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NYS Senator Luis Sepúlveda Funds Organizations Providing Free Legal Assistance in the Bronx

Bronx, NY (July 29, 2021) — Today, NYS Senator Luis Sepúlveda awarded three community-based organizations providing free legal services with additional Senate grant funding totaling \$35,000. The three organizations receiving the grant funding are The Bronx Defenders, Mobilization for Justice, and Catholic Charities Community Services.

As part of the Legal Services Assistance Fund (LSAF) Legislative Grants for Senate Fiscal Year 2020-21 and 2021-22, NYS Senator Luis Sepúlveda will allocate a total of \$35,000 to support community-based non-profit organizations that provide civil and/or criminal legal services.

“I am proud to present these funds to three commendable organizations providing free legal services to Bronx residents,” said **NYS Senator Luis Sepúlveda, who represents the 32nd Senate District**. “Many of my constituents are in need of legal services but do not have the resources to acquire them. The Bronx Defenders, Mobilization for Justice, and Catholic Charities Community Services are all working to ensure that the most vulnerable amongst us have access to the legal representation that they need.”

The Bronx Defenders is a public defender nonprofit using holistic defense to transform the justice system and the way low-income Bronx clients are represented. By pioneering a new defense strategy known as holistic defense, attorneys are achieving better outcomes for their clients—defending more than 27,000 low-income Bronx residents each year in criminal, civil, child welfare, and immigration cases.

"The Bronx Defenders is honored to accept this generous funding in support of the unique holistic legal services we provide to the Bronx community. Senator Sepúlveda has been a champion of the people in The Bronx and it is our honor to call him an ally in our fight for equity and justice for all," said **Justine Olderman, Executive Director, The Bronx Defenders**.

Mobilization for Justice, formerly MFY Legal Services, provides free civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers with housing, immigration, employment, disability, and kinship care issues. In 2018, Mobilization for Justice launched its first office in the Bronx, serving one of the poorest communities in the country.

"Mobilization for Justice has served New Yorkers since 1963, but never has our city faced a crisis as devastating as the COVID-19 pandemic," said **Tiffany Liston, Executive Director, Mobilization for Justice**. “The funds awarded to us by Senator Sepúlveda will help us ensure that we can continue to provide the highest quality free legal services to our neighbors in the Bronx, and they'll help us fight to ensure that our community comes back stronger than it was before the pandemic.”

Catholic Charities Community Services provides legal services for immigrants looking for assistance with family reunification, citizenship, work authorization, status for victims of crime, trafficking, and more. The agency also assists its clients with obtaining work permits and job search assistance.

“Catholic Charities welcomes the generous support from Senator Sepúlveda's office at this critical time for immigrants—especially for families and workers in the Bronx who have held up our communities doing frontline and essential work during the pandemic, regardless of their status and circumstance,” said **Mario Russell, Director of Immigrant and Refugee Services, Catholic Charities Community Services, New York**. “This support will allow Catholic Charities' Division of Immigrant and Refugee Services to increase its educational outreach programming in the Bronx, utilizing technology to develop informational sessions and workshops targeted to the Bronx's most vulnerable noncitizens. In upholding the dignity of every person—each child, parent, worker, and refugee—we can build an even more welcoming, just, and compassionate city, which embraces the newcomer, the energy, and hope each brings.”

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