



Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. Military Legal Advocacy Project

WHAT

The Military Legal Advocacy Project provides free legal assistance to low income veterans, active duty military and their families. The Project resolves civil legal problems that are barriers to income and housing in an effort to promote economic and social stability and avoid homelessness.

WHY

Florida is home to 1.8 million veterans, 11 active military bases and a host of other military installations. The Military Legal Advocacy Project was created in response to a multitude of unmet legal needs arising among veterans, active duty military and their families as a direct result of their deployment.

HOW

The Military Legal Advocacy Project helps veterans and active duty military with their legal needs by:

- Appealing denials of veterans disability benefits;
 - Assisting with discharge upgrades;
 - Appealing denials of public benefits, unemployment compensation, and social security;
 - Representing tenants in selected landlord-tenant cases;
 - Assisting with homeownership problems including foreclosure and predatory lending; and
 - Assisting with IRS tax disputes
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WHO

LSGMI provides free civil legal services to the neediest individuals within our community. Our clients are primarily women, children, seniors, and the working poor. In many cases, we are the safety net preventing these individuals from becoming homeless or dependent on welfare. On a daily basis, our team of attorneys, who are organized into legal specialty units and projects, provides high quality representation to clients with problems relating to housing, health care, education, disability benefits, family issues, and employment.

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For further information, please contact attorney Ely Gonzalez: MLAP@lsgmi.org

Military Legal Advocacy Project Typical Cases

- Victor, an Operation Enduring Force Army veteran, was injured in an Afghanistan combat zone. The Army found Victor to be 80% disabled due to his injuries, and as a result he was medically discharged from military service. Subsequently, the Veterans Administration (VA) granted Victor a 100% disability rating based on an Army medical board determination that his impairments included post-traumatic stress disorder, hearing loss, shoulder injury, and residuals of a traumatic brain injury.

Despite this determination, Victor's claim for disability benefits was denied by the Social Security Administration based on the same medical evidence provided to the VA. The Military Legal Advocacy Project represented Victor before a SSA Administrative law judge and presented medical evidence supporting that his impairments met the SSA criteria for permanent disability. As result of the Project's advocacy, Victor received a favorable decision granting him much needed SSA disability benefits.