

INDIVIDUAL HONOREE



MARA B. LEVIN, *Herrick, Feinstein LLP*

Active and Responsive Employment Law Assistance Strengthens Nonprofit Human Resources

Mara B. Levin is partner at Herrick, Feinstein LLP and co-chair of the firm's Business Litigation and Employment Practices. She received an undergraduate degree from the University of Miami in 1983 and J.D. from New York Law School in 1985.

Since first volunteering with Lawyers Alliance in 2009, Ms. Levin has worked with many clients on a myriad of employment law matters, displaying a commitment to pro bono legal services. Employment law advice is essential for nonprofits to manage their workforce effectively and reduce risk. Ms. Levin regularly assists with classification issues; Fair Labor Standards Act compliance, including minimum wage and overtime requirements; drafting of severance agreements, offer letters, and employment handbooks; and general employment compliance. Nonprofits that are out of compliance may be at significant financial risk. Misclassifying an employee as an independent contractor can subject an organization to liability for back taxes, workers' compensation and unemployment penalties, back pay, and interest.

East Harlem Block Nursery (EHBN), which provides early childhood education services, sought Ms. Levin's assistance in evaluating the classifications of individuals working in its child care centers. She also drafted a standardized consulting agreement for EHBN to use with future independent contractors. Says Kelly Haley, EHBN's Interim Administrative Director, "Mara was professional, patient, thorough, and responsive. She really wanted to understand the issue and our sector. We mostly communicated by e-mail, but I always felt connected to her."

Ms. Levin helped **Dress for Success Worldwide (DFS)** understand the application of rules regarding exempt and non-exempt employees. DFS is an international nonprofit organization that empowers women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire, and development tools. As a result of Ms. Levin's work, DFS has adjusted staffing so that it is in compliance with federal laws, made informed decisions about its organizational structure, and forecasted realistic personnel budgets. Deirdre Simmons, DFS' Human Resources Business Partner, says, "Mara is phenomenal. She was informative, helpful, and patient; she continues to provide advice to DFS on exempt/non-exempt employees."

Ms. Levin has also assisted: **The Boys' Club of New York, Bronx Community Pride Center, Clemente Soto Véllez Cultural & Educational Center, Different Encounters, Elders Share the Arts, Heights and Hill Community Council, Henry Kaufmann Campground, Jacob Riis Settlement House, New Alternatives for Children, New York Harbor Foundation, and Queens Comprehensive Perinatal Council.**

Says Ms. Levin, "I have been committed to pro bono causes since my career began, but Lawyers Alliance has been instrumental in enabling me to increase that commitment. The staff is extremely dedicated and knowledgeable and they have connected me with passionate clients who are active in diverse fields, and who share a common goal – making New York a better place to live."