Northern Illinois opens health advocacy clinic

December 4, 2014

Northern Illinois University College of Law opened the doors to its new Health Advocacy Clinic, a medical-legal partnership between Northern Illinois University College of Law, Aunt Martha's Health Center, a health care and social service agency, and Hesed House, the second largest shelter for homeless individuals in the state of Illinois. Students will interview and counsel clients, draft legal documents, advocate at public aid offices and represent clients at formal hearings.

The new NIU Law Health Advocacy Clinic is the school’s fourth legal clinic. In addition, NIU Law currently has two clinical programs housed in its Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic in Rockford, Illinois. The Civil Justice Clinic has served more than 2,000 clients in the Winnebago County area since its founding in 2001, and provided opportunities for over 300 NIU law students to work cases in the areas of elder law, domestic abuse, adult criminal, and mediation. In 2011, the Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic expanded its program to include a Juvenile Justice Clinic. The school’s Foreclosure Mediation Clinic, funded by a $1.5 million grant from the Illinois Attorney General’s Office, is part of a community engagement project to address the residential foreclosure crisis in Kane County, Illinois. It is a joint effort between NIU Law, the Kane County Courts, Resolution Systems Institute – a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening justice by enhancing court Alternative Dispute Resolution Systems, Prairie State Legal Services – a provider of legal services to low-income families and groups, and several other community partners.

"The addition of a new, innovative clinic in the heart of Aurora further reinforces NIU Law’s commitment to community engagement," said NIU Law Dean Jennifer Rosato Perea. "Through such partnerships, the school has the opportunity to model to its law students the value of using one’s legal skills to meaningfully assist members of their community. In addition, the clinic setting provides an invaluable experiential learning opportunity that helps prepare out students to practice."