials, reductions, and terminations made in error and to ensure agencies are applying complex new rules correctly," said **Jack Newton, Director of the Public Benefits Unit in Legal Services NYC's Bronx office.** "Legal Services NYC is proud to partner on the new, streamlined Fair Hearing Help NY website, which gives New Yorkers the tools and resources they need to navigate fair hearings and access the benefits they need to survive."

The re-launched Fair Hearing Help NY free legal resource website can be accessed on the Empire Justice Center's website at www.empirejustice.org/fair-hearing-help-ny or by www.fairhearinghelpny.org.

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The Legal Aid Society

The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit law firm that exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For 150 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. www.legalaidnyc.org

Empire Justice Center

*[Empire Justice Center](http://www.empirejustice.org) is a statewide nonprofit law firm whose mission is to make the law work for all New Yorkers, particularly for those who need its protection most. We take a 360-degree, comprehensive approach to changing systems by engaging in three major and interconnected areas of service. We **teach the law** by providing training, support and technical assistance to legal services and other community-based organizations; we **practice the law** by providing direct, civil legal assistance to low-income people with a particular focus on those from marginalized communities; and we **change the law** by engaging in policy analysis, research and advocacy and undertaking impact litigation to get at the root of systemic issues.*

New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)

Founded in 1990, [New York Legal Assistance Group \(NYLAG\)](http://www.nylag.org) is a leading civil legal services organization combating economic, racial and social injustice by advocating for people experiencing poverty or in crisis. Our services include comprehensive, free civil legal services, financial empowerment, impact litigation, policy advocacy, and community partnerships. Prioritizing client-centered, trauma-informed and community-rooted programming, NYLAG worked at more than 200 community sites and impacted the lives of more than 127,000 people last year.

Legal

Services

NYC

Legal Services NYC fights poverty and advances racial, social and economic justice for low-income New Yorkers. For more than 50 years, the organization has challenged systemic inequities and helped clients secure housing, income and economic stability, family and immigration support, education and healthcare. Legal Services NYC works to ensure all New Yorkers have access to the resources and protections they need to thrive.