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BEST PRACTICES IN UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION APPEALS

Pleading Standards After *Iqbal* and *Twombly*

Low-Income LGBT Clients

Health Care, Housing, and Estate Planning for LGBT Older Adults

Applying the Problem-Solving Practice Model in Legal Services

Assigned Consumer Debts

Right to Counsel in Civil Cases

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing



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Recognizing and Responding to the Needs of Low-Income Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Clients

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Legal services for low-income lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people have changed markedly in the last twenty years. Expanding legal protections have increased opportunities for attorneys to make a positive difference in the lives of LGBT people. New programs are now providing direct legal services to low-income LGBT people.

Here we deepen practitioners' knowledge about LGBT client communities and equip attorneys with information, skills, and strategies to ensure that their offices are providing the best possible LGBT-related legal assistance. We discuss the need for affordable LGBT-related legal services, explain the historical pressures on legal aid organizations to reduce services to LGBT people and the current trend among organizations to increase these services, and suggest practice tips for attorneys and legal aid organizations to improve their advocacy for LGBT clients.

Recognizing the Need for LGBT-Related Legal Aid

A serious challenge in improving legal services for LGBT people is raising awareness about poverty in LGBT populations. A widespread stereotype is that LGBT people are predominantly wealthy. This leads to the mistaken assumption that most or all LGBT people have the financial resources to hire private attorneys and that low- and no-cost legal services for LGBT people are unnecessary. In fact, the poverty rates for LGBT groups are comparable or higher than those for non-LGBT people. Moreover, to attain the legal protections and advantages that married couples enjoy, same-sex couples often must hire attorneys to advise them on financial, estate, and health care planning, which can cost thousands of dollars.¹ LGBT people are liable to be harassed or discriminated against at work, not to mention having difficulties in securing a job, negatively affecting their income and benefits.

¹See, e.g., Rex W. Huppke, "Marriage" Benefits Costly for Gay Couples, CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Jan. 18, 2010, at 1 (main section).

Poverty in LGBT Communities. The myth that LGBT people are affluent is undermined by their common experiences. LGBT people often suffer employment discrimination because of homophobia and transphobia and consequently have difficulty earning a livelihood and accessing health care insurance. Same-sex couples who cannot marry cannot benefit from the legal financial protections available to married couples. LGBT people who are estranged from their families of origin often are more economically vulnerable because they lack family support.²

A groundbreaking study of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community by the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law indicates that “poverty is at least as common in the [lesbian, gay, and bisexual] population as among heterosexual people and their families.”³ According to the study, national data show higher rates of poverty for lesbian and bisexual women than for heterosexual women, and roughly equal poverty rates for gay and bisexual men and for heterosexual men.⁴ Citing 2000 census data, the report states that “[p]overty rates for people in same-sex couples are comparable to or higher than rates for married couples.”⁵ Certain subsets of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual population have even greater economic challenges, the study shows. Same-sex couples in rural areas are twice as likely to live in poverty as same-sex couples in urban areas and are “poorer than different-sex married couples who live in rural areas.”⁶ African Americans in same-sex couples have

poverty rates that are significantly higher than both African American different-sex married couples and white same-sex couples.⁷ Latino and Latina same-sex parents have fewer financial resources to raise their children than do different-sex married couples.⁸

A recent study commissioned by the Transgender Law Center indicates that transgender people deal with profound economic challenges. Transgender people who responded to the center’s survey were “twice as likely to live below the poverty line as a member of the general population.”⁹ Homelessness is also a serious issue, according to the report: “One in five respondents indicated that they have been homeless at some point since identifying as transgender.”¹⁰

These data show that many LGBT people’s economic reality is significantly more challenging than widely believed to be. LGBT individuals who struggle with poverty have few resources to pay for a private attorney. Legal aid is the sole safety net for many low-income LGBT people, whose particular vulnerabilities are due to their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Common Legal Difficulties that LGBT People Encounter. LGBT people confront unique challenges in many areas of law. In family law LGBT people encounter difficulties in securing their rights as legal parents. For example, almost all states have laws that prohibit stripping LGBT people of custody of children from previous different-sex relationships merely

²See Randy Albelda et al., *Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community* (2009), www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/pdf/LGBPovertyReport.pdf.

