

SAMPLE CASES

Brianna and Billy are three-year-old twins who are living with their grandmother. Their mother dropped them off at the home when her new boyfriend said that they needed too much attention. Their father is currently incarcerated for a number of drug-related offenses. Brianna and Billy's grandmother came to LACY wanting to know how she could get the authority to seek medical care for the children, who both suffer from asthma. LACY assisted the grandmother in obtaining a legal guardianship over the twins.

Isabela is a sixteen-year-old foster youth who qualifies for special education services based on a learning disability. In spite of her learning disability, she managed to earn good grades for a time. However, Isabela's depression and anxiety negatively impacted her ability to complete assigned work, remain organized, and focus on academic tasks. Compounding the problem, Isabella's teachers refused to provide the few simple accommodations required by her Individualized Education Program, and her grades suffered. LACY helped Isabela's foster mother make a complaint to the California Department of Education (CDE) about the teachers' conduct. CDE found that the school had violated the law and awarded Isabela \$6,000 worth of tutoring services to compensate her for her loss of educational opportunity.

Maria is a seventeen-year-old girl who lived with her boyfriend, their baby, and her boyfriend's family. After repeated beatings from her boyfriend, Maria decided she needed to leave the home. She called LACY for assistance. LACY was able to get Maria a restraining order and custody of the baby. In addition, LACY assisted Maria in getting a civil standby so she could retrieve her belongings from the home. Finally, LACY worked with the staff of a local agency to get Maria into a transitional living program, where Maria is learning to live on her own and support herself and her baby.

OTHER LAW FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

Health Legal Services provides direct legal services to individuals living with HIV/AIDS or diabetes in a wide range of practice areas including public and private benefits and insurance, housing and consumer matters, simple estate planning, employment discrimination and reasonable accommodation matters, breach-of-confidentiality issues and representation or referrals on other legal issues.

Fair Housing Law Project provides education, advocacy, and legal representation to prevent and redress instances of housing discrimination and predatory mortgage lending. Its mission is to ensure that all people may freely choose a place to live without regard to their race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, source of income, disability or whether they have children in their family or operate a home daycare.

Mental Health Advocacy Project provides legal assistance to individuals identified as mentally or developmentally disabled in the areas of housing, government benefits, mental health patient's rights, health, discrimination, rehabilitation, developmental services, and education. Its mission is to empower those individuals to live more independent, secure, and satisfying lives through the enforcement of their legal rights and the advancement of their social and economic well-being.

Public Interest Law Firm represents disadvantaged individuals on issues which affect important civil rights and have significant impact on the community. Priority areas are: civil and constitutional rights; children and youth; individuals with disabilities and elders; housing and homelessness; and immigrant and refugee rights. Local law firms provide pro bono services in impact litigation and advocacy.

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Legal
Advocates for
Children &
Youth

MISSION

LACY advances the rights of children and youth, empowering them to lead healthy and productive lives. We listen to, advise, and advocate for our clients to ensure their voices are heard and their rights are protected.

HISTORY & PURPOSE

Legal Advocates for Children & Youth (LACY) is one of the five programs of the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley (Law Foundation). LACY was founded in 1990 after the Law Foundation established a task force to conduct a needs assessment of children in Santa Clara County. As a result, LACY was formed with the goal of providing a holistic approach to addressing the legal needs of children and youth.

HOW TO ACCESS OUR SERVICES

If you or a minor you know needs legal assistance, call LACY for an intake interview at: 408-280-2416.

LEGAL SERVICES

Educational Empowerment Project LACY assists students and their caregivers in school enrollment, school discipline, and special education matters. Since 2002, LACY has collaborated with the Department of Family & Children's Services, Juvenile Probation, and Morrissey Compton Educational Center through Project YEA! to provide educational advocacy for youth in foster care or the juvenile justice system.

LEGAL SERVICES cont'd

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Project

LACY provides legal and social work services to children and youth up to age 21 who are, are suspected of being, or are at high risk of being commercially sexually exploited.

Emancipation Project LACY represents minors who qualify for emancipation in the court process.

Guardianship Project LACY helps children stabilize their lives by seeking legal guardianships and preventing minors from entering the foster care system. The Probate Court regularly appoints LACY to represent children in contested cases.

Juvenile Dependency LACY attorneys provide representation in Juvenile Court to children who have suffered abuse or neglect. Minors also receive assistance in other legal areas, including education and immigration.

Medical-Legal Partnership Clinics LACY's medical-legal partnership with Valley Medical Center assists children and families with legal issues that impact children's health and well-being by providing on-site services at the Bascom and Gilroy Pediatric Clinics.

Refugee Foster Care Program LACY serves as an independent review panel for immigrant foster children placed through Catholic Charities.

Safe Families Project LACY provides representation and education for pregnant and parenting teens on paternity, child custody and support, and domestic violence. The Superior Court also appoints LACY to represent children in high-conflict custody cases.

Transition-Aged Foster Youth Project LACY helps current and former foster youth ages 14 to 25 with civil legal issues that arise as they are transitioning out of the foster care system to adulthood. LACY offers regular drop-in hours, and services by appointment, at a community center for transition-aged foster youth.

Unaccompanied Minor's Project LACY provides legal and social work services to children and youth who are undocumented and whose parents cannot care for them, specifically by obtaining guardianships or family court orders, which allow youth to obtain green cards to stay in the U.S.

LACY'S TEAM APPROACH

LACY uses a multi-disciplinary approach to advocacy to provide clients with holistic services that address their needs. LACY's team of social workers provide services such as clinical assessments, referral to resources, and case management. Assessments address important questions that assist the attorneys in their legal advocacy—questions such as the risk and safety of children and youth, the appropriateness of their placement, and needed services to address the overall social and emotional health of our clients. In addition to professional social work services, LACY social workers engage in informal advocacy to complement LACY attorneys' legal advocacy.

CLIENT RESPONSE

My experience was enlightening, wonderful and more than I could have imagined. In a way you saved my family. – from a parent who worked with a LACY attorney to advocate for his child's special education needs.

I would like to thank LACY because now my son and I feel safe. –17 year old teen mother who obtained a restraining order against ex-boyfriend.

I think it helps a lot. I couldn't have gotten a lot done without the help of my attorney. – from a 16 year old foster youth who was represented by LACY throughout her juvenile court case.

LACY is a great office. I have referred many people to the office. –17 year old female who obtained custody order for her baby.

I am glad that I have found LACY because now I live with people that I really love and that love me back. Thank you LACY. –LACY Client