

OPPORTUNITIES IN LITIGATION/DIRECT REPRESENTATION

For more information or to get involved with any of the following organizations, contact the CityBar Public Service Network at (212) 382-4713 or cpsn@abcny.org

Advocates for Children (AFC)

Advocates for Children (AFC) is a not-for-profit organization which provides advocacy for students and their families on a wide array of educational issues affecting public school students in New York City.

Pro Bono Project

The Pro Bono Project assists AFC in its work in the areas of school suspension and special education administrative hearings. Pro bono lawyers provide representation to families who have children with disabilities and students who are suspended from high school. Required training is provided in the areas of special education and suspension.

AIDS Center of Queens County

AIDS Center of Queens County (ACQC) provides comprehensive social services for Queens residents with HIV infection or AIDS, their families, partners and caregivers. Its services are provided in English and Spanish and include: Case Management, Mental Health, Legal Services, Harm Reduction, a Housing Placement Program, Education/Prevention, etc.

Legal Services Program

Direct Representation

Volunteer attorneys are needed in the following areas: wills, immigration and entitlements. Training is provided.

American Indian Law Alliance (AILA)

The American Indian Law Alliance (AILA) Legal Services Project provides free, culturally sensitive legal services for the New York City Native American community, numbering over 40,000. These legal services include, but are not limited to, basic legal services in housing and discrimination, as well as work relating to the Indian Child Welfare Act and border-crossing issues affected by the Jay Treaty.

Legal Representation for Native Americans

Volunteer attorneys are needed in the following areas: children's law, family and matrimonial law, government benefits, housing and tenants, welfare, and Indian Child Welfare Act (adoption and enrollment). Volunteer attorneys work directly with the Director of the Legal Services Project on specific legal issues.

Direct Representation

Volunteer attorneys are needed in the following areas: children's law, family and matrimonial law, government benefits, housing and tenants, welfare, and the Indian Child Welfare Act (adoption and enrollment). Volunteers are required to carry out their cases to completion.

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)

Founded in 1974, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) is the first legal rights organization on the East Coast serving Asian Americans. We were founded by a group of lawyers, law students and community activists who believed that the law should be used as a tool to achieve social and economic justice for Asian Americans and all Americans.

AALDEF works on a variety of programs, including voting rights, combating Asian-American violence and police brutality, fighting against sweat shops, defending the rights of low-income tenants, affirmative action, and immigrants' rights.

Direct Representation

Attorneys are needed to represent individuals or co-counsel with the organization on cases involving immigration and deportation, employment (wage-and-hour), and education and language access.

Association for the Help of Retarded Children (AHRC)

The Association for the Help of Retarded Children provides a wide variety of services to mentally retarded individuals and their families, including adult day services, evaluation services, home health care, and legal services, particularly in the areas of disability, guardianship issues and future care planning.

Direct Representation

Volunteer attorneys are needed in the following areas: disability, family & juvenile, housing, immigration and naturalization and life planning. Training is provided and is sometimes required.

Bronx County Supreme Court, Civil Branch, 12th Judicial District

The Civil Branch of the Supreme Court, Bronx County, utilizes a panel of approximately 100 attorneys designated by the Administrative Judge of the 12th Judicial District to represent indigent litigants in both contested and uncontested matrimonial proceedings.

Legal Representation in Matrimonial Proceedings

Volunteer attorneys are needed for all aspects of matrimonial proceedings, including post-trial motions. The criterion for selection is previous experience in representing litigants in matrimonial proceedings in Supreme Court, Bronx County. Attorneys are assigned randomly to the pending matters. The program is supervised by the Administrative Judge. Fluency in Spanish is useful, but not necessary.

Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)

The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) is a non-profit legal and educational organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Founded in 1966 by Arthur Kinoy, William Kunstler, Morton Stavis and Ben Smith, CCR is committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change.

CCR uses litigation, education and organizing support to empower communities, to guarantee the rights of those with the fewest protections and the least access to legal resources, to train the next generation of progressive lawyers and activists, and to strengthen the progressive movement.

Assist with CCR Litigation

CCR is looking for a plaintiff in a FOIA lawsuit to obtain documents that discuss treatment and abuse of detainees in Afghanistan, Iraq and the detention center at Guantanamo Bay from various departments and branches of the US Government (e.g., Department of Defense, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation). As the litigation continues, the government produces more and more documents. At times, over 10,000 pages are produced at one time. Unfortunately, CCR staff has not had sufficient time and resources to review all the documents immediately. As a volunteer, one will be called when documents are produced and need to be reviewed. Along with other volunteers, one will review the released governmental documents to help identify critical information that can be publicly disclosed to media in an attempt to hold the Bush Administration accountable for their actions abroad.

The Children's Law Center (CLC)

The Children's Law Center (CLC) is a not-for-profit law firm that provides legal representation to children in custody/visitation, guardianship, and family offense (domestic violence) cases. CLC is appointed by the judges of the Brooklyn and Bronx Family Courts and the Integrated Domestic Violence Parts in the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island. CLC is funded by the Office of Court Administration. Most cases involve disputes between parents as to custody and/or visitation. In some cases the dispute is between a parent and non-parent. Most cases involve issues of domestic violence and child neglect and abuse. Each child is interviewed by an attorney, which is often done multiple times. The parties are also interviewed and an investigation is conducted. In some cases, a CLC social worker works with the lawyer on the case. The Children's Law Center strives to represent the child's interests and wishes effectively and aggressively and to insure that the child's voice is heard and that his/her interests are placed before the court.

Appellate Practice

CLC files appellate briefs on behalf of children in a number of Family Court matters. Volunteers are needed to draft respondents' briefs to be submitted to the Appellate Division. Areas of law include child custody, visitation and domestic violence. Extensive supervision by CLC staff attorneys is provided and required. The volunteer can work at CLC or out of office but should be available for occasional meetings at CLC's offices. Good legal writing skills required and prior experience in appellate brief writing preferred. Background in family law preferred but not required.

Attorneys

Volunteer would work with the staff at the Children's Law Center taking cases and representing the children. Volunteers should have some litigation experience. The Children's Law Center staff will train all volunteers in substantive areas of the law, trial techniques, interviewing children, child development, and the psychological impact of separation, divorce, and family violence on children.

City Bar Justice Center (CBJC)

Founded by the Association of the Bar of the City of New York in 1946, the City Bar Justice Center strives to facilitate and improve the administration of justice. By leveraging volunteer attorneys at its Law Program or advising the self-represented at the Legal Hotline, the City Bar Justice Center provides legal assistance to over 15,000 low-income New Yorkers annually. City Bar Justice Center staff and volunteers serve immigrants, battered women, the homeless, families in crisis, elders, people with cancer, and others who cannot access legal resources. Over 12,000 calls are answered through the Legal Hotline and over 400 people are provided with assistance each year in uncontested and contested divorce clinics. Through the CityBar Public Service Network, the City Bar Justice Center fosters public service in the legal profession by matching attorneys with legal and non-legal volunteer opportunities.