³*Id.* at i.

⁴*Id.* at ii.

⁵*Id.* (citing U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, UNITED STATES CENSUS 2000 (2001)).

⁶*Id.*

⁷*Id.*

⁸Christopher Ramos & Gary J. Gates, Williams Institute, *Census Snapshot: California’s Latino/Latina LGB Population* (2008), <http://bit.ly/5BjVt3>.

⁹Transgender Law Center, *The State of Transgender California 6* (2009), <http://bit.ly/1xJxp>.

¹⁰*Id.* at 13.

because of the parent's sexual orientation or gender identity.¹¹ Nevertheless, many non-LGBT spouses seek custody of their children on the grounds that their LGBT spouses' sexual orientation or gender identity makes them unfit parents. Many LGBT people raising children are not the biological or adoptive parents of those children. All nonbiological parents should seek to adopt their children, if possible, to ensure that all states and the federal government recognize their parental rights.¹²

LGBT people often cannot obtain legal recognition of their relationships because most states do not recognize same-sex relationships. Many same-sex couples who break up cannot seek support or equitable property division. Even in states that allow same-sex partners to marry or enter into a domestic partnership or civil union, the federal government does not recognize same-sex

partners for purposes of federal tax law, immigration law, federal entitlement programs such as social security, Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans' benefits, or other federal programs.¹³ Transgender people may also be unable to receive transgender-related health care through Medicaid or Medicare.

LGBT people are also more likely than non-LGBT people to be harassed or discriminated against at work. Some states have antidiscrimination laws that protect LGBT people, but most do not.¹⁴ The U.S. Supreme Court and lower courts recognize that discrimination on the basis of gender nonconformity or transgender status is a form of sex discrimination in violation of federal law.¹⁵ At writing, Congress is considering federal legislation that would clearly prohibit harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment.¹⁶

¹¹*In re Marriage of R.S.*, 677 N.E.2d 1297, 1301–2 (Ill. App. Ct. 1996) (parent's sexual orientation alone cannot be basis for change in custody; numerous other states have adopted similar rule). See also, e.g., *Jacoby v. Jacoby*, 763 So. 2d 410, 413 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 2000) ("For a court to properly consider conduct such as [a parent's] sexual orientation on the issue of custody, the conduct must have a direct effect or impact upon the children."); *Fox v. Fox*, 904 P.2d 66, 70 (Okla. 1995) (possibility that child may experience "community members' disapproval" in future because of mother's sexual orientation cannot be basis for modification of custody); *Birdsall v. Birdsall*, 197 Cal. App. 3d 1024, 1031 (1988) ("The unconventional lifestyle of one parent, or the opposing moral positions of the parties ... do not provide adequate basis for restricting visitation rights. Evidence of one parent's homosexuality, without a link to detriment to the child, is insufficient to constitute harm."); *Christian v. Randall*, 516 P.2d 132, 134 (Colo. Ct. App. 1973) (trial court erred by modifying custody solely based on transgender parent's gender transition).

¹²Adoption may also place economic strain on a couple. One same-sex couple reported that for one partner to adopt the child of the other partner cost them \$2,000 (see Hupke, *supra* note 1, at 8).

¹³Federal Defense of Marriage Act, 1 U.S.C.A. § 7 (under federal law "the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife").

¹⁴Twelve states and Washington D.C. have laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (see, e.g., California (CAL. GOV'T CODE §§ 12926, 12949 (since 2003), and 12920 (since 2001)); Colorado (COLO. REV. STAT. §§ 24-34-401, 24-34-402 (since 2007)); Maine (ME. REV. STAT. ANN. tit. 5 §§ 4571–76, 4581–83, 4591–54F (since 2005)); Minnesota (MINN. STAT. §§ 363A.01–363A.41 (since 2004)); Rhode Island (R.I. GEN. LAWS §§ 28-5-3, 28-5-7, 34-37-4 (since 2001))). Nine states have laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation (see, e.g., Connecticut (CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46a-81c–m (since 1991)); Delaware (DEL. CODE ANN. tit. 6, § 4501-04 (since 2009)); Wisconsin (WIS. STAT. §§ 36.12, 106.50, 106.52 (2002))).

