

NEWS RELEASE

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LEGAL SERVICES OF NEW JERSEY TO AID HAITIANS APPLYING FOR TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS

EDISON— Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) has developed new programs to assist Haitians who may be eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). TPS will allow citizens or nationals of Haiti, and those of no nationality who last resided in Haiti, to stay and work lawfully in the United States for 18 months (until July 22, 2011) if they have resided in the U.S. at least since January 12, 2010, and have been physically present here since January 21, 2010. LSNJ will provide free, direct representation to eligible individuals, and will also conduct walk-in information and application sessions at its offices in Edison and other sites in the northern and southern parts of the state. Further information is available by calling a toll-free TPS information line for a recorded message at 888-894-0612; visiting LSNJ's self-help Web site, www.LSNJLAW.org; or calling LSNJ's toll-free legal hotline, open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., at 888-LSNJ-LAW (888-576-5529). The hotline can also assist low-income New Jersey residents who have family in Haiti with immigration issues. Interpreters are available for hotline callers who are speakers of Creole, French and other languages.

According to Raquiba Huq, a staff attorney with LSNJ's Immigration Representation Project, "Because of LSNJ's long experience providing immigration legal

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assistance, we are well-positioned to provide immediate help to Haitian nationals in this critical situation. It's important that those who think they may be eligible for TPS seek legal advice before filing their application, so we urge them to contact us. We also caution them," she added, "against using the services of notaries public who falsely claim to be qualified to provide advice or assistance in preparing a TPS application. In the past, this has resulted in people not obtaining benefits to which they were entitled by law or even being placed into removal proceedings."

Operating in New Jersey through a network of six regional programs and LSNJ, the statewide coordinating office, Legal Services provides essential legal aid—and access to the judicial system to resolve disputes—to people who cannot afford legal counsel for their civil legal problems. More than 74,000 clients were served last year – and tens of thousands more were helped through self-help publications and the LSNJ Web site.

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