

LAWYERS ALLIANCE FOR NEW YORK

INDIVIDUAL HONOREE



TARA ELLIS, *Seyfarth Shaw LLP*

In-demand employment attorney customizes pro bono services to address clients' needs

Tara Ellis is an associate in the Labor and Employment department at Seyfarth Shaw LLP. She received a B.A. from Georgetown University in 2005 and a J.D. from Cornell Law School in 2008.

Ms. Ellis has volunteered for eight employment matters in just three years. Because of her work, nonprofit organizations have confidence that their employee handbooks are legally compliant and operationally sound. She trained numerous employees and managers about their rights and obligations under the laws against sexual harassment even before New York State made such training mandatory.

Ms. Ellis' commitment to her pro bono clients is truly outstanding. Helping **Pride Center of Staten Island** to negotiate and draft an employment contract for its new Executive Director, she worked to complete the project before her impending due date. Ganine Gambale, Pride Center's Board Chair, says, "I have nothing but good things to say about Tara. We worked really well together. She is very good at what she does and was very accommodating with all of my questions and revisions, producing a clear agreement."

Wendy Longwood, COO of **Dress for Success**, echoes these sentiments, saying, "Tara worked with Dress for Success on an employment matter last fall. She and her colleagues at Seyfarth Shaw were an absolute pleasure to work with, both in terms of thoroughness and responsiveness. Our leadership team was grateful for the sound advice provided in addition to reviewing documentation and preparing the legal paperwork. Tara's effort was greatly appreciated."

Drafting an employee handbook can be an arduous process, but Ms. Ellis makes sure these projects are pushed to completion. Kathryn Wallem, **Beam Center's** Manager of Operations and Community Programs, is working on a handbook with Ms. Ellis and reports, "Tara took the time to understand our organization, and what makes it different from the boilerplate." Edgardo Rivera, Finance Director of the **Brooklyn Arts Council**, says that a recent harassment training for employees "went very well. The feedback was very positive and I look forward to working with her again."

Ms. Ellis has also worked with **Hamilton-Madison House**, **Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York**, **Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights**, and **Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center** on employee handbooks and trainings.

Ms. Ellis comments, "I've worked with Lawyers Alliance on several pro bono matters over the past few years, and it's been a truly wonderful experience. The matters I have worked on are interesting, and the clients are responsive and nice people to work with. Lawyers Alliance is always quick to respond when I have had questions. I look forward to working on more matters with Lawyers Alliance in the future!"