¹⁵See, e.g., *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins*, 490 U.S. 228 (1989) (harassment directed at person because that person does not conform to traditional sex stereotypes is form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII); *Nichols v. Azteca Restaurant Enterprises*, 256 F.3d 864, 874–75 (9th Cir. 2001) (harassment "based upon the perception that [the plaintiff] is effeminate" is harassment because of sex, in violation of Title VII and Washington Law Against Discrimination.); *Schwenk v. Hartford*, 204 F.3d 1187, 1202 (9th Cir. 2000) (in case involving transgender plaintiff, court noted that Title VII prohibits "[d]iscrimination because one fails to act in the way expected of a man or woman"); *Medina v. Income Support Division*, 413 F.3d 1131, 1135 (10th Cir. 2005) (noting that Third Circuit held that "a plaintiff may satisfy her evidentiary burden [of demonstrating discrimination because of sex] by showing that the harasser was acting to punish the plaintiff's noncompliance with gender stereotypes," citing *Bibby v. Philadelphia Coca Cola Bottling Company*, 260 F.3d 257 (3d Cir. 2001)); *Barnes v. City of Cincinnati*, 401 F.3d 729 (6th Cir. 2005) (being transsexual does not exclude person from protection from gender-stereotyping discrimination). At the same time courts have been reluctant to interpret Title VII to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation (see, e.g., *Mowery v. Escambia County Utilities Authority*, Case No. 3:04-cv-382, 2006 WL 327965 (N.D. Fla. 2006)).

¹⁶The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, H.R. 3017, 111th Cong. (2009) would provide basic protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Congress is also considering other critical legislation, including the Respect for Marriage Act, H.R. 3567, 111th Cong. (2009), which would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act to ensure the rights of all lawfully married same-sex couples, and the Uniting American Families Act, S. 424, 111th Cong. (2009), which would allow for U.S. citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their same-sex partners for family-based immigration.

These vulnerabilities heighten the need for legal counsel to protect the interests of LGBT individuals. In particular, legal aid attorneys are vital in protecting the interests of low-income LGBT people and their families.

Legal Aid and LGBT Issues

In the 1980s legal aid organizations were pressured to curb services to LGBT people. Georgia Rep. Lawrence P. McDonald and other members of Congress made repeated efforts to deny LGBT people access to federally funded legal aid.¹⁷ An amendment sponsored by Representative McDonald in 1981 would have prohibited federally funded legal assistance to “promote, defend, or protect homosexuality.”¹⁸

Although the McDonald amendment never won congressional approval, the support it engendered pressured legal services organizations to distance themselves from LGBT people and related advocacy. One of the key arguments in the battle against the amendment was that legal aid groups did not provide many services to gay clients or, at most, provided only minimal assistance where sexual orientation was actually relevant.¹⁹ The hostile political environment in which the Reagan administration sought to abolish legal aid in turn politicized legal services’ advocacy on behalf of LGBT clients and kept a key leader in the closet. Dan Bradley, president of the Legal Services Corporation during the fiercest

battles over federal funding, remained in the closet about his gay identity. Bradley feared that political opponents would use his sexual orientation to attack legal aid further.²⁰

During the 1980s, meanwhile, the need for legal services in the LGBT community grew. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people’s criminalization, then sanctioned by the Supreme Court, meant that many parents might lose custody of, and visitation rights with, their children.²¹ An increasing number of gay men were poverty-stricken as a result of HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome) and encountered pernicious discrimination and a myriad of related legal difficulties.

