

Volunteer Attorney Accomplishment for Internal and External News

Date: May 12, 2020
Name of Attorneys: Robert Kennedy, Max Goodman, Bessie Qu, Taylor Muller, Nam Phan
Name of Firm: Milbank LLP
Client Served: New York Immigration Coalition
Accomplishment: Drafted guidelines and updated the New York Immigration Coalition’s existing template grant agreements to facilitate its dissemination of disaster relief funds to community-based nonprofit organizations for distribution to immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specific Case Highlights: Founded in 1987, the New York Immigration Coalition (the NYIC) is an umbrella policy and advocacy nonprofit organization that represents over 200 immigrant and refugee rights groups throughout New York State. As the coordinating body for organizations that serve one of the largest and most diverse newcomer populations in the United States, the NYIC is a leading advocate for immigrant communities on the local, state, and national levels.

The NYIC launched the #NYUnited Fund to fight for the health and safety of New York’s 4 million immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many of these immigrant New Yorkers are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic as essential workers, the federal stimulus package under The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) excluded undocumented immigrants and workers that are paid “under the table” from its relief. In order to support these vulnerable immigrant New Yorkers, the NYIC is granting the proceeds from the #NYUnited Fund to community-based nonprofit organizations, which, in turn, are distributing this crucial relief to these individuals in need.

Robert Kennedy, Max Goodman, Bessie Qu, Taylor Muller, and Nam Phan of Milbank LLP assisted the NYIC by updating its template grant agreement and drafting guidelines for the administration of the COVID-19 emergency grants for use with its community partners. By ensuring that the #NYUnited Fund’s recipient eligibility criteria are clearly defined and that the funding is rapidly and securely distributed to those in need, the Milbank volunteers have helped the NYIC make sure that undocumented immigrants are not forgotten in New York’s disaster relief efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, the NYIC has raised over \$1,500,000 in relief through the #NYUnited Fund and expects to distribute more than \$2 million before the end of June 2020.

Steve Choi, the NYIC’s Executive Director, remarked, “The Milbank team has provided rapid response legal advice on our emergency cash grants program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their guidance on the terms of our RFP to member organizations, the agreement between NYIC and its grantees, and helpful FAQ document regarding offering emergency relief have been very helpful. We thank Milbank and Lawyers Alliance for New York for their expert assistance and for being able to take on and complete this work rapidly, allowing us to move quickly to meet emergency needs.”

About Lawyers Alliance: [Lawyers Alliance for New York](https://www.lawyersalliance.org) is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations and social enterprises that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. By connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities, Lawyers Alliance for New York helps organizations to develop and provide housing, stimulate economic opportunity, improve urban health and education, promote community arts, and operate and advocate for vital programs that benefit low-income New Yorkers of all ages. During the past year, staff attorneys at Lawyers Alliance worked with more than 2,000 volunteer attorneys to represent approximately 700 nonprofit clients on 1,350 matters.

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