



PHILADELPHIA LAWYERS FOR SOCIAL EQUITY RECEIVES FIRST-EVER GRANT FROM THE PHILADELPHIA BAR FOUNDATION

December 20, 2017 – Philadelphia, PA. The Philadelphia Bar Foundation, Philadelphia’s only foundation dedicated to strengthening the delivery of civil legal aid, announced today that Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (PLSE) will receive a 2018 Philadelphia Bar Foundation Grant.

Founded in 1964, the Bar Foundation seeks to remove barriers to justice, engage the community to support legal aid, and build system-wide capacity. It provides annual grants and other support that allow its legal aid nonprofit partners to provide vital services for tens of thousands of people across the Philadelphia region who are facing civil legal obstacles.

This is the first time that the Philadelphia Bar Foundation has made an award to PLSE, and PLSE is the only first-time recipient included this year, according to the Bar Foundation’s Executive Director Jessica R. Hilburn-Holmes. “PLSE is a hidden gem,” she said. “It files and prosecutes more criminal records expungement petitions than any other organization in the United States, by leveraging the volunteer work of lawyers, law students, paralegals and technology. It’s an excellent model of how our legal community can work together to help those who are desperate for legal help, but cannot afford it. We are delighted to be able to add PLSE to our very impressive list of nonprofit partners.”

“On behalf of the thousands of people whose lives will be changed by better jobs and better housing when their criminal record histories are expunged, I thank the Philadelphia Bar Foundation for this great vote of confidence,” said attorney Ryan Allen Hancock, Chair of PLSE’s Board of Directors and Chair of the Employment Law Department of Willig, Williams & Davidson.

“It has been estimated that twenty-five percent of all Philadelphians have criminal records, and most if not all of us have biases about criminal records,” Hancock continued. “As attorneys, we have an obligation to recognize these biases and provide our clients not just legal expertise, but also hope and confidence that they need to keep going. The Philadelphia Bar Foundation Grant recognizes the difference we are making in the lives of our clients, our profession and our City. I hope it will be the emblem we need to attract more support, so that we can expand our program and help more people, improving our society for everyone.”

About The Philadelphia Bar Foundation

The Philadelphia Bar Foundation is dedicated to promoting access to justice for all people in the community, particularly those struggling with poverty, abuse and discrimination. It accomplishes this mission by providing grants and technical assistance in support of quality legal services, addressing unmet legal needs and providing education on matters in the public interest. To learn more about the Philadelphia Bar Foundation’s annual grant awards, visit <https://www.philabarfoundation.org/work/grantmaking>.

About Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity

PLSE serves low income individuals who have been arrested and/or convicted of crimes and whose criminal records hold them back from achieving better jobs, better housing, higher quality of lives for themselves and their families. PLSE pursues these objectives through individual representation, strategic litigation, community education, research, and legislative advocacy. To learn more about PLSE, visit www.plsephilly.org