

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

Strengthening Nonprofits Is Important for Recovery

NCPL Fellows Help Nonprofits

2021 Business Law & Leadership Gala

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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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NCPL Fellows Gain Experience and Help Nonprofits

The **National Center on Philanthropy and the Law** (NCPL), founded in 1988 at New York University School of Law, is dedicated to improving nonprofit law and offers fellowships for recent law school graduates to work in a public interest setting. Lawyers Alliance hosts the yearlong NCPL Fellowship in Nonprofit Law, created in 2018 as an opportunity for emerging lawyers to gain experience representing nonprofits on complex legal projects.

Fellows counsel clients on business law, contract negotiations and transactional matters, and they present educational trainings to nonprofits and pro bono counsel, under supervision of Lawyers Alliance's experienced staff attorneys. "Having a fully vetted, high-caliber developing staff attorney who has demonstrated their commitment to learning about nonprofit law and pursuing a public interest career is invaluable," says **Hedwig O'Hara**, Lawyers Alliance's Legal Director.

"Working with over 100 Lawyers Alliance client organizations has exposed me to a far greater number of discrete and vivid legal questions and issues than law school can offer," says **Peter F. Martin**, reflecting on his time as a NCPL Fellow. Since joining Lawyers Alliance in December 2020, Martin has opened several new legal matters for community-based organizations and advocacy groups. He also has participated in client screenings, client consultations, and webinar presentations, and prepared Legal Alerts related to COVID-19 challenges specific to the nonprofit sector.

"Fellows contribute to the vitality of our staff and bring fresh ideas to our work and services by bringing their own talents and interests," adds Executive Director **Elizabeth Guggenheimer**. Both Fellows and permanent staff build one-on-one relationships with client contacts, and the Fellowship allows Lawyers Alliance to provide nonprofits greater depth and breadth of services. Two months into her NPCL Fellowship, **Elizabeth Wytock** observes, "Hearing clients express their deep, sincere gratitude drives home to me how few other comparable services exist, and how valuable Lawyers Alliance is to not just the organizations we serve, but also, in turn, to their clients and the communities they serve."

To date, Lawyers Alliance has hosted four Fellows with backgrounds in nonprofit programming, journalism, advocacy, education, and clerking.

- > **Grace Heusner**, 2018-2019 Fellow, an Associate at Laura Solomon & Associates, handles transactional work for nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations.
- > Staff Attorney **Rafi Stern**, 2019-2020 Fellow, spearheads the Economic Opportunity program area.
- > **Peter F. Martin**, 2020-2021 Fellow, is working on a virtual clinic that offers governance consultations to immigrant-serving nonprofits.
- > **Elizabeth Wytock** joined Lawyers Alliance in September 2021 and brings her perspective as a tax attorney.

Rafi Stern's Fellowship confirmed his desire to stay in the nonprofit world. "You see a huge range of problems that organizations deal with. The Fellowship was a big learning experience and it made me want to stay at Lawyers Alliance even more." A significant part of Stern's caseload is aimed at nonprofits serving New York City's business improvement districts in low-income neighborhoods. For example, with pro bono counsel, he recently helped a community development organization to draft a request for proposals that the organization is using to find new sanitation services.

The NCPL Fellowship is a key example of how Lawyers Alliance supports the growth of the nonprofit legal field. By mentoring people at an early stage of their careers, Lawyers Alliance ensures that exceptional, compassionate lawyers are prepared to successfully serve all types of nonprofits.



NCPL Fellows Elizabeth Wytock and Peter Martin

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Strengthening Nonprofits Is Important for Recovery

Strengthening nonprofits and rebuilding a better New York are intertwined.

Since the pandemic began, nonprofits have found innovative ways to reach and support their communities, and they are playing a central role in our City's recovery and renewal, from providing food, shelter, and human services to connecting New Yorkers through the racial justice movement and community arts. Strengthening nonprofits and rebuilding a better New York are intertwined.

Lawyers Alliance has identified six elements critical to the success of nonprofits, especially during difficult times: mission, people, financial stability, facilities, technology, and relationships. Lawyers Alliance helps nonprofits address legal issues associated with each of these elements.

Mission

The charitable mission of a nonprofit organization creates an agenda for the services it will offer, who it will target for services, and how services are to be delivered. Legal assistance can help organizations review mission questions related to their corporate purposes, board oversight, and restricted funds, so they can make informed decisions and focus their resources on core services.

Case Example: Harlem Advocates for Seniors, a senior-led coalition focused on issues of concern to seniors, is bringing recreational, social, and cultural programs to where community members live. A team of volunteers from **Citibank** and **Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP** assessed the organization's legal needs during a pro bono clinic, and then the Skadden pro bono attorneys updated the organization's governance policies and procedures



Photo Credit: Goddard Riverside

Goddard Riverside is a multi-service agency in Manhattan.

to reflect best practices. This legal assistance is helping Harlem Advocates for Seniors to transition and grow during and beyond the pandemic. **Hear from the client** about the impact of pro bono in this video.