In addition, the City Bar Justice Center is committed to increasing the public's knowledge and understanding of the justice system. Toward this end, the City Bar Justice Center supports projects of the Association's approximately 180 Association committees and its renowned library. The committee projects have stimulated legal and public policy reforms that have had a positive impact upon individual lives and communities.

Assist Individuals in Contested Divorce Proceedings

The Pro Se Contested Divorce Clinic needs attorneys with matrimonial experience to assist individuals involved in contested divorce proceedings.

Refugee Assistance Project

Represent Political Asylum Seekers

Volunteer attorneys are needed to represent asylum-seekers before the BCIS. Training is provided and CLE credit is available.

Legal Clinic for the Homeless

Represent and/or Advise Homeless Individuals

Volunteers are needed to provide advice and counsel, brief services and, if necessary, representation at fair hearings for people who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. Training on public assistance and subsidized housing is provided. Volunteers are required to attend at least two clinics or represent two clients through referral in the year after they are trained.

Immigrant Women & Children's Project

Represent Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence

Volunteer attorneys are needed to represent IWC clients seeking to self-petition under VAWA. Training is provided and CLE credit is available.

Elderlaw Project

Represent and/or Advise Senior Citizens

Volunteer attorneys are trained to give advice, counsel and, if necessary, brief services to clients who attend Elderlaw Clinics. Also, volunteer attorneys are needed to provide wills for indigent elderly clientele. Training is provided and CLE credit is available.

Cancer Advocacy Program

Represent Cancer Survivors with Insurance Claims

The Cancer Advocacy Program needs volunteer attorneys with relevant experience to represent cancer sufferers and survivors in insurance litigation claims.

Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project

Represent Small Businesses

Attorneys are needed to represent micro entrepreneurs in a number of areas, including: forming a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, LLP or LLC; reviewing and negotiating commercial leases; protecting trademarks and copyrights; preparing sales and service contracts; dealing with employment law matters, including drafting and reviewing employment agreements; reviewing loan documents and; obtaining necessary city, state and federal licenses and registrations. Volunteers can also make presentations at community-based organizations on a variety of legal issues facing small businesses.

Consumer Bankruptcy Project

Assist Individual Filing Chapter 7 Bankruptcy

Attorneys are needed to provide advice and counsel to pro se chapter 7 debtors.

Dwa Fanm

Dwa Fanm is New York's leading nonprofit community based domestic violence service organization working with Haitian, Caribbean and African immigrants. Dwa Fanm's mission is to promote and participate in a comprehensive and compassionate response to domestic violence through community education for increased understanding and prevention of domestic violence, advocacy for public responsibility and services that improve the quality of life for victims of domestic violence and their families. Dwa Fanm is committed to empowering all women and girls with the freedom to define and control their own lives. Dwa Fanm works to end discrimination, violence and other forms of injustice through its many programs.

Client services include individual and group counseling, case management, housing and financial assistance and legal assistance. Education services include awareness education, targeted prevention programs for men, women and youth, and materials distribution. All services and programs at Dwa Fanm are provided free of charge.

Jistis Pou Fanm

Prepare VAWA Petitions and Uncontested Divorce Filings

Dwa Fanm is in need of volunteer attorneys to assist clients in preparing VAWA self-petitions and filing for uncontested divorces. Training and on-going supervision will be provided. French or Creole language skills preferred but not required.

Assist with Contested Divorce and Child Custody

Dwa Fanm is seeking volunteer attorneys to represent clients in filing for contested divorce and custody matters. Supervision is available, but currently there is no formal training program, so this project is best suited for attorneys with experience in matrimonial law. French or Creole language skills preferred but not required.

The Fortune Society

The Fortune Society exists to help prisoners and those facing jail or prison time. The Fortune Society works to improve prison conditions and protect the rights of prisoners. Staffed primarily by ex-prisoners, Fortune is committed to providing the foundation from which new lives can be launched. The Fortune Society seeks to reverse current punitive criminal justice policy and to address the root causes of crime through outreach and advocacy. Fortune is committed to having its services and advocacy shaped by the prison and transition experiences of ex-offenders. The Fortune Society recognizes the importance of prevention by developing services that reflect the needs of our clients and their families. Fortune acts to reverse the current plague of prison construction and mass incarceration by changing minds and building lives.

Freedom of the Press

The Fortune Society publishes a quarterly newsletter, FortuneNews, which is distributed to prisons nationwide. Currently, there are certain prisons that refuse to take the paper in. Fortune is looking for volunteer attorneys to help them challenge this practice as a freedom of the press issue. There is some precedent in this area, based on the right of a publication to reach the audience for which it was intended.

The Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc. (GMHC)

Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-supported and community-based organization committed to national leadership in the fight against AIDS. Its mission is to reduce the spread of HIV disease, help people with HIV maintain and improve their health and independence, and keep the prevention, treatment and cure of HIV an urgent national and local priority.

Volunteer Attorney

GMHC is seeking volunteer attorneys to assist the Legal Services Department in the following areas: Family Law, Tax, Employment, and Medical Malpractice. The volunteer attorney would be able to provide pro bono legal consultation or pro bono legal representation on cases referred directly from the Legal Services Department. The volunteer would also be able to offer expert advice to Legal Services attorneys about specific legal research questions in the above-mentioned practice areas.

Grace Institute

For over 100 years, Grace Institute has provided underserved New York women with the practical skills necessary for obtaining employment, developing self-sufficiency and improving the quality of their lives. Originally established by William R. Grace and his brother Michael in 1897 as a tuition-free, non-sectarian educational and vocational school for immigrant women, the school has evolved over the years to meet the demands of today's society.

Grace Institute serves women through a quality job-training program that nurtures and shapes the whole person while teaching the skills to enable them to contribute to 21st century society. Grace Institute provides discipline, direction, stability and community while students learn to be competitive in the market place. Students' self-esteem grows through this supportive learning environment with its focus on both personal and practical development. The Grace history of achieving excellence through high expectations is reflected in the programs and in the commitment to faculty and students.

Nonprofit Assistance

Grace would love to talk to a retired attorney or an attorney who can make a significant time commitment about opportunities to provide legal counsel or other assistance to the organization.

Entrepreneurship Program

Assist Micro Entrepreneurs

Attorneys are needed to assist students in its Entrepreneurship Program. Attorneys could serve as presenters or speakers for various Program events. Attorneys could also provide pro bono legal assistance to prospective entrepreneurs.

