

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **New Legal Aid Kiosks Expand Access to Free Legal Help Throughout Minnesota**

May 3, 2021 — The Minnesota Legal Services Coalition (“The Coalition”), providers of justice to low-income people throughout Minnesota, has received \$3.5 million in Federal CARES Act funding from the State of Minnesota to provide **Reach Justice Minnesota**. **Reach Justice Minnesota** is a series of initiatives that leverage technology and emergency staffing to help protect Minnesotans’ basic civil and human rights in the face of an unprecedented emergency and disaster. There is rising demand for civil legal aid all over Minnesota as a direct result of the public health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Reach Justice Minnesota** has deployed more than 250 Legal Kiosks statewide to expand access to free legal services for vulnerable populations. The kiosks are stationed in a variety of community locations offering the public the ability to apply for civil legal aid services, access legal resources, and, in some cases, attend online meetings and remote court hearings in privacy.

The pandemic has moved the legal system virtual, creating a digital divide that has disproportionately impacted the communities served by civil legal aid. Longstanding financial and transportation barriers have exacerbated the pandemic’s effect on the communities civil legal aid serves, making it a challenge for them to have a healthy and safe experience interacting with civil legal aid experts and participating in virtual legal proceedings.

“Civil legal aid makes justice a reality in the communities we serve. The kiosk network we created will help deliver justice to Minnesotans statewide, vindicating their most basic civil and human rights,” said Drew Schaffer, Executive Director of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid.

Dori Streit, Executive Director of Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota added, “We envision the impact and legacy as carrying forward beyond the pandemic, helping us to connect with client communities in new ways to deliver on the promise of equal justice for all.”

The initial rollout includes more than 250 kiosk locations at libraries, community centers, courthouses, health centers, shelters, Native American tribal centers, and a variety of nonprofit partners throughout the state. For a list of publicly accessible kiosks, visit <https://www.legalkiosk.org/locations>. The kiosk terminals are ADA accessible. The kiosks are currently set up in English and will soon have translations into Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

Find more information about the Legal Kiosk Project, visit [www.legalkiosk.org](http://www.legalkiosk.org).