People

People drive mission. Stakeholders include staff, boards, donors, volunteers, and program participants. Understanding the legal framework can help nonprofits work through evolving personnel and operational questions, so that they can better engage people in hybrid and in-person activities.

Educational Example: In September 2021, Lawyers Alliance held an online Community Arts Roundtable, *Another Opening, Another Executive Order*. Pro bono counsel from **Sendroff & Baruch, LLP** and the Co-Artistic Director of **Heartbeat Opera** discussed the return to in-person community arts events, with the goal of filling seats while keeping audiences and performers safe. Forty roundtable participants gained useful information about vaccine and mask mandates; terms and conditions for audience members; and appropriate personnel protocols for cast, crew, and other staff members.

Financial Stability

Revenues and cash are essential to sustain programs. However, state and local government funding, philanthropic support, and fee-for-service revenues are limited. Legal assistance can help nonprofits navigate issues related to lending, borrowing, fundraising law, cost control, and sound fiscal management. Some organizations are pursuing strategic alliances to improve their financial stability and programmatic reach.

Case Example: This year, **Goddard Riverside**, a multi-service agency on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and **Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center**, serving individuals and families on the East Side, announced a strategic partnership to enhance the services that both organizations provide. Pro bono attorneys from **Lowenstein Sandler LLP** represented Goddard with the documentation of the partnership, resulting in a relationship that increases efficiencies and serves more than 26,000 City residents from Lincoln Square to East Harlem.

Facilities

For decades, the nonprofit sector has developed onsite community services to improve the lives of New Yorkers across the spectrum of need and neighborhood. The pandemic has tested that model. Lawyers can help organizations evaluate, negotiate, and renegotiate their real estate options to move forward.

Case Example: During the pandemic, **Grand Street Settlement**, a multi-service agency, has received legal assistance from a **Dechert LLP** real estate attorney on three leases, enabling it to expand its Early Head Start and Head Start programming for children up to age five in Brooklyn. The first lease is for a Head Start Childcare Center on 55th Street, and the newer ones are for spaces on 50th Street and Atlantic Avenue. The client reports that, because of pro bono counsel's "talented and professional support during the legal negotiations, Grand Street is able to provide high-quality child development programs for an additional 200+ families with children in areas of high need."

Technology

Increased use of digital communications brings new opportunities and new legal questions. Lawyers Alliance staff and volunteers are helping organizations with legal issues related to technology contracts, website activity, confidentiality of client and employee information, and ownership of intellectual property.

Case Example: With university students who serve as mentors, **Latinas On the Verge of Excellence** (L.O.V.E.) empowers young Latinas to strive for success. L.O.V.E. operated more of its programs virtually during the pandemic, helping young women pursue healthy lifestyles and college and career readiness. Pro bono counsel from **Linklaters LLP** is providing legal guidance related to L.O.V.E.'s website policy and data privacy procedures. Recently, pro bono counsel from **Arnold & Porter LLP** assisted with a whistleblower policy and document retention policy. [See a video clip](#) with words from the client and volunteers.

Relationships

Another vital resource is a nonprofit organization's network of relationships with external parties, such as subcontractors, partners, vendors, program participants, lenders, and creditors. As organizations work to build a better New York, many are exploring new or different arrangements. Legal assistance can help nonprofits establish and sustain better relationships for the longer term.

Case Example: During the pandemic, **Meals For Good** has been expanding its reach by partnering with community groups in East and Central Harlem so that more New Yorkers facing food insecurity can choose the food they want. Pro bono counsel from **Dentons US LLP** recently advised Meals For Good on its pilot project to distribute vouchers for groceries to those in need, including guidance on letters to the managers of two local supermarkets detailing the project and their participation. Through this effort, Meals For Good reached approximately 700 adults and more than 600 children, the majority of whom were immigrants from Mexico, Central America, and Africa.

Through these and other legal strategies, Lawyers Alliance staff and volunteers are ready and eager to help organizations navigate legal issues during the next stage of pandemic recovery and economic renewal.



Photo Credit: Grand Street Settlement

Grand Street has expanded its early childhood services in Brooklyn.

2021 Business Law & Leadership Gala



Lawyers Alliance Board member Ellen Ching welcomed guests to the 2021 Gala.

On May 26th Lawyers Alliance held our Business Law & Leadership Gala online. The Gala, the premier annual event for business and transactional lawyers committed to pro bono legal services for nonprofits, raised more than \$500,000.

“Nonprofits are at the forefront of New York’s reemergence. They are working hard to return our City’s neighborhoods to their full potential. But they will need legal help. We are grateful to our honorees and donors for supporting the Gala and our efforts to make such assistance possible,” said **Elizabeth Guggenheimer**, Lawyers Alliance’s Executive Director.

