

# **Community Legal Aid**

A non-profit law firm serving the legal needs of low-income individuals and families in central northeast Ohio



[www.communitylegalaid.org](http://www.communitylegalaid.org)

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## **Volunteer advocates needed to help survivors of violence**

The Volunteer Advocacy Legal Unit (VALU) at the Mahoning County Domestic Relations Court is seeking volunteers to assist victims who are ready to end the cycle of violence.

“Our volunteers work with people who are in crisis and need help finding safety and stability in their lives,” shared Shatiqua Lyons, a paralegal at Community Legal Aid who coordinates the VALU program.

Volunteers bring clarity, calm, and assurance to victims by offering their support, she explained. They help survivors through the process of asking the Court for a temporary protection order.

“Having someone by your side during this process can bring courage and comfort,” Lyons said.

Legal Aid provides training for anyone who is interested in becoming part of the VALU team. This training covers the ins and outs of legal proceedings, as well as techniques for working with victims of violence.

VALU has been serving our community since 1991. It is a cooperative program between the Legal Aid and Mahoning County Domestic Relations Court.

Judge Beth A. Smith, who presides over the Domestic Relations Court, stressed the benefits this program provides to both the Court and the victims it serves.

“The VALU program, providing advocates for survivors of domestic violence, is essential to the effective issuance of civil protection orders,” Smith stated.

Smith explained that volunteers are present during domestic violence hearings, providing support to those seeking protection orders.

No legal background or prior training is required in order to volunteer. Those interested in

becoming a volunteer or learning more about the program should contact Legal Aid at (330) 983-2573.

#### About VALU

Location: Basement of the Mahoning County Courthouse

Hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Contact: (330) 742-5856 or (330) 742-5857

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