Habitat for Humanity - NYC

Habitat for Humanity is an ecumenical Christian organization that works in partnership with people everywhere to build affordable houses for individuals and families in need. Construction is a partnership venture between volunteers and future home owners. Houses are sold at no profit and with a no interest mortgage repaid over fifteen to thirty years.

Real Estate Assistance

Habitat is looking for attorneys to help with residential real estate closings.

Housing Conservation Coordinators, Inc. (HCC)

Individuals who live between 34th Street to 72nd Street are eligible for HCC'sr services. Intake is Mondays from 4-6:30pm and Thursday 10-12:30 on a walk in basis. Individuals who reside outside the organization's catchmen area are eligible to attend our legal clinic every Monday evening at 7pm to meet with a volunteer lawyer for legal advice.

Public Benefits

HCC provides advocacy and representation for individuals who have problems accessing and maintaining public assistance.

Legal Representation

HCC provides free legal services, including legal representation, to eligible low and moderate income tenants, tenant associations, DFC cooperatives and other community organizations located in the Hell's Kitchen/Clinton neighborhood in housing related matters.

Human Rights First

Since 1978, Human Rights First (f/k/a The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights) has worked in the U.S. and abroad to create a secure and humane world by advancing justice, human dignity and respect for the rule of law. Human Rights First supports human rights activists who fight for basic freedoms and peaceful change at the local level; protects refugees in flight from persecution and repression; promotes fair economic practices by creating safeguards for workers' rights; and helps build a strong international system of justice and accountability for the worst human rights crimes.

Asylum Program

Direct Representation

Human Rights First matches asylum clients with volunteer lawyers. Asylum Program staff train and guide the volunteer lawyers through the asylum application process and hearings. The comprehensive training and support system includes videotapes, instructional manuals, simulated hearings, and symposia with experts on conditions in countries from which clients have fled.

inMotion, Inc.

InMotion seeks to expand the availability of quality pro bono legal counsel to indigent and working-poor women in New York City. Women find assistance with matrimonial and family court cases through pro bono direct representation, pro se and technical assistance, legal clinics, policy initiatives, and community outreach. In addition to the 1,000+ women who have been represented in both Supreme and Family Court by inMotion volunteers, InMotion staff in Manhattan and the Bronx helps hundreds of additional women each year with advice, counsel and brief services. InMotion also has an annual Pro Se Workshop that teaches women with uncontested cases how to file for and obtain divorces pro se.

Traditional Pro Bono

Uncontested Divorce/VAWA Attorney

A volunteer is needed to take major responsibility for uncontested divorce cases and/or Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petition matters. This may include drafting pleadings, filing papers, and conferencing with clients regarding the content of divorce pleadings and supporting affidavits in connection with self-petitions to BCIS (the former INS).

Direct Representation

Lawyers can represent individual clients in litigated matters: divorces with issues (financial and/or child-related) in Supreme Court and orders of protection, custody/visitation and child and spousal support matters in Family Court. These cases often involve motion practice and extensive discovery. Many cases result in hearings and a few proceed to full trial, requiring witness preparation, the delivery of oral arguments and the chance to conduct direct and cross examinations.

Jewish Community Relations Council

The Jewish Legal Assistance Program (JLAP) provides legal assistance to Jewish communal and religious organizations in corporate and tax exempt areas, real estate and litigation.

Direct Representation

Volunteers are needed to provide legal assistance in corporate and tax exempt areas, real estate and litigation. Volunteer lawyers are trained on an individual basis, and the commitment varies by project.

Kings County D.A.'s Office

The bureaus, units and divisions of the Kings County District Attorney's Office specialize in various areas of law and crime. Each bureau includes attorneys, investigators and paralegals that gather evidence, analyze information, and prepare as well as present cases for prosecution. Equally important are the many complimentary bureaus that support the agency's objectives in law enforcement, community development and the improvement of quality of life for Brooklyn residents.

Volunteer D.A.

Volunteers are needed to work as Special Assistant District Attorneys. Volunteers would serve in almost every aspect of a D.A.'s work in various areas of law and crime. No prior criminal law experience is necessary.

Senior Affairs Bureau

Retired Attorneys Program

The Kings County D.A.'s Office is looking for retired attorneys to serve as Special Assistant D.A.'s on matters affecting senior citizens throughout Brooklyn.

Lawyers For Children (LFC)

Lawyers For Children (LFC) was founded in 1984 and remains one of the leading professional, not-for-profit organizations in New York City dedicated to representing children in foster care. In addition, LFC provides free legal and social work services to children who are the subject of abuse, neglect, termination of parental rights, adoption, guardianship, paternity, custody and visitation proceedings. LFC's unique, multi-disciplinary approach to advocacy on behalf of individual children is enhanced by LFC's commitment to continually explore new and innovative ways to protect and advocate for children on a system-wide basis. Their endeavors include: Impact Litigation, Policy Advocacy, Child Sexual Abuse Evaluation and Education Project, Child-Centered Evaluative Visiting, Immigration Rights Project for Children in Foster Care, Groundbreaking Handbooks for Children in Foster Care.

Litigation

Volunteers who are able to contribute twenty-four hours per week over a minimum three-month period of time are eligible to participate in LFC's pro bono direct legal services program. In addition, LFC frequently uses the services of pro bono attorneys to handle appeals. Appellate work is subject to entirely different time commitments and is the most common form of pro bono assistance provided to LFC. Training is provided and required.

The Legal Action Center (LAC)

The Legal Action Center (LAC) is a policy and legal organization that advocates for the rights of people living with or affected by HIV, people with histories of alcohol and/or drug dependence, and people with criminal records. LAC conducts impact litigation in these areas and also provides advice and advocacy on behalf of thousands of individuals in these constituencies.

Direct Representation

Volunteers are needed to represent individuals in administrative and court proceedings to challenge discrimination because of a criminal record, alcohol/drug related problem, or HIV status, or to challenge the breach of HIV privacy. Other volunteer opportunities may also exist - in LAC's legal services project or some of its policy projects - depending on the background of the volunteer attorney.

Legal Action for Animals

Legal Action for Animals provide legal advice and representation to individuals enforcing their rights to domestic pets, who experience negligence by veterinarians or other pet care givers, or who witness or are victims of animal abuse.

Direct Representation

Legal Action for Animals needs volunteers to assist in providing legal consultation, advice and direct representation to its clients.

Legal Aid Society

The Legal Aid Society in New York City is the nation's oldest and largest provider of legal services to the indigent. The Society's diverse practice in the areas of civil legal work, criminal defense and juvenile justice make it a truly unique, full-service institution. Each year, Legal Aid Staff of approximately 900 lawyers and 800 support personnel provide comprehensive legal services to approximately 300,000 poor individuals and families throughout New York City's five boroughs.

