

This initiative helps low-income immigrants who are victims of anti-LGBT or HIV-related persecution to gain legal status in the United States. More than eighty countries have laws that criminalize people who are LGBT— with several applying the death penalty. The lucky ones make it to the United States. But without legal status, they face the constant threat of deportation, are unable to work, and cannot access needed benefits related to housing, healthcare, and disability, among other things. Attorneys who submit asylum applications achieve two things. In the short run—“while the application is pending”—clients gain permission to remain in the U.S., secure benefits, and are authorized to work. Later, the asylum application is very likely to be granted, giving clients permanent legal status—and an enduring shot at a stable, safe life in the United States. These cases usually require no more than 80 hours of time spread out over 3-6 months. (Although there is often a significant delay between submission of a completed application and an interview being scheduled, pro bono attorneys are not required to attend the interview if they do not wish to do so. LSNYC will appear at the interview, if pro bono attorneys are unavailable.)

Scope of work for pro bono volunteers includes:

- a. Meet with the client and confer with LSNYC mentoring attorney about the contours of the case.
- b. Help the client gather evidence in support of their application, including any written evidence or records of persecution, and country conditions.
- c. Draft declarations in support of the application.
- d. Submit the application to USCIS.
- e. Optional appearance at the interview with USCIS. (There is likely to be a long wait between submission of a completed application and an interview being scheduled. LSNYC will give pro bono attorneys the option of appearing, but there is no obligation to do so.)

Law firms, corporations, law firm lawyers, and in-house counsel who are interested in partnering with LSNYC are encouraged to reach out to learn more. Please contact Adam J. Heintz, Director of Pro Bono Services, at 646-442-3582 or aheintz@legalservicesnyc.org.

[Volunteer Application](#)