

NEWS RELEASE



SCHOOL OF LAW
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY



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Media contacts at end of release

Verizon and Seton Hall Law School Announce New Program to Provide Free Legal Assistance to New Jersey Victims of Domestic Violence

***Initiative Will Provide Services throughout Newark, and Bergen, Essex, Hudson,
Middlesex, Passaic and Union Counties***

NEWARK, N.J. -- Seton Hall School of Law and Verizon announced the creation today of the Verizon Public Interest Fellowship Program, which will provide free legal services to low-income victims of domestic violence and will create a team of lawyers experienced in representing those seeking to break free of abuse.

The fellowship program, announced at the law school, was established with a \$90,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation. The initiative will provide free legal services to domestic violence victims in Newark and six New Jersey counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic and Union. Newark Mayor a. Cory Booker, Essex County Prosecutor Paula Dow and Verizon New Jersey President Dennis Bone joined several officials from the law school at the event.

“Many victims remain trapped in abusive situations because they are financially dependent upon their abusers and do not have the resources to seek legal assistance,” said Patrick

E. Hobbs, dean of the law school. “The Verizon Public Interest Fellowship Program will provide victims of domestic violence with the immediate safety and security that comes from pursuing their legal rights with the support and expertise of trained legal professionals, and the opportunity to seek long-term security by fostering financial independence.”

Dennis Bone, president of Verizon New Jersey, said, “We’re in a unique position to work with one of the nation’s leading law schools on a program that will directly assist domestic violence victims and their families. With this grant, hundreds of victims of domestic violence will receive the legal assistance they need to rebuild their lives, as Seton Hall Law also creates a pipeline of lawyers knowledgeable and committed to working in this important area of the law.”

The program will offer financial literacy and employment training workshops to assist domestic violence victims with gaining and maintaining their independence. In addition, it will feature extensive collaboration with legal and social service agencies, a strong academic component, mentoring relationships, and an opportunity for all the various stakeholders to share their knowledge and experiences with one another.

“Domestic violence is a national and personal tragedy, with 70,000 such incidents reported in New Jersey annually. Victims of domestic violence require our compassion and support. The Verizon Public Interest Fellowship Program, a partnership between Verizon and the Seton Hall Law School, will provide victims of domestic violence with the practical tools and spiritual strength they need to heal the wounds and move on with their lives. This collaborative effort will restore and empower human beings and help us create a safer, stronger, and prouder Newark,” said Newark Mayor Cory A. Booker.

“Domestic violence remains a very serious problem in Essex County,” said Prosecutor Paula Dow. “Any opportunity to assist victims in obtaining every protection that both the civil

and criminal systems provide for them is always extremely valuable. The collaboration of public and private entities aids in the delivery of justice to victims and holding batterers accountable.”

The Verizon Public Interest Fellowship Program builds upon Seton Hall Law’s strong public interest offerings, including its clinical and *pro bono* programs provided through the Center for Social Justice. The program will support one postgraduate fellow and six summer fellows who each will be assigned to one of the legal services partners. Fellows will be provided with training in family law as well as with the social and psychological needs of clients exposed to partner violence, as they also gain exposure to the other areas that impact domestic violence victims, including child welfare systems and the social services available to assist them with rebuilding their lives.

“The placement of fellows within a network of domestic violence partners provides a unique opportunity for students to gain firsthand experience working with domestic violence clients,” said Madeleine Kurtz, associate director for public interest at Seton Hall Law, who will oversee the program. “One of the reasons there is a shortage of attorneys providing *pro bono* representation to victims of domestic violence is because they have never received appropriate training. The Verizon Public Interest Fellowship Program will allow us to better prepare students to represent domestic violence clients. Not only will the program help these clients now, but in the future, as well.”

Several organizations are collaborating with Seton Hall Law in the effort including Essex-Newark Legal Services, Partners for Women and Justice, Legal Services of New Jersey, Northeast New Jersey Legal Services, the Rachel Coalition, Manavi Inc., and WISE Women’s Center of Essex County College. The Verizon grant will fund the program for one year. Seton Hall Law will seek additional funding to continue the program thereafter.

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Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE:VZ), headquartered in New York, is a global leader in delivering broadband and other wireless and wireline communications services to mass market, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America's most reliable wireless network, serving more than 87 million customers nationwide. Verizon's Wireline operations provide converged communications, information and entertainment services over the nation's most advanced fiber-optic network. Wireline also includes Verizon Business, which delivers innovative and seamless business solutions to customers around the world. A Dow 30 company, Verizon employs a diverse workforce of more than 235,000 and last year generated consolidated operating revenues of more than \$97 billion. For more information, visit www.verizon.com.

Seton Hall University School of Law, New Jersey's only private law school, and a leading law school in the New York metropolitan area, is dedicated to preparing students for the practice of law through excellence in scholarship and teaching, with a strong focus on clinical education. Seton Hall Law is located in Newark, NJ and offers both day and evening degree programs. For more information, visit law.shu.edu.

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