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LATEST LEGAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON MINIMUM WAGES, UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, IRS DEBT COLLECTIONS, EXPUNGEMENT ISSUES

EDISON — Details for low- and moderate-income New Jerseyans about their rights to receive the new minimum wage, as well as time-and -a-half pay for overtime work are among the issues detailed in the latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ).

The publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” provides information on whom to contact for further information on the various issues. The bilingual newsletter is accessible online at [Looking Out For Your Legal Rights](#) and also is available at all Legal Services offices in New Jersey.

The state’s minimum wage went from \$8.44 to \$8.60 this year, and that means no matter how many hours a person may work in a given week, it must at least calculate at the \$8.60 hourly rate. Further, most workers are entitled to time-and-a-half compensation for any hours worked beyond 40 in a week. There is an exception for certain management and other workers, but such exempt classifications may be open to a challenge.

The LSNJ newsletter notes that the failure to pay salaried workers overtime when it is required is a common wage violation. It notes claims to recover back pay for wage and overtime infractions can be filed as much as three years after the fact.

It is possible for workers who leave their jobs voluntarily to still collect unemployment benefits in some situations, including because of illness or other “good cause” reasons. But in such situations employees must maintain detailed records of what caused their departure and

how they notified their employer in advance.

The newsletter also provides details on what individuals must do to get any juvenile offense records expunged once the five year waiting period has passed, as well as which drug convictions adults may get expunged from their criminal records. That even could include, for example, third and fourth degree convictions the for sale, distribution or possession of any kind of a controlled dangerous substance, such as heroin or cocaine.

Under a relatively new federal law, the Internal Revenue Service can use private debt collectors to recover long overdue unpaid taxes. The newsletter specifies what individuals need to know to protect their consumer rights and avoid unscrupulous debt collectors.

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 2.4 million cases.

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