

# NURSING-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

## Impact Report

Since 2016, public interest lawyers have worked hand-in-hand with public health nurses in Philadelphia who support parents through the evidence-based *Nurse-Family Partnership* and *Parents As Teachers* home visiting programs.

This interdisciplinary team works to ensure that pregnant women and new mothers have the opportunity to raise their children in safe, healthy homes, with uninterrupted health coverage and other benefits.

Through the **Nursing-Legal Partnership**, all clients of the *Philadelphia Nurse-Family Partnership* and the *Mabel Morris Family Home Visit Program* are screened proactively for unmet legal needs that harm maternal and child health.

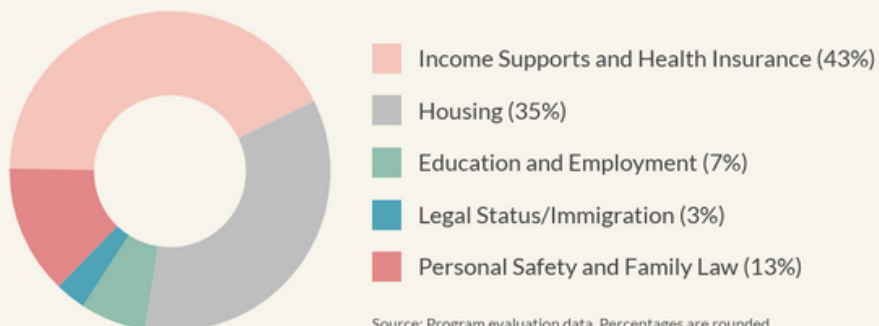
In the first three years of the project, attorneys opened cases addressing over 430 different legal issues. Many new mothers had more than one legal issue, and some had as many as 13.



### Service Delivery 2016 - 2018

- Nurse home visitors conducted **over 2,400 screenings** to proactively identify the unmet legal needs of new mothers
- Over **400 unique women** received assistance with an unmet legal need
- **79% of clients** surveyed said that legal services **positively impacted their life or their family members' lives**

**Nursing-Legal Partnership**  
Summary of Mothers' Legal Cases (2016 - 2018)



# Reducing Maternal Risk & Toxic Stress

Many pregnant women enter home visiting programs with concerns about their own physical safety, housing, and other basic needs. These crises increase toxic maternal stress and interfere with maternal-child bonds.

Evaluation data indicate that **the mothers who use Nursing-Legal Partnership services are at higher risk of negative health consequences than most mothers enrolled in home visiting.** By providing concrete support to high-risk mothers, the Nursing-Legal Partnership stabilizes families and prevents crises from escalating.

## Return on Investment

Nursing-Legal Partnership attorneys have represented low-income families and achieved results including:

- Preventing utility shut-offs
- Securing appropriate housing for clients with disabilities
- Preventing or delaying evictions
- Obtaining, preventing termination, or increasing the amount of clients' public benefits

From 2016-2018, a total of **\$1,339,497** in **economic case benefits** were estimated.



Mothers receiving legal services show **statistically significant risk reduction** in:

- Loneliness and Social Isolation
- Economic Adversity
- Substance Use and Abuse
- Depression, Anxiety and Other Mental Health Issues
- Homelessness and Residential Instability\*

# 67%

of client respondents had **decreased stress levels** following legal services

*\* Partial list of domains showing improvement*

## Healthy Policies, Healthy Families

The Nursing-Legal Partnership **Policy Agenda** is updated annually with input from clients. Priority issues include safe housing, breastfeeding-friendly policies, food security and safer community spaces. Events like **Community Action Day** (pictured) bring families together to describe the changes they wish to see in the world.

The policy-themed **Brunch & Learn event series** convenes staff of family support programs serving low-income pregnant and parenting women in Philadelphia. These events help frontline providers identify and address the legal needs and rights of clients. They also create opportunities for resource-sharing and citywide collaboration.

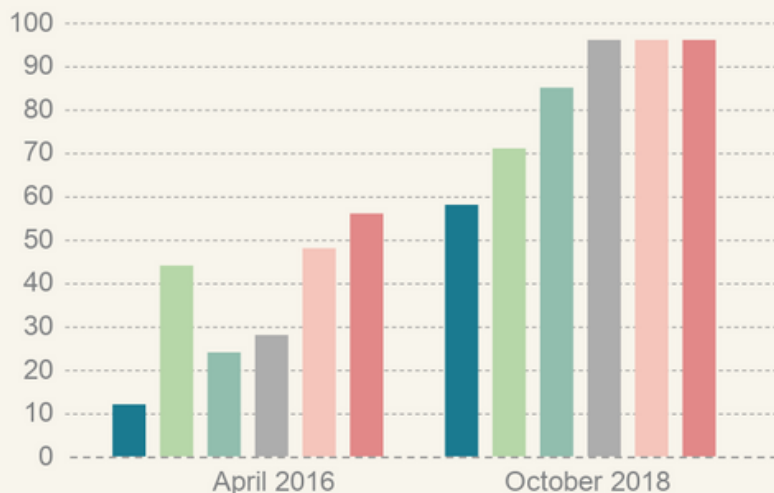


# Nurses & Lawyers for Moms & Babies

The Nursing-Legal Partnership fully integrates health and legal staff. Lawyers are housed on-site in the same office with public health nurses. Nurse-attorney consultations happen every day at the lunch table and around the water cooler. **More than 30 trainings have prepared nurses to spot legal issues impacting family health.** Nurses have gained a better understanding of clients' rights and the ways they can advocate for themselves.

## Nursing-Legal Partnership

### Nurses Are More Comfortable Addressing Family Needs



Percentage of home visiting nurses reporting they are "comfortable" or "very comfortable" addressing:

- Issues related to immigration/legal status
- Employment discrimination issues
- Education needs of children with learning disabilities
- Housing issues
- Public benefits, including health insurance
- Domestic violence and family safety issues

Nurses say that the Nursing-Legal Partnership has made them more effective at their jobs, and better equipped to address the social needs of families.

As of October 2018, **over 95% of nurses surveyed say they are comfortable addressing client issues related to domestic violence, housing, and public benefits.** A majority of nurses also express comfort addressing family needs related to education, immigration and employment.

The **percentage of nurses** who were **"very satisfied" with their jobs** overall increased from 36% in April 2016 to **71%** in October 2018.

At the same time, **100% of attorneys** report that working with case managers and nurses has increased their ability to advocate on behalf of clients, and that they have gained knowledge about health or healthcare.



**I have several clients who would be homeless without the Nursing-Legal Partnership. I have other clients that have successfully appealed benefits denials because I knew a little bit more and they knew a little bit more.**

**I have clients who learned to be great advocates for themselves once they knew what they were entitled to.**

*Nurse Home Visitor, 2018*

# About the Project

The Nursing-Legal Partnership is a collaboration between the **National Nurse-Led Care Consortium (NNCC)** and the **Health, Education & Legal assistance Project (HELP:MLP)** at Widener University.

This report was published in March 2019. It reflects data collected during the project's initial 3-year pilot phase (January 2016 to December 2018).

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- *The Patricia Kind Family Foundation*

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[nurseledcare.org/programs/nursing-legal-partnership](http://nurseledcare.org/programs/nursing-legal-partnership)

## Connect with us

**Philadelphia Nurse-Family Partnership**  
**Mabel Morris Family Home Visit Program**  
1080 N. Delaware Avenue, Suite 300 D  
Philadelphia PA 19125  
Phone: 215-287-2114  
[nurseledcare.org](http://nurseledcare.org)



@Philly.NFP.MM



@Philly\_NFP\_MM

