

Medical-Legal Partnerships Plus

Health Education Advocacy and Law Project



About the Grant Recipient

The Health Education Advocacy and Law (HEAL) Project helps the families of children who are patients at Akron Children's Hospital navigate a wide range of challenges related to poverty, poor health, and systemic and racial inequity in central northeast Ohio. The HEAL medical-legal partnership brings together medical, legal, and social service providers to provide critical advocacy to families with low incomes whose legal needs have adverse effects on their health.

Founded in 2014, HEAL is a partnership between:

- Community Legal Aid
- Akron Children's Hospital

About the Award

Using \$214,000 awarded through the Medical-Legal Partnerships Plus (MLP+) demonstration program, HEAL will increase the number of children and families currently served by 30% and serve an additional 12 immigrant families by:

- Expanding the capacity of the existing social service navigator role to refine the current workflow process, to ensure all patients are assigned a social worker or care coordinator for improved case management.
- Ensuring all patients receive referrals for free and reduced cost social services from their social worker or case coordinator. This includes using Findhelp Network, a new social service connection service, to connect patients with verified social care organizations that work to address health-harming issues.
- Expanding the type of legal services that Community Legal Aid and its volunteer lawyer program provide to patients, including pro bono services.
- Establishing a new liaison position responsible for coordinating regular meetings with Akron Children's Hospital to improve communication between hospital staff and the social worker or care coordinator assigned to the patient.

About the Medical-Legal Partnerships Plus (MLP+) Program

In fiscal year 2023, the [Office of Community Services](#) (OCS) within the [Administration for Children and Families](#) at the U.S. [Department of Health and Human Services](#) launched MLP+, a brand new demonstration program. OCS awarded \$1.6 million to eight MLPs across the country to build, expand, and strengthen their capacity to serve vulnerable families and improve health outcomes. This is the first-ever federal funding dedicated to medical-legal partnerships, and will impact households in Connecticut, Hawaii, Montana, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. This funding will help existing MLPs increase their capacity to serve families and households in their communities by providing legal services and wraparound social supports to help improve their health and wellbeing and address the causes and consequences of poverty.

About Medical-Legal Partnerships

Medical-legal partnerships (MLPs) bring legal services into health care settings to help families, clinicians, social workers, and others identify and prevent the health-harming social conditions that can keep people from thriving.

MLPs meet individuals and families with low incomes where they are and help connect them to other essential services such as housing support; educational access; and child-care to improve their overall health and wellbeing.