

Legal Assistance Helps Nonprofits Address the Pandemic's Toll on Quality Education

The pandemic's disparate effect on communities of color and immigrant communities has widened the educational gap.

While most New York City students and teachers are back in the classroom, uncertainty about the pandemic's trajectory and a desire to catch up after more than a year of remote learning have added to the stress felt by students, parents, and staff at schools and community-based organizations. Further, the pandemic's disparate effect on communities of color and immigrant communities has widened the educational gap. Lawyers Alliance's nonprofit clients are working tirelessly to address these issues. Timely legal assistance helps.

Attention to academic and educational needs

New York nonprofits are offering new and enhanced learning opportunities to help address the impact of lost instructional time on multilingual learners, youth experiencing homelessness or in foster care, students with disabilities, and other underserved public school students. Greater use of website resources and virtual programming prompts legal questions related to data privacy and intellectual property.

Case Example: Literacy Inc. (LINC) partners with community-based organizations to engage parents in their children's early learning. LINC works with families in neighborhoods affected by poverty to ensure children grow up reading. The pandemic forced LINC to rely on its website as a tool for direct programming. Pro bono attorneys from **Cooley LLP**

were invaluable in reviewing the website's privacy and use policy to reflect its increased functionality. Jeanine Nadler, LINC's Director of Finance and Administration, praises the work, "The legal team was responsive and quick to complete the work. We are grateful to have effective policies in place during this unprecedented time."

Support for students facing pandemic-related traumas

Nonprofits are providing social, emotional, and mental health services to K-12 and postsecondary
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Photo Credit: Literacy Inc.

Literacy Inc. engages parents in their children's early learning.

inside



Photo Credit: Goddard Riverside

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students in New York City's underserved communities, many of whom face multiple traumas stemming from the pandemic. With legal guidance, these organizations are better able to negotiate and review the agreements they need to offer this support.

Case Example: Partnership with Children (PWC) places full-time social workers and Community School directors in 33 schools across all five boroughs of New York City, providing trauma-informed care and critical mental health services to more than 13,000 students and engaging families throughout the school community. During the pandemic, PWC has connected students and families with resources including counseling, food, technology, and enrichment opportunities. In the summer of 2021, a pro bono attorney from **Farrell Fritz, P.C.** helped PWC to negotiate a lease for a satellite office in Harlem, allowing PWC to establish a prevention program that provides supplemental supports for local families.

Strategies to undo educational and technology inequities

From tutoring and mentoring to advocacy for wireless connections and more inclusive schools, nonprofits and social enterprises are stepping up to insist on better and more equitable educational opportunities for students most adversely affected by the pandemic. Guidance from Lawyers Alliance staff and volunteers helps organizations provide programming and events to help them continue this work.

Case Example: Educators for Excellence's mission is to ensure that teachers have a leading voice in the policies that impact their students and profession. By doing so, it hopes to create an equitable

education system that provides all students the opportunity to succeed and elevates the teaching profession. With assistance from pro bono counsel at **Latham & Watkins LLP**, Educators for Excellence developed a contract that allowed it to partner with another organization to host its largest-ever virtual event. The event, which was designed to promote community engagement and advocacy, included author and anti-racist activist Professor Ibram X. Kendi as the keynote speaker. "We know that culturally relevant and anti-racist classrooms are integral to the success of all students," says Evan Stone, Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Educators for Excellence. "This important conversation with Professor Kendi highlighted the urgency educators feel to build anti-racist classrooms, to affirm all students' experiences, and further galvanized our members to continue advocating to increase teacher diversity."

If your organization needs assistance, or for more information about our work with nonprofits focused on youth education, please visit the [Nonprofits section of our website](#).



Photo Credit: Educators for Excellence

Chanda Smith Baker and Professor Ibram X. Kendi during the Educators for Excellence event.

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