

**Lopez, Donna**

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**From:** Lisa Hartnett [lhartnett@cascap.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 01, 2014 4:58 PM  
**To:** Lopez, Donna  
**Cc:** City Council  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for Cambridge-Somerville Legal Services

Please enter this letter into the official record of the City Council.

My name is Lisa Hartnett and I work for Cascap, Inc. supervising the Service Coordinators that work in the Cambridge Housing Authority's elderly/disabled buildings. Over the years we have all made many referrals to Cambridge-Somerville Legal Services, and it is impossible to overstate how vital their work has been to our tenants. Not only have they provided expert legal guidance, they have done so with incredible patience and understanding of the population that they are serving. When tenants are facing eviction or other legal action, they are often frightened and overwhelmed. We have seen how the staff at CASLS have guided them through the legal process and fiercely advocated on their behalf. When CASLS has not been able to directly assist a tenant they have been available to the Service Coordinators to offer advice and assistance.

Because of the population that we serve, Deborah Filler has been our primary contact. Deb has come to my team meetings to consult with and advise my staff, has attended community meetings focused on the elderly, and has been a consistent resource whenever we have any kind of legal question. In fact, I have always been amazed at the speed and thoroughness with which Deb responds to questions.

Having legal services available in the community is vital to our population. Expecting seniors and folks with disabilities, including mobility issues and cognitive impairments not to mention financial constraints, to travel to downtown Boston is unrealistic. And hiring a local attorney is out of the question for our folks. As one of my staff said today "folks will just give up and not get any help at all." I fear that evictions will increase dramatically without the services of this valuable local agency.

Should you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.  
Lisa Hartnett, LICSW  
Service Coordinator Supervisor  
Cascap, Inc.