The distinguished honorees were:

CRAIG KATERBERG *Budweiser APAC*

Craig Katerberg is the Chief Legal and Corporate Affairs Officer for Budweiser APAC, a \$42B USD publicly-listed brewer focused on sustainable growth in Asia and one of the largest companies on the Hong Kong stock market. Since 2012 he has served in legal, finance, and senior leadership positions within the AB InBev family of companies in different countries around the globe, including as General Counsel of Anheuser-Busch. He was a standout Lawyers Alliance volunteer while an associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP and won a Cornerstone Award in 2011 for his exceptional pro bono work with local nonprofits.

DARILYN T. OLIDGE *Brightwood Capital Advisors, LLC*

Darilyn T. Olidge is the Partner, General Counsel, and Chief Compliance Officer of Brightwood Capital Advisors, LLC, a private equity firm that provides debt and equity capital solutions to companies located throughout the United States. Ms. Olidge also serves on the firm’s Executive Committee. Throughout her professional career, Ms. Olidge has been engaged in numerous nonprofit organizations, including serving as a trustee of New York University School of Law, a board member of the LGBTQ Center of New York, and, most recently, being elected to the Board of Directors of Communities in Schools.

RODERICK JONES, Ed.D *Goddard Riverside*

Roderick Jones, Ed.D has been the Executive Director of Goddard Riverside since 2017. Previously, he spent nine years as President and CEO of Grace Hill Settlement House in St. Louis, Missouri. Before that, he served as President and CEO of the Community Place of Greater Rochester (NY). A multi-service nonprofit organization, Goddard Riverside first became a Lawyers Alliance client in 1983, and has been receiving pro bono legal assistance from Lawyers Alliance consistently since 2002. Goddard, and its affiliate the Stanley M. Isaacs Center, serves more than 26,000 people a year on the Upper West Side and throughout New York City with a variety of programs for all ages.

For event details or to watch the Gala, visit our [website](#).



See a [video clip](#) about the amazing work being done by Lawyers Alliance’s long-time client, **Greater Jamaica Development Corporation**, to develop co-working space for local entrepreneurs, particularly those construction-related jobs. Also featured are pro bono lawyers from **Holland & Knight LLP**.

“Lawyers Alliance is the first step to go to because of the resources they have access to as well as the expertise inherent in the organization,” says Greater Jamaica’s Executive Director Hope Knight.

Kirkland & Ellis Leaders Steer Law Firm Appeal to New Heights

Lawyers Alliance's 2020-2021 Law Firm Appeal raised a record-breaking \$932,600 from 82 participating law firms, including eight new donor firms. Lawyers Alliance applauds the outstanding Co-Chairs of this recent Appeal, **Jon A. Ballis** and **Edward O. Sassower** of **Kirkland & Ellis LLP**, for their excellent leadership. They were integral to the success of the Appeal.

Mr. Ballis is Chairman of Kirkland's Executive Committee, the governing body of Kirkland & Ellis. He has long been recognized as one of the leading private equity attorneys in the United States.

Mr. Ballis said, "Kirkland & Ellis is proud to have led this year's Law Firm Appeal, a significant source of funding for Lawyers Alliance's work with organizations on the front-lines addressing today's most pressing needs. The commitment and participation of law firms, both financially and through pro bono legal expertise, is essential to the success of these not-for-profit organizations."

Mr. Sassower is a member of Kirkland's Executive Committee and is a partner in the Restructuring Group. He focuses on representing debtors,

creditors and distressed or special situation investors in bankruptcy cases, out-of-court restructurings and acquisitions.

Mr. Sassower remarked, "Law firm support of the Appeal allows Lawyers Alliance to continue providing meaningful pro bono opportunities to business and transactional lawyers and help nonprofits make a positive impact in people's lives." Kirkland is a longtime Lawyers Alliance supporter and Kirkland partner **Christine Okike** is Board Treasurer.

This annual appeal helps Lawyers Alliance provide legal services and educational resources to strengthen nonprofit and community organizations that provide housing and human services, operate and advocate for programs promoting social justice and equity, increase economic and educational opportunities, and promote community arts that are improving the lives of low-income and disadvantaged New Yorkers.

Lawyers Alliance thanks the following firms that contributed \$1,000 or more to the Law Firm Appeal running July 2020 through June 2021:



Jon A. Ballis



Edward O. Sassower

Allen & Overy LLP
Alston & Bird LLP
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP
Bernstein Litowitz Berger
& Grossmann, LLP
Blank Rome LLP
Brown Rudnick LLP
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White & Case LLP
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP
Winston & Strawn LLP

Save the Date – Thursday, December 2, 2021

CORNERSTONE
A W A R D S
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Live, online

Thursday, December 2, 2021, 5:00 – 6:00 pm

Join us as we celebrate the extraordinary pro bono work of:

2021 Institutional Honorees

DAVIS POLK & WARDWELL LLP

SIDLEY AUSTIN LLP

2021 Individual Honorees

And the more than 2,021 additional individuals
in Lawyers Alliance's volunteer network

For more information, visit www.lawyersalliance.org/volunteer-recognition.

To register for this free event, send your name, organization, and
e-mail address to cornerstone@lawyersalliance.org.



Lawyers Alliance

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