

Human Services Are Essential to Urban Health During and Beyond the Pandemic

With quality legal assistance, human services providers can navigate legally compliant strategies for bolstering their programs, operations, and finances.

Lawyers Alliance's human services clients are improving the quality of life for low-income New Yorkers by providing a range of shelter, food, health, nutrition, foster care, victims' assistance, and other social services. For the past two-plus years, these organizations have provided safety net services to individuals, families, and neighborhoods by taking a comprehensive approach to people's well-being, contributing to better health outcomes and positive social change. At the same time, human services organizations are coping with organizational and resource concerns aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

That is where Lawyers Alliance staff and volunteers can and will continue to help. With quality legal assistance, human services providers can navigate legally compliant strategies for bolstering their programs, operations, and finances. Working together, lawyers and nonprofits are helping to build a healthier city.

Delivering Comprehensive Health Care and Related Services

Community health care providers are on the front lines, treating COVID-19 and other health issues in local settings. These organizations will continue to face unique challenges due to the services they provide and the far-reaching effects of the pandemic on urban health.

Case Example: Community Health Initiative's (CHI) Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health

Center, serves the Coney Island, Brooklyn community as a fully integrated clinic, delivering a holistic approach to care, including preventive health and supportive services, regardless of patients' ability to pay. The pandemic exacerbated CHI's need for a larger facility to accommodate its 4,000 patients. To meet community demand and apply lessons learned from the pandemic, CHI is developing a new clinic site with the help of a team of volunteers from **Ballard Spahr LLP**, who supported CHI's New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) transaction, donating many hours preparing for the closing with the Nonprofit Finance Fund. The

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Photo Credit: Urban Outreach Center of NYC

Urban Outreach Center of NYC helps New Yorkers access healthy food and basic resources.

inside



Photo Credit: CareerWise New York

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volunteers negotiated the loan documents, lease agreement, and the construction contract for the development of the health center. Alex Movshovich, CEO of CHI says, "On our own, CHI, being a small nonprofit, would not have received such robust legal representation." The Ballard Spahr team's expert assistance will allow CHI to complete the new health center and meet the increased demand for quality health services in Coney Island.

Food, Clothing, and Referrals to Supportive Services

Human services organizations provide a full range of necessities and support to people in need. The pandemic exacerbated personal challenges for many New Yorkers.

Case Example: Urban Outreach Center of NYC (UOCNYC) is committed to ending the hunger gap in East Harlem and the Upper East Side by creating spaces of justice-centered hospitality where homeless and food-insecure New Yorkers can access healthy food and basic resources. UOCNYC currently operates a weekly food pantry, community dinner, and social services support and served more than 1,000,000 meals worth of food in 2021 and directly serves 50,000 people annually, reaching countless more throughout New York City. A volunteer attorney from **Vinson & Elkins LLP** advised UOCNYC on its options to license or lease renovated space from its landlord, a church on the Upper East Side, and in turn the client negotiated a new lease with the church. The lease allows UOCNYC to occupy a portion of the building that includes a commercial kitchen for the preparation of food served at its community dinners and

bathrooms with showers for those in need. With this updated space, UOCNYC has improved service delivery and can expand the number of people served. "We are grateful for the help to carefully negotiate the use of our new space to ensure that the Urban Outreach Center will continue to serve tens of thousands of food-insecure neighbors for years to come with dignity and hospitality," says Executive Director Jordan Tarwater.

Psychosocial Support Services

Personal contact and face-to-face communications remain a crucial element for human services and other nonprofits working to establish an open, supportive, and caring environment. Changing case numbers and safety procedures have necessitated shifts of this work between virtual and in-person environments, each with legal considerations for nonprofit providers.

Case Example: Heights Hill Mental Health Service South Beach Psychiatric Center Community Advisory Board is an advocacy and services program for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals seeking mental health services. At its Rainbow Heights Club in Brooklyn, Heights Hill offers support groups, social activities, and meals, providing services and a welcoming atmosphere for its clients. Volunteer attorneys from **White & Case LLP** reviewed the nonprofit's waiver and release form, to help it inform participants of changes and manage risk as part of its return to in-person services amid the pandemic. Volunteer attorneys from **Sidley Austin LLP** assisted with negotiating a sublease for new space, further optimizing Rainbow Heights' return to in-person services and providing a friendly place for LGBTQ populations to take the next step on their road to emotional recovery and wellness. Christian Huygen, PhD, Executive Director of Heights Hill Mental Health Service CAB, says, "The pro bono services enabled Rainbow Heights Club to successfully reopen for in-person member services and negotiate a sub-lease with the New York State Office of Mental Health, ensuring a home for our programming for the next 20 years!"

If your nonprofit organization needs legal assistance, please visit the [Nonprofits section of our website](#).

Rainbow Heights Club provides advocacy and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals in Brooklyn.



Photo Credit: Heights Hill Mental Health Service CAB