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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATE LEGAL SUPPORT NETWORK

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The California Women's Law Center is pleased to launch the **Domestic Violence Advocate Legal Support Network** ("Legal Support Network") which provides California's domestic violence shelters with resources and training aimed at addressing the multitude of legal issues that arise in the day-to-day operation of a domestic violence shelter organization. The Legal Support Network is funded by a grant from the Blue Shield of California Foundation.

Non-profit organizations that provide emergency shelter to domestic violence victims and their children are often as financially destitute as the clients they serve. Generally, these organizations operate on limited budgets and, despite being seriously underfunded and understaffed, provide an array of services for victims and their children. The financial pressures faced by domestic violence shelters are compounded by the fact that these organizations face a multitude of legal issues on a daily basis, yet are unable to afford legal counsel to assist them with these matters. Indeed, while the domestic violence victims that these organizations serve have access to a number of free legal services, there are no free legal resources to assist the directors and staff of domestic violence shelters.

The goal of the Legal Support Network is to promote the capacity, sustainability and welfare of California's domestic violence shelters by ensuring that these organizations have access to ongoing, free legal services for matters relating to the management and operation of their organizations. In order to achieve this goal, the Legal Support Network will (1) develop a **legal manual** for directors and managers of domestic violence shelters that covers a variety of legal issues from the unique perspective of domestic violence shelter service providers; (2) provide **statewide trainings** to directors and managers of domestic violence shelters on relevant legal issues; and (3) direct the **Adopt-An-Angel Program** whereby domestic violence shelter programs will be matched with local law firms that will provide them with ongoing *pro bono* legal assistance.

CWLC is currently seeking law firms to participate in the Adopt-An-Angel Program. Participating firms are expected to provide *pro bono* legal advice and assistance to their adopted shelter for a period of two years for legal matters relating to the shelter's operation (i.e., negotiating lease agreements, reviewing human resource materials, providing risk management advice, etc.). For more information about the Adopt-An-Angel Program, see our information sheet entitled *Adopt-An-Angel Program – Q & A Sheet for Law Firms*.



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