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**LATEST LEGAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON CHILD SUPPORT,
COLD WEATHER ISSUES FACING THE POOR AND HOMELESS**

EDISON — The latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) centers on dealing with numerous aspects of when child support ends or continues — even in the oft-thorny situations in which divorced parents disagree.

The newsletter also centers on what assistance may be available to cover or reduce costs for utility bills, including protection from internet shut-offs for households with students.

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” may be viewed online at www.lsnjlaw.org.

The article providing an overview of how child support works notes that generally termination or “emancipation” is when the child reaches 18 and is out of high school, has no plans to attend college or a training program, and is not disabled. There are different legal procedures to follow in cases involving divorce or child abuse as opposed to when those circumstances do not apply. The situations in which support is determined are spelled out, as well as the various exceptions in law when support continues past the age of 19.

Other than for children with disabilities, child support must end after age 23. However, it is possible for judges then to order child support effectively be replaced by what’s called

“financial maintenance.” More information about all aspect of child support is available at www.njchildsupport.org.

Anticipating the bitterly cold days ahead this winter, the publication offers advice on help available to homeless people when the weather becomes so severe that their lives are at risk, as well as explaining what programs are available to homeowners having a hard time paying utility bills.

A Code Blue alert allows authorities during dangerous weather conditions to take homeless people to local shelters or what’s known as “warming centers.” For a list of Code Blue facilities dial 2-1-1. Local police in most counties can advise if a Code Blue alert has been issued.

A separate article in the publication notes there is a moratorium through March 15 of next year on all shutoffs of residential gas, electric and water services. Additionally, there are services that can help needy applicants pay utility bills. The three major services include the Universal Service Fund (USF), the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and the Lifeline Energy Assistance Program. More information about those programs is available by calling the LSNJLAWSM toll-free legal hotline at 1-888-LSNJ-LAW (1-888-576-5529).

Meanwhile, the LSNJLAWSM hotline also is a source for obtaining information about people’s rights when they are accused by the state of abusing or neglecting their children — a process that can be the basis for removal of the children from the family home and placement of the accused forever on the Child Abuse Registry. An article in the newsletter provides what amounts to tutorial on actions and consequences available to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families in such matters. Also highlighted is a related recent New Jersey Supreme

court decision giving accused individuals new rights to learn what evidence is behind the state's finding, and the opportunity ultimately to appeal to the Appellate Division.

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of five independent non-profit corporations and has been providing free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people through offices in all 21 counties for more than 50 years. Since its inception, LSNJ has provided representation in more than 2.6 million cases.

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