Despite these pressures, legal aid attorneys have been the primary providers of legal services to low-income LGBT people for decades. In recent years legal aid organizations throughout the country have launched new programs focused on serving low-income LGBT clients. These programs serve urban, suburban, and rural LGBT communities and address a range of substantive legal issues. For example, Bay Area Legal Aid, a legal services group in California, helps low-income LGBT parents and their children on issues of family law. In Michigan Lakeshore Legal Aid delivers services and operates a resource center for LGBT victims of domestic violence. California Rural Legal Assistance maintains an ambitious program to serve low-income LGBT people,

¹⁷H. Amend. 52 to Legal Services Corporation Act Amendments of 1981, H.R. 3480, 97th Cong. (offered June 17, 1981) (sponsored by Rep. Lawrence P. McDonald (D-Ga.); H.R. 3955, 97th Cong. (1981) (“A bill to strengthen the American family and to promote virtues of family life through education, tax assistance, and related measures”) (cosponsored by Rep. Lawrence P. McDonald).

¹⁸H. Amend. 52 to H.R. 3480, 97th Cong. (1981).

¹⁹STEVE ENDEAN, BRINGING LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS INTO THE MAINSTREAM: 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS 253 (Vicki L. Eaklor ed., 2006).

²⁰Richard Pearson, *Dan Bradley Dies: Activist for Gay Rights*, WASHINGTON POST, Jan. 10, 1988, at D7.

²¹Throughout the 1980s several states had statutes criminalizing sodomy (see, e.g., TEX. PENAL CODE § 21.06 (criminalizing “deviate sexual intercourse with another individual of the same sex”); VA. CODE ANN. § 18.2-361; MO. REV. STAT. § 566.090). Antisodomy laws, even those that purported to bar sodomy between same-sex and different-sex couples, reflected antigay attitudes (WILLIAM N. ESKRIDGE JR. & NAN D. HUNTER, *SEXUALITY, GENDER AND THE LAW* 45 (2d ed. 2003)). The U.S. Supreme Court in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186 (1986), upheld the constitutionality of antisodomy laws. Parents who were gay and lesbian risked losing custody and visitation rights due to the criminalization of conduct related to their sexual orientation (see, e.g., *Ex parte D.W.W.*, 717 So. 2d 793, 796 (Ala. 1998) (“Even without this evidence that the children have been adversely affected by their mother’s [same-sex] relationship, the trial court would have been justified in restricting R.W.’s visitation, in order to limit the children’s exposure to their mother’s lesbian lifestyle.... [T]he conduct inherent in lesbianism is illegal in Alabama.”); *Bottoms v. Bottoms*, 457 S.E.2d 102, 108 (Va. 1995) (reinstating trial court’s decision to transfer custody of child from his mother to his grandmother, relying in part on state’s law criminalizing sodomy)).

particularly in the area of employment discrimination.²² Other groups, including the Silvia Rivera Law Project in New York City, Equality Advocates Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts Transgender Legal Advocates, have been formed specifically to perform direct legal services to low-income LGBT people.²³

LGBT legal organizations recognize that legal aid groups are indispensable partners in ensuring that recent advances in civil rights improve the everyday lives of LGBT people. Several organizations—including Equality Advocates Pennsylvania, Lambda Legal, Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, the American Civil Liberties Union LGBT Project, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and the National LGBT Bar Association—have committed resources to training the legal aid bar, publishing online guides, and providing technical assistance to attorneys representing LGBT clients. Some organizations such as the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Sacramento Gay and Lesbian Center have launched strategic partnerships with legal aid groups to boost the groups' overall ability to serve LGBT clients.

Practice Tips for Working with LGBT Clients

To advocate on behalf of LGBT clients, legal aid attorneys need to reach out to the LGBT community, become knowledgeable about the problems of LGBT people, and stay on top of the rapidly changing laws affecting LGBT people. Legal aid offices seeking to help LGBT people must communicate to the LGBT community that they are available and willing to help. How can advocates build the trust of potential LGBT clients and the LGBT community?

How can advocates publicize their services to the LGBT community? And how can advocates partner with LGBT organizations to enhance their representation of LGBT clients?

Establish Effective Client-Attorney Relationships. Legal aid attorneys must understand basic LGBT-related terminology and concepts before they can begin to build trust and open communication with LGBT clients. Fluency in these terms can improve understanding and increase an attorney's overall confidence in handling LGBT-related legal matters. Legal aid attorneys must also pay attention to how they present themselves and their offices to LGBT people.

