

Request for Legal Assistance

Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. Our network of pro bono lawyers from law firms and corporations and staff of experienced attorneys collaborate to deliver expert corporate, tax, real estate, employment, intellectual property, and other legal services to community organizations. By *connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities*, we help nonprofits to develop affordable housing, stimulate economic development, promote community arts, strengthen urban health, and operate and advocate for vital programs for children and young people, the elderly, and other low-income New Yorkers.

Lawyers Alliance provides legal assistance for a full range of issues facing community-based and nonprofit organizations, including formation, governance, contracts, real estate, financings, restructurings, tax matters, personnel issues, and compliance with federal and state laws regulating nonprofits. Our legal assistance can strengthen your nonprofit's organizational and operational infrastructure, making it better equipped to fulfill its charitable purposes.

How to Apply for Legal Assistance

If your organization is a nonprofit (or an organization seeking not-for-profit status) operating ongoing programs or activities in New York City that benefit low-income individuals or communities, then it meets Lawyers Alliance's threshold eligibility requirement. The next step is to complete and return the attached application form.

We review *complete* applications to determine whether the organization's work supports Lawyers Alliance's mission and if the organization appears to have a legal matter that we can address. We then invite potential clients to an introductory meeting with one of our staff to discuss the organization's application and legal needs in more detail. If Lawyers Alliance agrees to assist your organization, we will try to place the legal matter with a pro bono attorney, in which case a Lawyers Alliance staff attorney will serve as co-counsel; alternatively, we will assign the entire matter to one of our staff attorneys.

What Does it Cost?

1) If your organization has not previously paid a Lawyers Alliance screening and placement fee, you will be charged one of the following. These payments help cover a portion of Lawyers Alliance's costs to screen your organization's legal needs and place the work with our volunteers.

a) New client fee for nonprofit organizations that are already incorporated and have received federal tax-exempt status: \$475.00.

b) New client fee for organizations that seek legal assistance with incorporation and / or applying for tax exemption: \$575.00. Note: Your organization also will receive, at no additional charge, a copy of Lawyers Alliance's publication, *Getting Organized*, plus admission to an upcoming live or recorded workshop or webinar on "Becoming a Nonprofit: Incorporation and Tax Exemption."



It is *not* necessary to submit payment with your application. Payment is due when you are accepted as a Lawyers Alliance client.

- 2) For services provided exclusively by Lawyers Alliance staff attorneys, we charge a below market rate on an hourly or per transaction basis, depending on the matter.
- 3) For all clients, there will be no charge for legal services provided by a volunteer attorney. Your organization will be responsible for any registration, filing or court fees incurred.

Request for Legal Assistance Form Instructions

The following guidelines will assist you in completing the attached application:

1. Answer all the questions, providing as much detail as possible, and attach additional sheets if necessary to complete the questions thoroughly. The more we know about a prospective client, the easier it will be for us to review its application and assess its legal needs.
2. Enclose the documents requested on page 4.
3. Include brochures and other materials that show the mission, activities, staff, and other special features of your organization.
4. Include documents related to the current legal need (i.e. copies of contracts, personnel policies, audits), if such information is known to you.
5. **Newly-forming organizations MUST provide:**
 - a) A business plan or narrative description of existing and planned programs;
 - b) Documents confirming the amount and sources of funding; if you have not secured funding, provide copies of grant proposals or a fundraising plan;
 - c) A three-year proposed income/expense statement; and
 - d) Names and addresses of the organization's initial board of directors.
6. Please make sure that you have included ALL of the required attachments.
7. Mail your application to:

REQUEST FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE
Lawyers Alliance for New York
171 Madison Avenue, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10016

If you have any questions, contact Lawyers Alliance Client Relations Coordinator at 212-219-1800, x 278.

Request for Legal Assistance Form

Please see page iii for instructions.

1.
 - a. Name of Organization _____
 - b. Address _____

 - c. Phone Number () _____
 - d. Fax Number () _____
 - e. Website _____

2.
 - a. Name of Contact Person _____
 - b. Position in/Relationship to Organization _____
 - c. Address (if different from above) _____

 - d. Work Phone () _____ Home Phone () _____
 - e. Email Address _____

Please place a check mark by the address and telephone number at which you would like Lawyers Alliance to contact the contact person.

3. Please list the purpose and/or mission of the organization.

4. Please list your organization's activities and programs. If you have written brochures or other materials, please include them.

5. Please list any plans of the organization for future activities and/or programs. You may indicate here whether past programs will be ongoing.

6. a. How long has the organization existed? _____
b. Is the organization incorporated? ____YES ____NO Tax-Exempt? ____YES ____NO

If incorporated, enclose a copy of your certificate of incorporation, bylaws and any amendments thereto. If tax-exempt, please enclose a copy of the IRS letter indicating your status.

7. a. How many members does the organization's board of directors have? _____
Attach names, titles, and addresses of board members.

- b. How many employees does the organization have? _____
Attach names and titles of the organization's management staff.