A crucial component of this work is the more than 1,000 attorneys and paralegals in the private bar who join with the society to ensure equal access to justice.

Social Security Disability and SSI Hearings

The Legal Aid Society is looking for a volunteer to act as a representative to disabled clients in hearings before the Social Security Administration. The role of the representative is to investigate the facts, gather corroborating medical evidence, and prepare the client for the hearing.

Housing Authority Termination of Tenancy Hearings

Public housing is one of the few affordable housing alternatives in New York City. Defending clients in administrative proceedings who are threatened with eviction from the "Projects" provides crucial legal assistance to prevent homelessness. Clients frequently are elderly or longtime residents, in cases where the New York City Housing Authority is alleging that another member of the household engaged in antisocial behavior. Pro bono counsel engage in fact-finding and document discovery, prepare witnesses, and conduct the direct and cross-examination.

Juvenile Rights Appeals

The Juvenile Rights Division represents New York City's abused and neglected children and is the public defender for children accused of committing criminal acts. The division's appeals unit represents children who have been freed for adoption or have been adjudicated juvenile delinquents. Volunteer attorneys receive expert appellate counsel to break down the transcript for appellate issues, review their appellate briefs, and oversee the final submission of papers.

Early Intervention Project

The Juvenile Rights Division represents many foster children under the age of three who are entitled to services under the federal Early Intervention Program to address delays in childhood development. Properly administered, this unique enrichment program can provide a varied menu of services critical to a child's healthy development and success in school. The volunteer attorney will interview the child and his/her caregiver, facilitate the referral process, monitor the applicable agency, and represent the child at the Individualized Family Service Plan Meeting. The process calls for skillful negotiation and advocacy on behalf of the child. Ongoing supervision by an expert children's rights attorney includes training and assistance in interviewing children.

Brooklyn Office for the Aging

Wills & Estates

Clients with small estates seek counsel to prepare simple wills. Pro bono attorneys confer with assigned clients at the Legal Aid office, obtain the necessary information, and prepare drafts. Volunteers meet with the clients again for finalization.

Consumer Issues

Seniors are vulnerable to liens on bank accounts containing exempt Social Security benefits vital to pay for rent, food and other essentials. The liens result from Civil Court judgments in which elderly clients never received notice of the underlying proceedings or were unable to respond in a timely fashion. Pro bono counsel provide needed redress filing motions to vacate default judgments, engaging in telephone advocacy with the creditor's attorney, and undertaking other salutary actions.

Assist Elderly Consumers

The elderly are also susceptible to misappropriation of funds and/or breach of fiduciary duty, as well as home improvement loan fraud and rent overcharges. Civil litigation in these areas involves pro bono counsel in conducting fact and documentary discovery, drafting legal pleadings and memoranda of law, negotiating, and participating in plenary hearings. Each case is supervised by an experienced Legal Aid attorney who conducts the initial attorney-client interview and remains available for advice and counsel throughout the proceedings.

Housing Development Unit

Community Housing Development

There are a variety of valuable ways for pro bono counsel to contribute to community housing development. They include, but are not limited to:

- Litigation Counsel to obtain court orders directing landlords to make repairs and restore essential services and to enforce compliance with those orders;
- Litigation Counsel to secure the appointment of an administrator to manage badly deteriorated buildings and then assist the administrator in obtaining financing to make major repairs and capital improvements;
- Real Estate Counsel to tenant associations seeking to purchase their buildings and form low-income co-ops;
- House Counsel to existing low-income co-ops;
- Corporate Counsel to not-for-profit community-based organizations on development projects to build or rehabilitate affordable housing; and
- Corporate Counsel to not-for-profit community-based organizations on other economic development matters, such as expanding day care, job training, and other needed community services.

In every matter, the volunteers work with a staff team experienced in representation of tenant groups and community-based non-profit organizations. This challenging pro bono work has had a significant impact on our city's poorest neighborhoods and in the lives of thousands of New Yorkers. Training may be available.

Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic

Tax Representation

Attorneys are needed to represent clients in disputes with the IRS and New York State.

Criminal Appeals Bureau

Represent Indigent in Criminal Appeals

Attorneys are needed to represent indigent individuals in criminal appeals.

Family Law Unit

Domestic Violence and Family Law

Under the supervision of experienced family lawyers, junior associates serve a crucial role to put an end to family violence and build financial independence through successful advocacy. Pro bono counsel conduct the evidentiary hearing in Family Court following investigation, documentary discovery, and preparation of the client witnesses. Services are provided in the following areas: custody - contested and uncontested; divorce - contested and uncontested; equitable distribution issues; separation agreements; visitation; orders of protection; welfare issues; immigration - domestic violence self-petitions and battered spouse waivers; and housing - New York City housing and Section 8 moves. Staff lawyers also assist hundreds of women who are victims of domestic violence, aided by law students that the staff trains and deploys at the Manhattan Family Court through the Courtroom Advocates Project.

Immigration Law Unit

Direct Representation

The Immigration Law Unit works with attorneys looking to volunteer to represent their clients in a number of immigration-related areas, including asylum, deportation and removal proceedings.

The Legal Aid Society-Brooklyn Office for the Aging

The Civil Division's Brooklyn Office for the Aging is the legal services program for nearly 1% of the nation's elderly population. Limited resources compel staff to restrict representation to seniors threatened with eviction or the denial/reduction of critical government benefits. Pro bono attorneys help to fill the immense need for assistance with other crucial legal problems.

Consumer Issues

Seniors are vulnerable to liens on bank accounts containing exempt Social Security benefits vital to pay for rent, food and other essentials. The liens result from Civil Court judgments in which elderly clients never received notice of the underlying proceedings or were unable to respond in a timely fashion. Pro bono counsel provide needed redress filing motions to vacate default judgments, engaging in telephone advocacy with the creditor's attorney, and undertaking other salutary actions.

Wills & Estates

Clients with small estates seek counsel to prepare simple wills. Pro bono attorneys confer with assigned clients at the Legal Aid office, obtain the necessary information, and prepare drafts. Volunteers meet with the clients again for finalization.

Direct Representation

The Brooklyn Office for the Aging can use the assistance of lawyers with relevant experience to represent its clients in a number of legal areas that affect the elderly, including benefits, eviction, wills, health care proxies, simple estates, etc.

Assist Elderly Consumers

The elderly are susceptible to misappropriation of funds and/or breach of fiduciary duty, as well as home improvement loan fraud and rent overcharges. Civil litigation in these areas involves pro bono counsel in conducting fact and documentary discovery, drafting legal pleadings and memoranda of law, negotiating, and participating in plenary hearings. Each case is supervised by an experienced Legal Aid attorney who conducts the initial attorney-client interview and remains available for advice and counsel throughout the proceedings.

