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**SARGENT SHRIVER NATIONAL CENTER ON POVERTY LAW
AND CENTER FOR LEGAL AID EDUCATION
UNITE TO ADVANCE JUSTICE & OPPORTUNITY**

(CHICAGO – October 10, 2011) On September 30, 2011 the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law (Shriver Center) acquired Boston-based Center for Legal Aid Education (CLAE). This move enables the Shriver Center to provide broader and deeper support to equal justice lawyers and advocates across the country, enhancing and broadening the national community of advocates who work together to improve social and economic justice for low-income people.

“Through policy development, legal expertise and a full toolbox of strategies, the Shriver Center serves as a strong force to help low-income people gain a voice in structuring laws and policies that affect them deeply,” said John Bouman, president of the Shriver Center. “By acquiring CLAE, we greatly enhance our ability to train, support, and collaborate with frontline legal aid lawyers working for justice in disenfranchised communities throughout the country.”

The organizations complement one another in their missions and their operations. In addition to developing and advancing federal, state and local laws and policies that create a more just and equitable society, the Shriver Center serves as a communications hub and thought leader for the national legal aid community, sharing information on the latest legal strategies and best practices for representing low-income clients through webinars, readers’ forums, reports, blogs and *Clearinghouse Review: Journal of Poverty Law and Policy*.

CLAE does its part to help realize the promise of justice and opportunity by providing timely and top quality continuing legal education that responds to the legal aid community's distinctive mission and practice. Since 2006, CLAE has provided training and leadership development programs to more than 2,100 advocates in 40 states. The Shriver Center aims to expand its online and in-person training programs to serve advocates in all states while also offering specialized institutes focused on racial justice and leadership.

The addition of CLAE’s comprehensive training curriculum to the Shriver Center’s advocacy and communications programs will enable the Shriver Center to provide the full range of communication, education, training and leadership development skills advocates need to help their clients obtain justice. The timing of this merger is particularly important given the ongoing economic downturn, which has placed financial pressure on legal aid program budgets while generating a growing demand for their services.

“Joining the Shriver Center will enable us to use our resources more effectively and eliminate significant operational redundancies, so that we can expand access to our programs while keeping them affordable,” said Ellen Hemley, executive director of CLAE. Following the acquisition, Ms. Hemley will join the Shriver Center’s senior management team as vice president of training programs. She will be based in the Shriver Center’s Boston office and oversee the design and delivery of the Center’s national training and leadership development programs.

“This is an exciting development for the legal community,” said Mr. Bouman, “one that will strengthen and bring together advocates from around the country and foster bold, innovative solutions to the many problems confronting low-income communities.”

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The Shriver Center is a 2010 recipient of the MacArthur Foundation’s Creative and Effective Institutions Award.