FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1/17/2023

Contact:
Louisa Gregory
314.256.8736
lmgregory@lsem.org

WELLS FARGO GRANTS $200,000 TO LEGAL SERVICES OF EASTERN MISSOURI

Funding will prevent eviction and protect family wealth in low-income communities

ST. LOUIS – Legal Services of Eastern Missouri has received a grant of $200,000 payable over two years to fund programs that prevent evictions for renter households and assist low-income homeowners with title clearance and estate planning services that enable them to preserve generational wealth.

“We are most grateful for this funding from Wells Fargo, which will provide underserved communities with assistance on a variety of housing matters,” said Dan Glazier, Executive Director & General Counsel of Legal Services of Eastern Missouri. “Wells Fargo is a very valued partner in our work.”

Legal Services’ Eviction Prevention Program is receiving $100,000 over two years to provide legal assistance and related support services to renters at risk of eviction. Grant funding will underwrite assistance for more than 120 tenant households. The program’s holistic approach to client assistance includes legal representation/advice, social work services, community education, strategic use of media, self-help resources, and utility advocacy.

“As federal funding for eviction prevention dries up, it is critical that at-risk tenants receive legal assistance to avoid and defend eviction filings and remain stably housed,” said Jennifer Heggemann, Director of Social Work at Legal Services. “Funding from Wells Fargo will help us provide the services needed to keep families from becoming homeless.”

The Family Property Project of Legal Services’ Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative also will receive $100,000 over two years. The project assists families at risk of losing property as a result of fractured land titles, also known as “heirs’ property.” Staff and volunteer attorneys help resolve land title issues and provide free beneficiary deed services to low-income homeowners to help preserve family property. Legal Services serves up to 100 families a year to prevent or cure the fractured title problems that lead to property abandonment.

“Resolving heirs’ property issues opens the door for financial and home repair assistance to maintain the property and allows families to pass their hard-earned asset on to the next
generation,” stated Peter Hoffman, Managing Attorney. “We appreciate this support from Wells Fargo, which will help prevent vacancy and residential property abandonment, especially in disinvested, historically Black neighborhoods,” he said.

Wells Fargo and the Wells Fargo Foundation collaborate with a wide range of nonprofit organizations that align with their strategic funding priorities, which include financial health, housing affordability, small business growth, and sustainable and environmental justice. Wells Fargo has donated more than $390 million to help address the housing affordability crisis in the country, including supporting available and affordable rentals, homeownership, and housing stability.

###

**About Legal Services of Eastern Missouri:** Legal Services of Eastern Missouri has provided free civil legal help for low-income families for 65 years. In 2021, more than 37,000 people in 21 counties of eastern Missouri received assistance from four regional offices. For more information, please visit www.lsem.org.