SHARON M. DIETRICH

Sharon Dietrich has been an attorney with the Employment Unit of Community Legal Services, Philadelphia, since 1987. She became CLS’ Managing Attorney for Public Benefits and Employment in 1997.

A focus of Ms. Dietrich’s work has been issues involving the employment of ex-offenders. These activities include: (1) representation of hundreds of ex-offenders who have been denied employment because of their criminal records; (2) participation as co-counsel in Nixon v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a lawsuit successfully challenging the constitutionality of the Older Adult Protective Services Act, a Pennsylvania statute prohibiting the employment of many ex-offenders in nursing homes, home health care agencies, mental health and mental retardation facilities, and other long-term health care facilities; (3) participation as co-counsel in Johnson v. Locke, a national class action alleging that the Census Bureau’s criminal background screening process violated Title VII; (4) participation as co-counsel in national class action litigation against the background screener HireRight for violations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act; and (5) contribution to Every Door Closed, a report from CLS and the Center for Law and Social Policy that discusses the cumulative civil law problems faced by ex-offenders.

In May 2002, Ms. Dietrich received an award from the Pennsylvania Prison Society in recognition of her work on behalf of ex-offenders. She also has received awards from the Philadelphia Bar Association (2005), the Pennsylvania Bar Association (2006) and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (2006).