

## Business and Transactional Lawyers Help Nonprofits Serving New Americans

Immigrant communities have always played a crucial role in New York City's fabric, vitality, and success. Many immigrants and their families were hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, often serving as front-line workers and sometimes ineligible for relief funds. During 2022, New York City is assisting a large number of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. The City's nonprofit sector has stepped up to ensure that new Americans throughout the City have better access to information and needed services. As nonprofits play an essential role in supporting immigrant communities, Lawyers Alliance and our volunteer attorneys can help by delivering pro bono legal services that strengthen these organizations.

### Good Governance Improves Nonprofit Operations

To help directors, officers, and managers function effectively, Lawyers Alliance's services include preparation of bylaws, conflicts of interest policies, and other organizational documents as well as advice on best practices for board meetings and governance.

**Case Example:** Pro bono corporate attorneys from **Crowell & Moring LLP** drafted a document retention and destruction policy for **Yemeni American Merchants Association (YAMA)**. Founded in 2017, the organization serves Yemeni-American merchants and their families through education, business and social service support, and civil rights advocacy. As YAMA expands its range of activities, it sought the policy to help maintain records consistent with best practices and contract obligations. Joel Feliciano, YAMA's COO, says, "The assistance we received provided added security for all those seeking services, ensuring that YAMA's data is managed from creation through destruction."

### Contract and Employment Law Guidance Enhances Programming

As nonprofits work to improve their programs, the legal framework related to human resources,

vendor and service agreements, and other relationships can be daunting. Lawyers Alliance staff and volunteers advise immigrant-serving organizations on relevant laws, contract negotiations, and risk management.

**Case Example:** Labor and employment lawyers from **O'Melveny & Myers LLP** volunteered to assist **ANSOB Center for Refugees** in Queens with an update to its employee handbook and a form of consultant agreement. During the past 22 years, ANSOB has helped more than 6,000 refugees and political asylum recipients from 104 countries adjust to life in the United States, by providing immigration legal services, citizenship classes, language instruction, educational counseling, social services, and job placement services. A client representative notes, "With pro bono legal assistance, ANSOB is better able to hire and manage people to carry forth our programs, including evening English language classes."

**Consultation Example:** Since the pandemic began, nonprofit clients such as **American Dream Charter School (ADS)** have participated in Lawyers Alliance's customized pro bono clinics and virtual consultations. Attorneys from **Linklaters LLP**, **Morgan Stanley**, **American Express**, **Goldman Sachs**, and **Sullivan & Cromwell LLP** provided guidance on employment, contract, and financing

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Photo: ANSOB Center for Refugees

**ANSOB Center for Refugees helps refugees and political asylum recipients adjust to life in the U.S.**

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matters to ADS. Melissa Melkonian, Founder and Head of School, reports, “Pro bono help through Lawyers Alliance continues to be helpful to our school, which is located in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx, cultivates a welcoming environment for English language learners and immigrant students, and uses culturally-responsive instruction focusing on students’ cultural experiences.”

## Negotiating Access to Working Capital Improves Finances

Transactional and finance lawyers bring a wealth of useful knowledge and deal skills to nonprofits that are borrowers, lenders and/or strategic partners in transactions that benefit immigrant communities, entrepreneurs, and families.

**American Dream Charter School cultivates a welcoming environment for English language learners and immigrant students.**

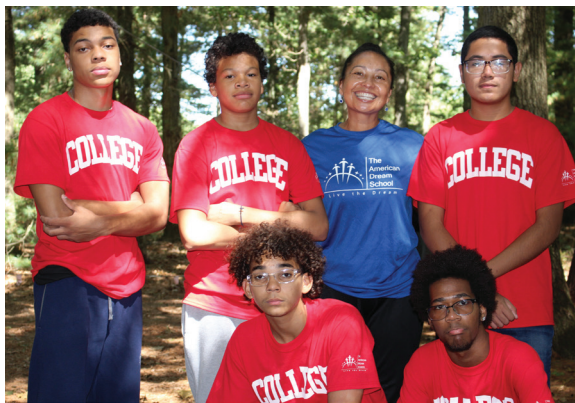


Photo: American Dream Charter School

**Case Example:** A team of pro bono attorneys from **Latham & Watkins LLP** helped **Center for Family Life** in Sunset Park review and negotiate term sheets and the resulting loan documents for two working capital loans. The Center provides a comprehensive range of family and social services in its diverse and densely populated Brooklyn neighborhood, home to a large number of new immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Central America, China, the Middle East, Europe, and elsewhere, seeking economic stability and better lives. The working capital loans helped the Center cover certain expenses while it sought to secure payment under its government contracts, thereby allowing the Center to continue to serve 15,000 individuals from more than 8,000 families each year. Julia Jean-Francois, Co-Executive Director, says, “The pro bono help has made a meaningful contribution to positioning our agency for success!”

These and countless other immigrant-serving nonprofits enrich New York life by bringing diverse communities and cultures together. Lawyers Alliance welcomes such organizations to contact Lawyers Alliance about legal help, and business and transactional lawyers to contact Lawyers Alliance about how to assist them.