8. a. How many people does the organization currently serve (or if newly forming, how many people does the organization plan to serve)? _____

- b. What geographic region does the organization currently serve (or if newly forming, what geographic region does the organization plan to serve)? _____

9. a. How much money has the organization received this year? _____

- b. Does this year's budget or funding include a line for legal fees? _____

- c. How much money has the organization spent in the last year? _____

Please include an annual report or income/expense statement (with a breakdown of income sources and expenses) for the most recent fiscal year. If you are starting a new organization, attach a three-year proposed income/expense statement—example attached.

- d. Please list names of all private foundation, corporate foundation and government funders in the past two years:

- e. If the organization is newly forming, please list specifically where the organization has sought or plans to seek funding. _____

10. Describe as specifically as possible the legal problem for which the organization seeks assistance. *(Please note that Lawyers Alliance provides only non-litigation legal services.)* If you have documents such as project proposals and budgets, legal papers, contracts, or letters relevant to your problem, include copies of them. _____

11. Are there any affiliates of your organization involved in this matter? If so, please list them below. Please attach the certificate of incorporation, bylaws, 501 (c)(3) determination letter, and names, titles, and addresses of all board members, for each affiliate.

12. Does your organization have any other affiliates that are not involved in this matter? If so, please list them below.

13. Please identify the other party(ies) involved in this matter, if applicable, and explain their role.

14. If the organization has a need for ongoing legal advice, please list those issues for which it needs advice.

15. a. Has a lawyer worked with the organization before on the problem described in question 10 above? YES NO

b. If so, what is that lawyer's name and affiliation?

c. What work has been done? Please specify if this work was on a pro bono or fee basis.

d. Why is she/he no longer representing the organization in this matter?

16. a. Aside from this problem, has the organization had a lawyer's help in the past? YES NO

b. If so, what is that lawyer's name and affiliation?

c. What assistance did she/he provide?

17. How and from whom did you hear about Lawyers Alliance's legal services? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance mailing | <input type="checkbox"/> Law firm or attorney |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> Government funder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance e-mails | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundation funder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Another nonprofit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/Co-worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance website | <input type="checkbox"/> Conference/ meeting (not hosted by Lawyers Alliance) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain): _____ |

Name of referring source: _____

NOTE: Please be sure that you have included all of the following. Your application will not be processed until our office receives all required information:

- Program outline, brochures and/or other descriptive materials
- Certificate of incorporation and amendments
- Bylaws
- IRS Confirmation of tax exempt status (i.e., determination letter), if any
- Lists of officers and directors, and senior staff members
- Annual report or income & expense statement (or three-year proposed budget if organization is newly forming)—example attached.
- Proposal for project funding if newly forming
- Copy of organization’s business plan, strategic plan or recent grant proposal, if available

For each affiliate please provide:

- Certificate of incorporation and amendments
- Bylaws
- IRS Confirmation of tax-exempt status (i.e., determination letter), if any
- Lists of officers and directors, and senior staff members

Return the application and direct any questions to our office. We look forward to hearing from your organization and hope that we can be of assistance.

Signature _____
Print Name _____
Title _____ Date _____

Example Three-Year Budget

The sample budget below is for your reference only. Please submit a budget that is tailored to your organization's needs. For organizations pursuing tax exemption, the budget submitted to Lawyers Alliance will be used as the basis for your organization's application to the IRS. As such try to be as detailed as possible, particularly with regard to specific anticipated sources of funding.

The listed amounts are just placeholders and should NOT be used as a basis for your decision making process while crafting your own budget.

Below are examples of specific government agencies as funding sources. Please similarly list specific institutions and the amounts you anticipate you will receive from them.

<u>Income</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Department of Housing Services	3,000	4,000	5,000
Department of the Aging	2,000	2,100	2,100
DYCD	1,000	1,000	1,500
<i>Total from Government Agencies</i>	<u>6,000</u>	<u>7,100</u>	<u>8,600</u>
Foundation 1	2,000	3,000	4,000
Foundation 2	1,000	1,000	1,500
<i>Total from Foundations</i>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>4,000</u>	<u>5,500</u>
Corporation 1	1,000	1,000	1,000
Corporation 2	5,000	6,000	7,000
Corporation 3	3,000	4,000	5,000
<i>Total from Corporations</i>	<u>9,000</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>13,000</u>
Individuals	1,500	2,200	3,800
<i>Total from Individuals</i>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>2,200</u>	<u>3,800</u>
Total Income	19,500	24,300	30,900
<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Rent	1,000	1,250	1,500
Telephone	0	1,200	1,300
Office Equipment	600	660	750
Postage	600	660	800
Printing	2,000	2,200	2,450
Travel	1,000	1,100	1,250
Staff Salaries	10,000	13,000	17,250
Insurance	1,500	1,650	1,800
Professional Services (including Architectural, Engineering, Accounting, and Legal)	0	0	200
Utilities	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,600</u>	<u>1,750</u>
Total Expenditures	18,200	23,320	29,050