Legal Momentum

Since 1970, Legal Momentum (formerly NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund) continues to be at the center of every major social and economic justice concern on the women's rights agenda, defining the issues and bringing them to public attention. Legal Momentum pursues equality for women and girls in the workplace, the schools, the family and the courts, through litigation, education, and public information programs. Legal Momentum's docket of 70 cases covers a wide range of gender equity issues. Legal Momentum also provides technical assistance to Congress and state legislatures, employs sophisticated media strategies, distributes up-to-the-minute fact sheets, and organizes national grassroots coalitions to promote and sustain broad-based advocacy for women's equality. Established in 1970 by the founders of the National Organization for Women, Legal Momentum is a separate organization with its own mission, programs and Board of Directors.

Employment and Housing Rights for Survivors of Abuse

Represent Victims of Employment or Housing Discrimination

Attorneys are needed to represent domestic violence victims who have been discriminated against on their jobs or face eviction or have been denied new housing due to the violence.

Legal Services for Children (LSC)

Legal Services for Children (LSC) is a legal assistance organization that represents children in civil legal matters, including special education disputes and Social Security disability benefits. LSC also conducts outreach to poor and underserved communities about the rights of children and sources of help when their rights are violated.

Represent Children

To dramatically increase the number of people being served while keeping costs low, LSC has created a model for recruiting and training volunteer attorneys.

LSC welcomes on a full- or part-time basis, as associates, lawyers who have retired, or otherwise left the profession, who wish to join LSC in helping children who cannot help themselves. Associates are given extensive training in the major LSC practice areas. Attorneys who are experts in their areas supervise and co-counsel with them until they become fully familiar with our practice.

Training is provided and required.

Legal Services for New York City (LSNY)

Legal Services for New York City (LSNY) is the largest provider of civil legal services to low-income people in the United States. LSNY's network of programs, office and outreach center offices located in low-income communities and transportation hubs throughout New York City have provided free legal help to people who have nowhere else to turn for over thirty-five years. LSNY's advocates provide high quality free legal services in areas that matter most to their clients and their communities: family, housing, benefits, consumer, health, employment, economic development, and education law.

LSNY represents its clients in courts and administrative tribunals, provides advice or referral when they can't provide representation, assists clients with community based economic development, provides legal education through community workshops, hotlines and written materials, and provides professional training in poverty law for attorneys, advocates and others.

Wills Clinic

Legal Services and Outreach

Pro bono legal assistance is needed in each of LSNY's offices in the following areas: bankruptcy, disability, domestic violence, elder law, family, HIV/AIDS, public benefits, housing, immigration, predatory lending and foreclosure, special education advocacy, tax law, matrimonial and wills. Training may be provided.

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV)

Established in 1967, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (formerly Westchester/Putnam Legal Services) is a non-profit law firm committed to providing support, advocacy and high quality civil legal services to poor individuals and families that cannot afford necessary legal counsel.

LSHV works with poor populations in Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Ulster, Orange and Sullivan counties. Their clientele consists primarily of minorities, women and children seeking representation in matters such as wrongful eviction, denial of public benefits, domestic violence and critical family and educational issues. The Domestic Violence Unit has obtained hundreds of orders of protection for battered women. The AIDS Permanency Planning Program makes it possible for a parent in the terminal stages of the disease to take part in the long-term planning of their child and participate in the guardianship or adoptive process.

Direct Representation

LSHV invites interested attorneys to serve on its distinguished panel of pro bono attorneys through the Volunteer Attorney Program. The mission of the Volunteer Attorney Program is to provide high quality legal services through the organized participation of the private bar.

LSHV will contact a participated attorney before referring a pro bono case. The attorney is free to accept or decline the referral. Malpractice insurance is provided by LSHV. The Volunteer Attorney Program refers civil matters that cannot be undertaken by LSHV staff due to limited resources. Types of cases that will be referred include family law matters, consumer issues, landlord/tenant, wills and bankruptcies. Volunteer attorneys indicate the types of matters they are willing to accept. Attorneys accepting a pro bono assignment through the Volunteer Attorney Program are eligible to receive one CLE credit for every six "fifty minute hours" spent working on the case.

Make the Road by Walking (MRBW)

Make the Road by Walking (MRBW) is a membership-led organization based in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Its members are primarily low-income Latino immigrants. The organization promotes economic opportunity and participatory democracy by increasing residents' power to achieve self-determination through collective action. MRBW's multi-faceted approach incorporates the following elements; organization and Activism to build a stronger community, to subject governing institutions to democratic community control, and to mobilize resistance to oppression; collaborative learning to share ideas and experiences, to analyze the root causes of the problems we face, and to strategize about how we can take action together to resolve these problems in a way that values the voice, perspective, and contribution of every person; a Community of Support to provide badly-needed educational and legal services to members and leaders, to draw people into our educational and organizing activities, and to affirm an ethic of cooperation, mutual help, and dignity.

Attorney Referrals

MRBW is in need of pro bono attorneys to whom they can refer cases, or with whom they can co-counsel cases. There is a particular need for attorneys to handle the following types of cases: Family law and custody issues (for clients who are not necessarily victims of domestic violence); consumer law; small business issues (not usually litigation); torts - assault & battery cases, lead paint poisoning cases, occasional toxic/chemical exposure cases, medical malpractice cases, etc.; criminal defense cases; housing cases.

Labor/Employment and Housing Lawyers

MRBW needs volunteer labor/employment and housing lawyers on Monday evenings to conduct consultations with and provide advice to low-income clients who come to a drop-in clinic. If possible, attorneys would take on one or more cases that come in via the clinics. Employment law training is available for interested attorneys, but prior experience with housing law is preferred.

Medicare Rights Center (MRC)

Medicare Rights Center (MRC) is a national, not-for-profit organization located in New York City that helps people with Medicare get good, affordable healthcare. We assist clients to understand Medicare rights, benefits, and options. MRC identifies the failings and limitations of the Medicare program, recommends systemic changes to correct them, educates the public about Medicare issues, empowers seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare to help themselves and, where necessary, takes corrective action on their behalf.

Represent Clients with Medicare Issues

MRC seeks volunteer lawyers with excellent writing and communication skills to represent clients with Medicare-related problems and to enhance its advocacy efforts. The Volunteer Lawyer will report to and work closely with MRC's Director of Client Services.

Depending on the volunteer's interests, responsibilities may include:

- 1) Providing information, assistance and referrals through two Medicare hotlines;
- 2) Supervising junior staff and volunteers on MRC's hotlines;
- 3) Rendering legal advice, developing cases and representing people with Medicare at administrative hearings and court proceedings; and
- 4) Working with senior staff to identify and address systemic problems in the application and administration of Medicare laws.

Training is provided and required.