Know the ABCs of LGBT. An umbrella term, LGBT includes many types of people. Like many sectors of society, LGBT people have adopted different words over the years to self-identify as individuals and as a community. For lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, older terms such as "homosexual" have been discarded because they carry negative connotations from an era when same-sex attraction was considered a mental illness, and gay and lesbian people were persecuted. Now the preferred terms for many are "lesbian," "gay," and "bisexual." "Transgender" refers to anyone whose behavior, appearance, or identity falls outside typical gender stereotypes. The term can include transsexual people, cross-dressers, transvestites, drag queens, and people who are gender nonconforming.²⁴ However, not all people who are gender nonconforming identify themselves as transgender.

Overall the terms "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," and "transgender" reflect two key ideas—sexual orientation and gender

²²Examples of other legal aid programs targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are LGBT Law Project at New York Legal Assistance Group; regular clinics staffed by Legal Services of Northern California at the Sacramento Gay and Lesbian Center; monthly clinics offered by Qlaw Foundation and King County Bar Association Neighborhood Legal Clinic Program in Seattle, Washington; Sanctuary for Families LGBT Initiative in New York City; and the Legal Aid Service of Broward County Human Rights Initiative. A number of law student clinics have also been formed, such as the Harvard Law School Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Clinic and the S.J. Quinney College of Law Pro Bono Initiative Clinic in partnership with Utah Pride Center and the OutLaws in Salt Lake City, Utah.

²³Other LGBT organizations providing free direct services or clinics are the legal services department of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center; the Transgender Law Center in San Francisco, California; the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of Colorado's Legal and Advocacy Program; the Center on Halsted in Chicago, Illinois; and the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York City.

²⁴See, e.g., Shannon Minter, *The Transgender Umbrella: One View*, in TRANSGENDER LAW CENTER, CALIFORNIA TRANSGENDER LAW 101: A REFERENCE GUIDE FOR CALIFORNIA LAWYERS AND ADVOCATES 89 (2006), www.transgenderlawcenter.org/pdf/ca_trans_law_101.pdf.

identity. Sexual orientation is a person's emotional and physical attraction to other people based on the gender of the other person. One may identify one's sexual orientation as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Gender identity refers to a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being male or female (or both or neither). Understand that sexual orientation differs from gender identity. Not all transgender individuals identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and they often identify themselves as heterosexual. Not all gay, lesbian, and bisexual people have gender-nonconforming characteristics.

While "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," and "transgender" are the most commonly used terms, individuals who may seem to meet these definitions may not identify themselves in these precise terms. The terminology continues to evolve. Advocates must avoid assuming that one does or does not identify oneself as LGBT, and advocates must respect how individuals choose to self-identify.

Use Inclusive Language. Using inclusive language that does not assume the gender of a client or the client's significant other sends a message that talking about one's sexual orientation or gender identity is safe. For example, many legal aid offices inquire about household information during intake. Ask "Are you in a relationship?" instead of "Do you have a boyfriend?"²⁵ Use this language with all clients, not just clients who "look" like they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. There is no way to know by looking at someone whether that someone is LGBT. For example, a masculine, gender-conforming man may be gay or bisexual.

Make Your Office LGBT Friendly. As with low-income clients generally, many LGBT people have had negative experiences with the legal system. LGBT people often assume that a law office is unfriend-

ly to LGBT people until it is clearly indicated otherwise. Use visual cues to show that your office is a safe and welcoming place for LGBT people. Put up posters or stickers that have positive messages about LGBT people and include display materials specifically for LGBT people.

Staff Should Attend Cultural Competency Training. Advocates advising LGBT clients must understand LGBT people and their problems. Ideally this means that attorneys and staff members receive cultural competency training.²⁶ If such training is not available, attorneys and staff members can visit educational websites, read articles and books, or watch movies with positive portrayals of LGBT people. All staff members, including front-desk and intake workers, should receive appropriate training. LGBT clients who have a negative experience with their first point of contact may be deterred from continuing to seek assistance. Attorneys and staff members can help create a welcoming space for LGBT clients by using terms and language that do not assume the gender of the client or the client's significant other.

