

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

EVELYN PADIN

Volunteer Today to be a Part of NJSBA Law Day Events



As I stood on the auditorium stage of Union City High School in May, looking out at the crowd of city residents still in their work clothes, their children in tow, I was moved by the number of people who came out on a weeknight

to get free legal advice. Even in the moments before the program began, I knew that the New Jersey State Bar Association (NJSBA) had to hold more of these events.

That Union City Law Day brought together dozens of volunteer lawyers to provide free consultations to hundreds of residents.

One woman asked how she could ensure her landlord wouldn't keep her security deposit.

A man wanted to know how he could get a green card, now that he had married an American.

The line at tables where volunteers offered information about the immigration process was 20-people deep.

That event, which was a partnership between the NJSBA, law enforcement, school officials, municipal leaders, elected officials and other bar groups, provided residents with an opportunity to get free guidance from volunteer attorneys in a number of practice areas.

This is important work, and the New Jersey legal community is uniquely prepared to help. We are here to help the community and serve as a critical resource for information and guidance.

It is my pleasure to announce that the NJSBA will offer these programs in disadvantaged communities around the state, starting this month. The first will be held later this month—on Oct. 26—in Passaic, in conjunction with a local nonprofit event aimed at providing the community with information about immigration issues. We are excited to

partner with bar groups and legal services organizations around the state for this event.

Law Days will also be held in Elizabeth in January, and in March in Camden. All NJSBA members and our colleagues in the legal community are welcome to join in this important work.

At each, we aim to recruit a team of attorneys and interpreters to offer people the opportunity to sit one-on-one with an attorney to discuss issues like immigration, guardianship

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for children, landlord-tenant matters, municipal court issues, divorce, domestic violence restraining orders, and criminal law matters.

These Law Days are the embodiment of how the NJSBA and the entire legal community work together to fulfill the mission of ensuring the public understands the rule of law and has access to the justice system. This is a way to give residents a voice and give people who wouldn't otherwise have a chance to meet with an attorney the opportunity to receive guidance to solve their problems and improve their lives.

I encourage you to join us and volunteer at a Law Day. Help bolster the faith and trust our communities have in the legal system by writing to askthenjsba@njsba.com to sign up.

Trust me when I tell you that if you take part, you will walk away exhilarated by the contribution you have made to improve people's lives. I know I did. ☺