MFY Legal Services

MFY has a forty-year history of providing high quality, direct civil legal services to low-income individuals, families, and community-based organizations. MFY has a professional staff of twenty attorneys. MFY is located near the courthouses in Lower Manhattan and is convenient to the subway.

Senior Lawyer Volunteer Program

The Senior Lawyer Volunteer Program needs lawyers no longer engaged in the fulltime practice of law who would like to make a longer-term commitment to volunteer their services.

Neighborhood Preservation Project

Legal Assistance

MFY is in need of attorneys to assist with their efforts in representing tenants in eviction proceedings, preventing the illegal conversion of Single Room Occupancy units (SROs), helping tenants stabilize their income and benefits, and assisting city agencies in monitoring SRO compliance with existing law.

Pro Bono Adoption Project

Adoptive Parent Representation

MFY Legal Services is looking for law firms to participate in their Pro Bono Adoption Project, representing prospective adoptive parents throughout the adoptive process. MFY provides training, support and assistance to the pro bono lawyers.

Manhattan Legal Aid for Seniors

Senior Assistance

MFY Legal Services is looking for attorneys to assist with the provision of a broad range of civil legal services to seniors in need of help on housing, benefits, health care, consumer and abuse issues.

The National Center for Law and Economic Studies (f/ka/ Welfare Law Center)

The Welfare Law Center is a national legal and policy organization that works to advance the cause of economic justice for low-income families, individuals, and communities in New York City and across the country. The Center achieves its goals through legal and policy analysis, legal representation, public education, training, and aid and support to advocates. The Center has recently brought landmark cases in New York City on issues including protection of welfare recipients' access to education, the systemic turning away of needy people from welfare centers, providing assistance for persons moving from welfare to work, and failures to implement due process procedures for foster parents and persons wrongfully denied or terminated from food stamps, Medicaid, and cash assistance. This litigation has created a model for litigation across the country.

Legal Research & Representation

Volunteers can assist with legal research and support for the Center's caseload. Opportunities may arise to co-counsel, conduct discovery, and counsel clients.

New York City Law Department

The “Corporation Counsel Public Service Program,” a unique initiative based on the public service/corporate mindset embraced by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg grew out of the strong interest expressed by law firms which aided the Law Department after the September 11, 2001 tragedy. With over 40 participating firms, the program, launched in May 2002, functions as a public/private initiative, where law firms volunteer associate time to the Law Department, enabling it to manage its mounting legal caseload. High caliber attorneys are offered a unique chance to give back to the City of New York in the spirit of public service and bolster their legal and trial experience. There are three aspects to the program--“Tort Volunteers,” “Firm Volunteers” and “Deposition Volunteers.” Firms may send an associate to the Law Department for a period of four to six months to work in its Tort Division, where associates gain the most trial experience. Firms may also represent the City on select, high profile and complex cases, from inception through trial. Finally, firms may instead send associates to partner with Law Department staff attorneys in taking and defending depositions in Federal and/or State court matters. The ongoing programs continue to benefit the Law Department and the city firms involved. By participating in the programs, firms are able to give their young associates valuable “hands on” experience while the Law Department gains more lawyers, enabling it to continue litigating a huge volume of cases in a way that protects the City’s interests to the fullest.

Tort Volunteers

Tort Volunteers

The Law Department is looking for volunteers to work in the Tort Division in Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens and Manhattan. This program is also available to non-firm affiliated attorneys, including solo practitioners and retirees.

Firm Volunteers

Firm Volunteers

The Law Department is looking for firms to take cases or matters in-house on a public service basis. This program is also available to non-firm affiliated attorneys, including retirees.

Deposition Training

Deposition Training

The Law Department is looking for volunteers to partner with staff attorneys to conduct depositions in various cases. This program is also available to non-firm affiliated attorneys, including solo practitioners and retirees.

New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)

Founded in 1990, the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) is a not-for-profit law office that provides free civil legal services for low income New Yorkers. NYLAG provides a wide range of legal services for low income New Yorkers who would otherwise be unable to afford or receive legal help. Direct legal services offered include representation, consultation and impact litigation. A full service agency, NYLAG offers comprehensive assistance from a single location for clients with more than one legal issue. NYLAG units include General Legal Services, Matrimonial/Family Law, Domestic Violence, Immigration, Special Litigation and Legal Health. NYLAG also offers legal education seminars to social workers, medical professionals, and other advocates, and has volunteer programs for attorneys, students and individuals interested in helping New Yorkers with their legal needs.

General Legal Service Unit

Child Advocacy

Attorneys are needed to assist parents/guardians in accessing special education, homecare services and other entitlements for children with special needs.

Elder Law Specialist Project

Attorneys are needed to assist low-income seniors with legal issues including wills, entitlements, health care, nursing home/hospital rights and consumer matters.

Matrimonial/Family Law Unit

Domestic Violence Clinical Center

Volunteer attorneys are needed to represent survivors of domestic violence in family court cases including obtaining orders of protection, custody, and child and/or spousal support.

New York Seniors Legal Assistance Project (NYSLA)

The New York Seniors Legal Assistance Project (NYSLA) is a joint project of Legal Services for the Elderly (LSE) and the City Bar Justice Center (CBJC) that offers a new resource for seniors to obtain assistance with legal matters. NYSLA offers advice and brief services on legal issues that most commonly affect low-income seniors: health care issues (including the new Medicare drug plans); income security issues (Social Security and other benefits); advance directives (health care proxies, living wills and other wills, and powers of attorney); consumer issues (bankruptcy and debt collection); nursing home transition issues; and other elder law issues (such as guardianships). NYSLA was designed to supplement the services available from legal services agencies serving low-income seniors across the state by handling the advice or shorter-service cases, thus freeing up the local legal services agencies to provide more extended representation. Priority is given to lower-income clients and clients who face barriers to obtaining legal relief without assistance, such as those with limited-English skills or personal factors such as fear and stress, frailty and ill health, absence of support mechanisms, living alone, or mobility restrictions.

Attorneys Needed in Consumer Debt and Advance Directive Matters

NYSLA is looking for retired attorneys able to dedicate a minimum of one day or multiple half-days to assist elderly individuals with consumer debt cases and/or health care directives. The volunteer would work at LSE's office and be trained and supervised by NYSLA staff. This project is ideal for retired attorneys interested in legal issues that particularly affect senior citizens.

New York State Division of Human Rights

The Division of Human Rights ensures equal opportunity in employment, housing, public accommodation, education and credit. The Division enforces the Human Rights Law, seeking to: promote human rights awareness; prevent and eliminate discrimination; investigate and resolve complaints of illegal discrimination fairly; and develop human rights legislation and policy for the state.

Legal Research, Writing, and Trial Preparation

Volunteer attorneys work in areas of legal research, writing and trial preparation. Extensive training is available to volunteers who commit to two days of service per week.