Reach Out to LGBT Communities. Legal aid organizations should ensure that LGBT communities are aware of legal aid offices and legal rights. Legal aid offices can spread the word that they are available to help LGBT people by distributing information throughout the community, partnering with local LGBT advocacy groups, and using the media.

Distribute Information About Rights. LGBT legal rights are rapidly changing, making it difficult for LGBT people to know what their rights are. A legal aid organization can distribute to the community and advocacy groups an office flyer with contact information or copies of publications that are available online through national LGBT advocacy groups. The National Center for Lesbian Rights, for example, offers a resource kit of brochures

²⁵Asking whether someone is married may be a relevant legal question.

²⁶"Cultural and linguistic competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations" (Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, What Is Cultural Competency (2005), <http://bit.ly/aiMRni>). One organization that conducts training on LGBT issues is Out and Equal Workplace Advocates, a national organization supporting the LGBT community in the workplace (www.outandequal.org).

and handouts. Posting LGBT-related legal information on your website may also be helpful.

Partner with Local Groups and Organizations. Legal aid attorneys may start partnering by meeting with local LGBT groups and community leaders to let them know that the attorneys are willing and able to assist in LGBT-related legal matters. These meetings are opportunities to publicize legal services, both LGBT- and non-LGBT-related, and to learn about LGBT people's local legal challenges. Some cities and towns have LGBT community centers that house many programs and groups. One national organization with hundreds of chapters throughout the country is Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Organizations serving those with HIV/AIDS may also be useful contacts in reaching LGBT communities. Local LGBT events such as pride festivals are ways for legal aid groups to publicize their services and educate the community about LGBT-related legal rights.

Use the Media. The media can be a tool for educating large audiences about LGBT rights and related legal aid. When working with the media, advocates must prepare key messages in advance and evaluate whether the interviewer will fairly and accurately handle the topic.

Know the Law. LGBT people's numerous legal difficulties stem from their sexual orientation or gender identity. The laws affecting LGBT people are complicated and constantly changing.

Partner with LGBT Legal Organizations. Since substantive laws affecting LGBT people are ever changing, LGBT legal organizations can help steer legal aid attorneys through those laws.²⁷ LGBT legal organizations can quickly relay key cases, statutes, or arguments for use in tackling issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity. Aside from their online publications explaining LGBT legal is-

ssues, LGBT legal organizations offer continuing legal education training on these issues.²⁸

Be Prepared. Expect to respond to hostile attitudes and irrelevant arguments. LGBT clients encounter hostility from the legal system even if their cases do not relate directly to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Because arguments based on sexual orientation or gender identity may be successful even when your client has an otherwise strong case, be prepared to respond to those arguments even if they appear to be irrelevant.



LGBT communities across the country have become increasingly visible, and the number of laws protecting LGBT people and their families has grown. Although resources may be limited, legal aid organizations can adopt cost-effective measures to improve advocacy on behalf of LGBT people. National LGBT legal groups offer free online publications, legal training, and technical assistance. LGBT people have a significant presence in low-income communities, and legal aid groups equipped to respond to LGBT clients' difficulties are in a better position to provide universal access to justice for poor communities.

The National LGBT Legal Aid Forum

is a new e-mail list (commonly known as a listserv) dedicated to improving legal services for low-income lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) clients. Legal aid advocates who are committed to advocating on behalf of LGBT people and their families, and attorneys from national, state, and regional LGBT legal organizations are invited to apply for membership at www.nclrights.org/LGBTlegalaid.

COMMENTS?

We invite you to fill out the comment form at www.povertylaw.org/reviewsurvey. Thank you.

—The Editors

²⁷Some national and regional LGBT legal organizations are Lambda Legal, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union LGBT Project, and Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders.

²⁸See, e.g., National Center for Lesbian Rights, *Legal Recognition of LGBT Families* (2010), www.nclrights.org; *id.*, *Planning with Purpose: Legal Basics for LGBT Elders* (2009), www.nclrights.org/PlanningwithPurpose.



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