

Pro Bono Attorneys Help Workforce Development Nonprofits Respond to the Changing World of Work

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In a shifting employment landscape, nonprofits engaged in job readiness, training, placement, and mentoring in New York are helping to build a more equitable and thriving economy, especially in tech and related fields. The COVID-19 pandemic altered the way people work and think about work, prompting nonprofit workforce development organizations to refocus on both near-term needs and longer-term opportunities. With these changes come nonprofit legal needs. Lawyers Alliance's staff and volunteer network have helped these organizations address changes in their own work and their work on behalf of those they serve.

Expanding Pathways for Youth and Young Adults

Lawyers Alliance is assisting nonprofits that empower and improve the economic security of young workers, women, new immigrants, and other populations that face barriers to job and career advancement. Frequent legal needs include contract reviews and corporate governance advice.

Case Example: CareerWise New York is an apprenticeship system offering a three-year applied-learning environment for high school students as well as a talent-acquisition strategy for socially conscious businesses. Students from schools in the Bronx and Brooklyn participate in

apprenticeships, earning a wage, debt-free college credit, and nationally-recognized industry certificates through hands-on experience in information technology, financial services, and business operations. A volunteer attorney from **Goulston & Storrs PC** updated the apprenticeship agreement between CareerWise, the students, and businesses. The agreement clarifies what is expected of the parties, enhancing their participation in a program that adjusts to changing times and creates rewarding career paths. Melinda Chang, CareerWise's Vice President of Employer Partnerships, says, "With the pro bono legal support, we were able to onboard several Fortune 500 companies as clients. These companies employ hundreds of underrepresented youth across New York City for a three-year apprenticeship."

Training the Trainers

Job programs not only link New Yorkers to jobs but also offer important training and skills, including in areas such as technology where local job openings have accelerated. Pro bono legal assistance can help nonprofit training programs navigate legal issues related to their personnel, intellectual property, and other organizational concerns.

Case Example: Working with and training workforce development practitioners, **Workforce Professionals Training Institute (WPTI)** increases the effectiveness of people, programs, and organizations that are committed to generating pathways out of poverty through employment. Trainers and training materials are the foundation for WPTI's activities, and the nonprofit seeks to protect both. A team of attorneys from **Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP** revised drafts of WPTI's template independent contractor agreement and client services agreement, specifically looking at the employment status of the trainers, as well as intellectual property relating to training materials. "After this thorough review, our contracting process is much more streamlined, making it easier and quicker to do business. Best of all, I can be confident that both WPTI and our intellectual property are well-protected," says Michael Grant, WPTI's Chief Operating Officer.

Invictus Enterprises Foundation provides work readiness, job training, and employment opportunities in a culinary program.



Photo Credit: Invictus Enterprises Foundation

Shifting Work Locations

The pandemic and social distancing changed where and how people work. When managing in-person, hybrid, or virtual work arrangements, nonprofits benefit from access to quality legal guidance on corporate structuring, real estate, licenses, and other evolving topics.

Case Example: Invictus Enterprises Foundation provides work readiness, job training, and employment opportunities to people of all abilities in a culinary program based in a bakery in Brooklyn. In September 2020, in response to the pandemic, Invictus created a food operation program to support participants in establishing and operating small home bakery businesses. Volunteer

attorneys from **Clifford Chance US LLP** put the legal structure in place and provided guidance on agreements between participants and Invictus, agreements with suppliers, licensing of the name of the baked goods, and trademark registrations. Invictus Co-Founder Molly Sebastian says, "Thanks to our volunteer attorneys, we were able to finalize our Cottage Business Program and set our bakers up to make and sell select Invictus products from their home kitchens. Our baker/entrepreneurs are baking, selling, earning money, and spreading awareness."

For more information about volunteering with Lawyers Alliance, please visit the [Lawyers section of our website](#).



Resource Call Service Is Available

Do you have a question about a nonprofit legal issue? Try our [Resource Call Hotline](#).

One of Lawyers Alliance's distinguishing features is our attorney staff. We bring, and are eager to share, legal knowledge about nonprofit law and the program and operational issues faced by nonprofits and social enterprises serving New York communities. While Lawyers Alliance's most intensive service is legal representation of clients on specific legal projects, there is an alternative: the Resource Call Hotline.

This service is for clients and non-clients seeking general information, not legal advice. Representative questions, typically answered in a brief telephone conversation, include:

- > **How** do we determine a quorum for Board approval of our organization's real estate transaction?
- > **What** are the latest applicable changes to the City guidance on vaccination or masking requirements for small employers?
- > **When** should our organization begin the process for obtaining or renewing a school-age childcare license for an afterschool program or summer camp?
- > As a volunteer attorney, **where** can I find suggested items to consider when updating the management association's bylaws for a local BID (business improvement district)?

The Resource Call Hotline assists board members, staff, lawyers, technical assistance providers, and members of the public. Hundreds receive general information each year.

Call the Hotline at (212) 219-1800 ext. 224 or e-mail ResourceCall@lawyersalliance.org. Include your question, name, and contact information. We will try to respond in two business days with an answer, suggestion, link to a relevant [Legal Alert](#), or proposed time to speak.

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