Pro Bono Partnership

Founded in 1997, the Pro Bono Partnership provides free business legal services and educational resources to nonprofit organizations in Fairfield County, CT, Westchester County, NY and New Jersey. It also provides some services to nonprofits in the surrounding region on a case-by-case basis. The Partnership assists nonprofit clients that benefit low-income communities or serve the public interest, and are unable to pay for legal services without significant impairment to financial resources necessary for the provision of critical programs and services. Partnership clients represent a broad spectrum of agencies addressing community needs, however the majority fall into the following categories: health and human services; child care; community development; youth; housing; education; mental health/disabilities; women/families/domestic violence; and multipurpose organizations.

Provide Legal Assistance to a Nonprofit Organization

The Pro Bono Partnership has ongoing volunteer opportunities for attorneys interested in assisting nonprofit organizations in a variety of transactional matters, including general corporate, employment, incorporation and tax exemption, real estate and intellectual property. For a complete list of the Partnership's current volunteer opportunities, please visit: www.probonopartnership.org/opportunities.htm.

Queens County District Attorney's Office

The Appeals Bureau of the Queens County District Attorney's Office offers attorneys an opportunity to provide a valuable service to the people of Queens County and to the victims of serious crimes, while receiving in return a valuable and rewarding appellate experience. Under the Appeals Bureau's Pro Bono program, a participating attorney will be appointed a Special Assistant District Attorney and be assigned to work on a criminal appeal from a serious felony conviction.

Appeals Bureau Pro Bono Program

Volunteer attorneys are needed to work on all aspects of criminal appeals through the Appeal Bureau's Pro Bono Program. Under the Appeals Bureau's Pro Bono program, a participating attorney will be appointed a Special Assistant District Attorney and be assigned to work on a criminal appeal from a serious felony conviction. The volunteer attorney will be responsible for reviewing the trial transcript, researching the legal issues raised on appeal, writing the respondent's brief on behalf of the People, and arguing the appeal in the Appellate Division, Second Department. A senior Appeals Bureau assistant will provide the attorney with sample briefs and a style guide, answer any questions that the attorney may have while writing the brief, edit the brief, and prepare the attorney for oral argument by conducting a moot court before a panel of Appeals Bureau assistants. The program tries to the greatest extent possible to ensure that every participating attorney does, in fact, have an oral argument in the Appellate Division. Prior criminal or appellate experience is useful, but not necessary.

Applicants must be attorneys admitted to practice law in New York and should have access to a library or computerized legal research materials.

Queens Volunteer Lawyers' Project, Inc. (QVLP)

Queens Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc. is a not-for-profit legal assistance program dedicated to providing attorneys on a pro bono basis to residents of Queens County who cannot afford to retain a lawyer to resolve their civil legal problems.

Volunteer Lawyers

Volunteer lawyers are assigned to represent indigent persons in Housing Court to avoid or delay eviction; in Family Court to secure custody or visitation rights or child support; in administrative hearings to obtain government benefits which have been denied; in actions to secure uncontested divorces; as well as in miscellaneous matters such as foreclosures and consumer problems.

Volunteers are trained through seminars in the relevant areas of law. The suggested volunteer commitment is ten hours per year.

Safe Horizon

Safe Horizon is the nation's largest victim assistance provider that serves more than 350,000 clients annually. Its mission is to provide support, prevent violence and promote justice for victims of crime and abuse.

Safe Horizon's Domestic Violence Law Project (DVLP) provides high-quality legal representation to low-income and indigent battered women in Family and Supreme Court proceedings including orders of protection, custody, visitation, child support and divorce.

The Immigration Law Project (ILP) provides free and low-cost legal services to victims of crime, torture and abuse in immigration proceedings, including Violence Against Women Act self-petitions, battered spouse waivers as well as political and gender-based asylum claims.

To assist as many clients as possible, DVLP and ILP operate legal hotlines that provide information, referrals and assistance to battered women. DVLP and ILP attorneys also receive referrals from citywide domestic violence hotlines, district attorney offices, community groups and family court and immigration judges.

DVLP and ILP staff also conduct training seminars for pro bono attorneys as well as for agency staff and clients to increase awareness of the legal issues facing battered women and available resources.

Represent Battered Women in Court

Pro bono attorneys are regularly needed to represent clients in family offense, custody, visitation, divorce and immigration proceedings. No experience in family or immigration law is necessary. The organization will provide comprehensive training materials to all attorneys interested in taking a case. Experienced family and immigration law practitioners are also assigned as mentors to all volunteer attorneys.

Sanctuary for Families (SFF)

Sanctuary for Families (SFF) is dedicated to meeting the needs of victims of domestic violence, while advocating for societal change and raising public awareness to end violence against all women and their children. Central to Sanctuary's work with individual clients and its efforts to advocate and educate is the belief that this is a crime that must not be tolerated.

Represent Battered Mothers in Family Court Matters

Sanctuary's Center for Battered Women's Legal Services provides extensive training and relies upon attorneys to represent battered women in matrimonial and family court matters. Training sessions are offered in the fall and spring. After completing the training, pro bono counsel are expected to assume at least two cases each year.

Pro Bono Attorney

Sanctuary for Families has volunteer opportunities available for senior or retired attorneys to work in its office on a part-time basis on one or more of its program initiatives. Projects are varied and can be tailored to attorney interest.

Family Law Project

Represent Domestic Violence Victims in Immigration

Volunteer attorneys are needed to represent domestic violence victims in immigration matters.

Courtroom Advocates Project (CAP)/Pro Bono Project

Pro Bono for New Associates

The Courtroom Advocates Project (CAP)/Pro Bono Project trains and mentors new law firms associates not yet admitted to the Bar who advocate for domestic violence victims when they first enter family court seeking orders of protection.

Contested Divorce Project

Assist Individuals in Contested Divorce Proceedings

Volunteers will have the opportunity to litigate contested divorces for domestic violence victims who desperately need to sever all ties with their batterers.

Child Projection Project

Represent Battered Mothers against Child Welfare Agency

Volunteers represent battered mothers in New York City who come to the attention of the City's child welfare agency and face removal of their children from their care due to domestic violence or other coercive governmental actions.

Union Settlement Association, Inc.

Union Settlement Association is one of the largest and oldest settlement houses in New York City. Since their founding in 1895, they have provided resources and programs to the neighborhood, while advocating for social and economic justice and foster local leadership. The Settlement is East Harlem's largest social service agency, and responds to issues that affect the entire community. Each year the Settlement serves more than 13,000 neighbors of all ages with effective programs and initiatives in education, recreation, the arts, nutrition, counseling and community development. Many of their programs are models for the public and nonprofit sectors. Union Settlement, in partnership with government, private and corporate funders, and a dedicated corps of volunteers, encourages human potential, helps individuals and families help themselves, and works to preserve and strengthen the social fabric of the community.

