

NEW YORK, NY (July 15, 2020) – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, The New York Bar Foundation launched an emergency fundraising drive to help address the legal needs of New Yorkers brought on by the pandemic. With these funds the Foundation has awarded 29 grants to legal services and public interest organizations in nearly every judicial district of the state, in the most successful fundraising effort in the Foundation's history.

"Even in the best of times The New York Bar Foundation learns of numerous and different unmet legal needs across New York State," said Lucia Whisenand, Chair of the Foundation's Grants Review Committee. "Now with the confluence of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic disruption those unmet needs are even more acute. The goal of this special campaign is to help providers increase their ability to represent those in urgent need of legal services."

The programs receiving Foundation grants will provide access to justice for those affected by the medical and economic crisis, including:

- Sustenance income, health care, cash assistance, and food stamps benefits for those in need
- Emergency legal assistance for victims of domestic violence sheltering in place with their abusers;
- Small businesses working to preserve employment critical to the fabric of neighborhoods by renegotiating commercial lease and rent modifications;
- Those ages 60+ in need of health care related assistance;
- HIV-positive and LGBTQ immigrants seeking release from detention;
- Laid-off Latinx workers compromised by limited access to relief programs;
- Renters with pandemic-related housing issues;
- Seniors, medically fragile individuals, and first responders seeking advanced planning, i.e., wills, living wills, health care proxies and powers of attorney.
- Consumers who face unmanageable debt collection issues

In addition, the Foundation awarded NYSBA a grant to help fund its pathbreaking Unemployment Insurance Pro Bono Assistance Network project.

"I'm impressed by the determination and resourcefulness of these organizations - many in fragile financial condition themselves and coping with the impacts of the pandemic," Foundation President Lesley Rosenthal said.

"The generosity of our state bar members and all of our donors has made it possible to provide critical support to these organizations," said June Castellano, Vice-Chair of the Grants Review Committee. "Lawyers throughout the state selflessly responded to the Foundation's call to fund the legal emergencies created by COVID-19."

Organizations receiving grants include:

Bronx Legal Services  
BronxWorks  
Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project  
Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation  
Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York  
Catholic Migration Services, Inc.  
Center for Elder Law and Justice  
Day One New York, Inc.  
Family Justice Center of Erie County  
Gender Equality Law Center  
Immigration Equality  
JustFix, Inc.  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
Legal Aid Society of Rochester, Inc.  
Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT)  
Legal Services of the Hudson Valley  
Lenox Hill Neighborhood House  
My Sisters' Place, Inc.  
Nassau County Bar Association Fund, Inc.  
Start Small Think Big  
The Door - A Center of Alternatives, Inc.  
The Family Center, Inc.  
The New York State Bar Association  
The Legal Aid Society  
The Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga County, Inc.

United Tenants of Albany, Inc.  
Volunteers of Legal Service  
Worker Justice Center of New York  
Youth Represent

"If you can, please join us in support these important efforts," said Rosenthal. "There is a world of need from the twin medical and economic crisis posed by COVID-19."

Gifts to the COVID-19 Emergency Legal Relief Fund can be made via <http://www.tnybf.org> and clicking the donate button or sent to The New York Bar Foundation, 1 Elk Street, Albany, NY 12207

#### **About The New York Bar Foundation**

The New York Bar Foundation is a charitable and philanthropic arm of the New York State Bar Association. Founded in 1950, the foundation is dedicated to aiding educational, direct legal services, and charitable projects aimed at meeting the law-related needs of the public and the profession. The foundation solicits charitable contributions and provides funding to increase public understanding of the law; improve the justice system and the law; facilitate the delivery of legal services; and enhance professional competence and ethics. More information about the foundation can be found at [www.tnybf.org](http://www.tnybf.org).

#### **About the New York State Bar Association**

The New York State Bar Association is the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation. Since 1876, the Association has helped shape the development of law, educated and informed the legal profession and the public, and championed the rights of New Yorkers through advocacy and guidance in our communities.

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