

Nonprofits Guide Youth Preparing for College and Careers

With timely legal help from Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorneys, nonprofits are better able to work to improve the lives, opportunities, and outcomes for young adults.

In recent years, the number of high school students enrolling in college immediately after high school has decreased. The mental and financial stress created and exacerbated by the pandemic and continued economic uncertainty has created additional challenges, including a rise in chronic absenteeism in New York City schools and less interest and ability to pursue a four-year degree. Nonprofits across the City are working to help young people overcome these barriers, addressing both embedded and newer concerns by dedicating staff, programming, and resources towards serving the needs of students and disconnected youth. With timely legal help from Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorneys, these nonprofits are better able to work to improve the lives, opportunities, and outcomes for young adults.

Preparing students for and providing access to college opportunities

Nonprofits working to improve college readiness offer mentorship, school year and summer enrichment, counseling, college preparation classes, application guidance, and exposure to college experiences. Programs help participants prepare for academic success after high school.

Case Example: For more than 150 years, **Goddard Riverside** has been providing numerous programs to help meet people's basic needs, including food, shelter, and education, bringing the community together for mutual aid and social action. Since 2011, Goddard has offered the Options Center and

Options Institute, which support low-income and first-generation New Yorkers in getting into, paying for, and graduating from college or skill-specific certificate programs. When Goddard's lease for the Harlem community center where it holds these programs was set to expire, it sought legal assistance to renew the lease. **Lawyers Alliance** helped review and negotiate a new lease agreement so that Goddard could continue to house its Options programs in the space, reaching more than 900 students and 650 educational professionals each year. "Lawyers Alliance has been a great partner to Goddard Riverside, we are so grateful for their expertise and generosity," says Rod Jones, Goddard's Executive Director.

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Photo Credit: Goddard Riverside

Goddard Riverside's Options Center and Options Institute help students get into, pay for, and graduate from college.

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Photo Credit: Radio Diaries

Attorneys Help Nonprofits Navigate the World of Technology

2022 Cornerstone Awards

Law Firm Appeal Supports Vital Services

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Braven supports students throughout college, providing needed skills and networks.

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Helping students navigate and succeed in college

For many students, getting to college is only the first step. Nonprofits understand that these students often need support and resources to help them be successful in college and beyond. Many offer comprehensive services that support students and families as well as work to dismantle economic and racial inequalities that serve as barriers to success.

Case Example: Braven supports untapped students from college to career by partnering with universities and employers to offer a two-part experience that begins with a credit-bearing college course followed by a post-course experience that lasts through graduation. Fellows emerge from Braven with the skills, experiences, and networks they need to land a strong first job and get on a path to economic freedom. Braven sought to understand and update its governance documents to comply with best practices. Pro bono attorneys from **Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP** reviewed and updated the bylaws, certificate of incorporation, and conflict of interest policy. Additionally, they drafted a whistleblower policy and Board resolutions in connection with banking and financing. All were adopted by the Board, providing Braven with practical and compliant documents. Sheila Lopez, Braven's General Counsel, says, "Davis Polk's expertise and support have strengthened our corporate governance and internal controls, which has been crucial as Braven grows to a 100+ person organization serving over 6,000 students across eight sites. We are incredibly grateful for their commitment to ensuring the next generation of leaders emerges from everywhere."



Photo Credit: Braven

Providing opportunities for occupational and career pathways

While college is a viable option for many young people, career opportunities provide a positive alternative for others. Nonprofits working to improve access to career pathways offer youth employment, internship, and apprenticeship opportunities; occupational development; job training; and related services to help disconnected youth entering the workforce achieve short- and long-term economic self-sufficiency.

Case Example: JobsFirstNYC creates and advances solutions that break down barriers and transform the systems supporting young adults and their communities in pursuit of economic mobility. It brings together community, corporate, human, organizational, private, and public resources to connect young adults and their communities to better economic opportunities, improving outcomes for more than 10,000 young people since 2007. Lawyers Alliance has supported JobsFirstNYC on a range of legal solutions for more than 10 years. Recently, a volunteer attorney from **New York Life Insurance Company** assisted with a review and update of the organization's website privacy policy to reflect best practices. The new website is an important tool to keep program participants and donors informed. In addition, a pro bono attorney from **Wells Fargo & Company** is developing a policy document regarding the establishment of an endowment and a volunteer attorney from **Linklaters LLP** is refining contract templates for JobsFirstNYC's work with consultants. Marjorie Parker, President and CEO, says, "JobsFirstNYC is confident that with this pro bono assistance, various areas of our work that need legal expertise have been serviced well through the partnership with Lawyers Alliance."

Lawyers Alliance thanks **The Frances L. and Edwin L. Cummings Memorial Fund** for supporting Lawyers Alliance's efforts to strengthen nonprofits engaged in college readiness and career pathways. For more information about our work with nonprofits focused on educational and economic opportunities, please contact Senior Staff Attorney **Ciarra Chavarria** or visit the **Nonprofits section** of our website.