Immigration Legal Services

Immigration Advisement: Attorneys are needed to represent individuals who are facing deportation or other INS problems.

United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit

The Criminal Justice Act/Pro Bono Committee of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit is coordinating the Court's Pro Bono Panel. Pro Bono Panel members will, at the Court's invitation, or on an appellant's motion for the appointment of counsel, represent pro se litigants in civil appeals which present issues of first impression, complex issues of law or fact, or which raise potentially meritorious claims warranting further briefing or oral argument. Pro bono representation will be provided to those litigants whom the Court deems would benefit from such representation but who would otherwise be unable to pay for counsel and are ineligible for the appointment of counsel pursuant to the Criminal Justice Act. Cases for which pro bono counsel will be appointed include a broad range of legal issues. While a significant percentage of the cases are prisoners' civil rights appeals, many other issues may be included, such as those involving labor and employment, discrimination, social security, immigration and tax law.

Appointment to Pro Bono Panel

The Criminal Justice Act/Pro Bono Committee is currently seeking applicants for the Court's newly formed pro bono panel. Applicants must be admitted to and members of good standing of the Bar for the Second Circuit and have at least three years appellate experience. Pro Bono Panel members will serve a term not to exceed three years.

United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York Pro Bono Panel

The Court has the authority under 29 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(1) to request an attorney to represent any person unable to afford counsel in a civil matter. The Court recruits volunteers for its cases by sending its panel attorneys a monthly e-mail list of the available pro bono case opportunities. These cases, generally commenced pro se, are screened and selected for pro bono counsel by the assigned judge.

Pro Bono Attorney

Attorneys are needed to serve as pro bono counsel for a variety of civil matters, including civil rights, employment discrimination, social security, cases against the United States, or cases brought under the Court's diversity jurisdiction. Pro bono counsel may apply to the Court for reimbursement of costs.

United States District Court for the Southern District of New York Pro Bono Panel

The Southern District's Pro Bono Panel provides representation to formerly pro se litigants pursuing civil actions before the Court. Upon application to the Court, a judge may grant a litigant's request for pro bono counsel. Once an application for the appointment of counsel is granted, the Court solicits volunteers from the Pro Bono Panel to represent the particular litigant.

Litigation

Volunteer attorneys are needed in the following areas of law: civil rights, employment discrimination, social security and other federal litigation.

Employment Discrimination Pro Bono Mediation Panel

Litigation/Mediation

Volunteer attorneys are needed with experience in employment law and mediation to work with the Employment Discrimination Pro Bono Mediation Panel.

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA)

Since 1969, Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA) has been the leading provider of pro bono legal services, mediation, educational programs and publications, and advocacy to the arts community in the New York area. VLA serves low-income artists and nonprofit arts organizations in every discipline. Programs include the Art Law Line, a hotline staffed by law students, in-house representation, and a pro-bono placement service through which more than 450 matters are placed each year with 1,100+ volunteer lawyers. VLA also maintains an arts-law resource library available to lawyers and clients, and offers art-law workshops to educate the arts community and attorneys.

Represent VLA Clients

Volunteer attorneys provide pro bono legal representation to low-income artists and arts organizations. VLA offers orientation for its lawyers and CLE classes as training. Volunteer attorneys must be covered by their own malpractice insurance.

The Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP)

The Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP) is a free legal services program for indigent residents of Kings County with cases in Kings County. It is the only program of its kind that operates borough-wide in Brooklyn and provides the critical legal services to solve fundamental problems affecting people's basic rights. The VLP is particularly involved in the representation of those affected with HIV/AIDS, battered women, and the elderly, though the organization attempts to assist any financially eligible client. The Project provides training in the areas of: Uncontested Divorces; Bankruptcy; Wills/Estates; Guardianships (for children); Child and Spousal Support; Adoption; and Custody and Visitation. Live trainings provide up to three free CLE credits. Volunteers must commit to accept at least one case per year in the area trained. Case referrals should be accepted within one year of training.

Battered Women's Project

Volunteers are needed to assist battered women with drafting petitions for orders of protection. They provide representation in custody and visitation cases, child and spousal support cases, and in a limited number of contested divorces. Volunteers also staff the Battered Women's Legal Helpline where they refer clients to appropriate social service organizations.

Child/Spousal Support Panel

Volunteer attorneys are needed to assist clients with a variety of child and spousal support cases, including the enforcement or modification of orders. Members of the private Bar act as mentors to attorneys who are new to the field.

Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS)

Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS) develops programs to provide free civil legal services to poor people living in New York City, and then recruits volunteer lawyers and law firms to undertake these services. Training and mentors are provided to volunteer lawyers.

VOLS serves as an information and referral source for lawyers interested in doing pro bono work in New York City and works with law firms to develop or expand pro bono programs. Forty-two law firms have taken the VOLS pledge to provide annually at least an average of 30 hours of qualifying pro bono work per attorney. Additional law firms are invited to take the VOLS pledge.

Elderly Project

Represent and/or Advise Senior Citizens

VOLS is in need of pro bono attorneys to assist with their provision of free civil legal assistance to elderly low-income residents of Manhattan. Assistance can include participation in a legal clinic, legal information seminars for seniors and social work staff, telephone consultations with senior center staff, and direct representation of seniors in need of legal assistance.

Children's Project

Law Firm Assistance

VOLS is looking for law firms to assist with their Children's Project, working to improve health outcomes for poor children. Projects include commencing a Housing Court action to order apartment repairs for a child with asthma, or assisting with restoring benefits to the family of a pediatric patient.

Incarcerated Mothers Law Project

Pro Bono Assistance

VOLS is looking for volunteer lawyers to assist incarcerated mothers with foster care issues, negotiate with foster guardians to bring children in their care for visits with their mothers, and help mothers to prepare for court hearings.

Microenterprise Project

Law Firm Assistance

VOLS is looking for law firms to match with non-profit economic development agencies in New York City that work with microentrepreneurs. Attorneys would provide one-on-one representation on business-related issues and make presentations to groups of microentrepreneurs on basic legal matters.

Workers Defense League (WDL)

The Workers Defense League (WDL) assists workers with work-related problems and conducts educational campaigns around various workers' rights issues. WDL provides free representation and phone consultations to hundreds of people who are believed to have been unfairly denied unemployment insurance benefits after losing or leaving their jobs.

Direct Representation

WDL is particularly interested in volunteers to advise unemployment insurance (UI) claimants about their rights and their losses, to represent UI claimants at administrative hearings, to research UI law; and to research and write appeals or replies to appeals of UI Administrative Law Judge's decisions. Training is provided.
