

Friends Profile: Rose Gasner

Rose Gasner joined the Board of The Council of New York Law Associates (CNYLA), Lawyers Alliance's original name, in 1988 and became Board Chair in 1990. She is currently Executive Vice President at AIRnyc, a health justice nonprofit organization and Lawyers Alliance client.

Q. How did you first become aware of Lawyers Alliance, and how have you stayed involved?

Back when it was CNYLA, I attended a summer associate event. A few years later, as a lawyer at a small nonprofit organization, I wanted to be part of a community of like-minded public service lawyers and re-engaged. As Board Chair, I oversaw the renaming to Lawyers Alliance for New York, with a new focus on recruiting law firm partners and corporate counsel as Board leaders. I used to joke that my job was to make sure we never had a Board member like me again. Over the next few decades I was a donor. And in the past few years, at AIRnyc, I'm a client!

Q. How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed AIRnyc's work with New York City communities most vulnerable to the virus and its effects?

AIRnyc's Community Health Workers (CHWs) meet people where they live to improve health, connect families to social care, and build health equity at the individual, household, and community level. AIRnyc serves disadvantaged, disenfranchised, underserved people throughout New York City who bear the highest burdens of poverty and chronic diseases.

The biggest change was our rapid pivot from in-person home visiting to a fully remote intervention, which we implemented by March 16. AIRnyc's model of care was born out of its work in asthma and has evolved to address additional conditions and scenarios. We helped over 8,000 New Yorkers social distance and stay out of the hospital during these harrowing months of COVID-19 by linking them with services including food and medication delivery, eviction prevention, telehealth, relief from domestic violence, and benefits navigation.

Q. What are some of the business and transactional legal issues that have resulted from these changes?

Funding is always a challenge for community-based organizations, and the pandemic has left already marginalized New Yorkers even more vulnerable to illness and poverty. Fortunately, our healthcare partners appreciated that our team was well-equipped to shift to remote work. I really appreciated the real estate webinar provided by Lawyers Alliance, which connected us with great lawyers who reviewed our lease and provided valuable guidance.

It's unusual for an organization like AIRnyc to have a full-time lawyer on staff. I am well-versed in healthcare privacy, so I was able to guide us through remote work issues. Lawyers Alliance's help with intellectual property issues was invaluable. I attended a legal clinic, and saw how helpful it is to go over a checklist of issues with skilled lawyers. That is an amazing program.

Q. Why do you feel it's important to provide ongoing financial support to Lawyers Alliance?

Access to legal help is not equitable. Legal rates are out of reach for most nonprofits, and yet the legal obligations placed on employers/organizations are quite complex. Employment law is a maze, most contracts are unintelligible, and nonprofits want to stay out of trouble while focusing on their mission. Lawyers Alliance does an amazing job of staying on top of all these issues.



Rose Gasner

About

Employment includes:

Society for the Right to Die
NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
Healthfirst
AIRnyc

Graduate of:

Dartmouth College
Columbia Law School

Other activities include:

Two book clubs, three fabulous kids, a husband who is the VP of Technology at the Anti-Defamation League. Volunteer on the Voter Protection Hotline. Knitting during the pandemic because you can do it outside video range on Zoom calls.

This profile is one in a [series](#) about people who have helped to build or been impacted by Lawyers Alliance for New York since 1969.