

# Racial Justice Advocacy and the Role of Advocacy Coordinators

*sponsored by*

**Legal Services Training Consortium of New England**

**December 9 - 10, 2003**

**Wachusett Village Inn & Conference Center  
Westminster, MA**

The notion of “racial justice” advocacy requires legal aid advocates to explicitly examine the intersections of race and poverty and develop proactive strategies that challenge institutional policies and practices that negatively impact communities of color and language minorities.

The Legal Services Training Consortium of New England is pleased to announce its second annual Advocacy Symposium to be held **December 9 - 10, 2003** at the Wachusett Village Inn and Conference Center. The Racial Justice Advocacy Symposium is geared primarily for **Advocacy Coordinators**, individuals responsible for promoting and supporting affirmative advocacy on behalf of low-income people and communities both within individual legal aid programs and on a statewide level. The symposium will include both substantive discussions on **racial justice issues and strategies** as well as peer support on specific challenges and responsibilities that Advocacy Coordinators face. It will also serve as the organizing meeting for an ongoing Advocacy Coordinator group that will continue to meet on a regular basis.

Through presentations and discussions, we will:

- Explore the meaning of and imperative for racial justice advocacy by legal aid advocates;
- Examine the range of litigation, community problem-solving and alternative advocacy approaches that legal aid advocates engage in to achieve racial justice;
- Identify tools and strategies through which advocacy coordinators can more effectively inspire and support affirmative advocacy within their programs; and
- Develop a plan for sponsoring ongoing Advocacy Coordinator meetings in the future.

**Presenters & Contributors:** We will be joined by a number of speakers and presenters including **David Hall**, Professor, Northeastern University School of Law and member of national Legal Services Corporation Board; **Camille Holmes**, Attorney with Center for Law and Social Policy in D.C. and **Fran Fajana**, Attorney with MLRI’s Minority Rights Project. We will also hear from a number of Advocacy Coordinators within our region regarding specific racial justice initiatives in such areas as housing, job training, education, healthcare. Additional presenters/contributors will be announced.

## Draft Agenda

### Day One – December 9

10:00 - 11:00    **Symposium registration**

11:00 - 12:30    **Introduction & Overview**

**Defining our terms** What do we mean by Racial Justice Advocacy? Why is this an important focus for our work as legal aid advocates? Why now? What is the relationship between racial justice advocacy and legal aid values and mission?

**A Community Perspective on Racial Justice** What issues are of most concern to communities of color and language minorities? How do we learn about these concerns and respond effectively to them?

12:30 - 1:30    Lunch

1:30 - 5:30    **Panel presentations, Discussions and Strategy Sessions**

**Litigation: Opportunities and Challenges** What has been the impact of recent Supreme Court decisions on civil rights laws and remedies and how are legal aid advocates and other allies responding?

**Examples from the field** What kinds of racial justice initiatives are legal aid advocates pursuing within our region and nationally? To what extent are we successfully using civil rights laws? To what extent are we employing non-litigation or community justice strategies? What have been our successes and challenges?

**Choosing to Promote Racial Justice** What challenges do we face when deciding to focus on racial justice? What specific skills or knowledge do legal aid advocates need in order to recognize and address these issues? How do we promote this work? How do we support our staff and each other?

### Day Two – December 10

9:00 - 12:30    **The Role of Advocacy Coordinator** This session will include presentations, discussions and peer support on specific topics related to the Advocacy Coordinator role.

12:30 - 1:30    Lunch

1:30 - 3:00    **Action planning:** We will develop a plan for sponsoring regular meetings of the Advocacy Coordinator group as well as suggested topics for future meetings.

# Advocacy Symposium December 9 - 10, 2003

## Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Program \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address, City, State and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee (select one): \*\* (NON- Consortium members: Please add additional \$200 to registration)

**Check-in Tuesday morning, 12/9:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$200 / single occupancy**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$155 / double occupancy**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$100 / commuter (includes all meals but no room)**

**Check-in Monday night, 12/8 (includes Monday night room and Tuesday breakfast):**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$295 / single occupancy**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$205 / double occupancy**

Roommate request (If you request double occupancy, but don't request a specific roommate, we will assign you to one) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you require a room that permits smoking? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you prefer a designated non-smoking room? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you require such a room (e.g., for health reasons)? \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate any special needs (e.g., dietary, accessibility) \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit your registration, together with a check payable to Massachusetts Law Reform Institute. A check must accompany the form(s) or the registration will not be processed.

Registration deadline: **Tuesday November 25, 2003.**

Please send completed forms and checks to:

Jessie Hill

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

99 Chauncy Street, Suite 500

Boston, MA 02111

## Racial Justice Advocacy December 9 - 10 Symposium

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Program \_\_\_\_\_

1. What kinds of racial justice issues are you seeing in the communities your legal aid program serves?
2. What are some examples of racial justice advocacy that your program is or has been engaged in? Please describe the nature of your program's work including: 1) how racial justice issues were identified; 2) strategies (such as litigation, legislative or community advocacy) you have engaged in to address the issues; 3) what challenges you have encountered; and 3) what results you have achieved.
3. What racial justice issues are you most interested in discussing at the December forum?
4. What topics related to racial justice would you be willing to discuss or present at the December forum?