



## **Legal Services NYC (LSNYC)**

### ***Contact Information***

**Website:** <http://www.legalservicesnyc.org/>

**Phone:** (646) 442-3600

**Email:** [volunteer@ls-nyc.org](mailto:volunteer@ls-nyc.org)

[Aheintz@ls-nyc.org](mailto:Aheintz@ls-nyc.org)

**Address:** 40 Worth Street, Suite 606

New York, NY 10013

### ***Description of Organization***

Legal Services NYC (LSNYC) assists low-income people in a range of civil areas including housing, family, foreclosure, consumer debt, immigration, and benefits. LSNYC has offices in a five boroughs. Volunteer attorneys are placed in one of these units, and have the opportunity to work with clients, appear in court, and do research and writing. Volunteers are permitted to set their own schedules, but are usually asked to commit to come on at least one day per week on an ongoing basis. LSNYC attorneys provide mentorship and supervision.

### ***Volunteer Opportunities***

LSNYC operates an expansive pro bono program that engages a range of private partners on behalf of thousands of low-income New Yorkers across multiple practice areas, and in all five boroughs. Managed by a full-time Director of Pro Bono Services, the Pro Bono Services Department works with staff and pro bono partners to create and manage pro bono projects, place cases, access in-kind resources, and match individual volunteers with appropriate LSNYC offices.

LSNYC offers a number of ongoing projects that partner law firms, corporations, and emeritus attorneys with individual clients who have discreet needs. LSNYC provides training, supervision,

and technical support, while pro bono partners take the lead on the cases. Availability varies, depending on current volunteer participation, office space, staffing, and client numbers.

Examples include:

- **SSI/SSD Appeals.** LSNYC represents disabled clients at hearings before federal administrative law judges. These cases frequently result in significant disability benefits to clients who would otherwise go unrepresented.

**Substantive area of law:**

Disability  
Litigation

- **Family Law Administrative Appeals.** LSNYC's Bronx office challenges client's inclusion on the New York State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment. Victories permit clients to return to work in a variety of fields, and to foster parent and adopt children.

**Substantive area of law:**

Family  
Litigation

- **Bankruptcy Assistance Project.** LSNYC's Bankruptcy Assistance Project (NYCBAP) helps debtors file pro se Chapter 7 bankruptcy petitions and help clients with contested matters. To date, more than 700 attorneys have participated, providing assistance to over 3,000 debtors. Clients are able to clear their debts and start their financial life over with a clean slate.

**Substantive area of law:**

Bankruptcy

**Housing Repairs.** LSNYC's Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Bronx offices represent low income clients in "HP actions"-cases in which a client has significant repair issues in her apartment that a landlord refuses to remedy. These cases make real, significant change for clients living in unacceptable living conditions.

**Substantive area of law:**

Housing  
Litigation

- **Wills Clinic.** LSNYC currently offers clinics to low-income clients in several boroughs to prepare wills, advance directives, and health care proxies. LSNYC seeks volunteers with trusts and estates experience to offer wills clinics elsewhere.

**Substantive area of law:**

Trusts and Estates  
Transactional / non-litigation

- **Trusts and Estates Panel.** LSNYC seeks to form a panel of 3 to 7 attorneys with expertise in Trusts and Estates law. LSNYC does not have such experts on staff, yet Trust and Estate questions arise with some regularity. The Trust and Estate Panel will agree to respond to Trust and Estate questions from LSNYC staff in a timely fashion, and provide expert advice to our advocates. Volunteers would operate off-site, and as needed. In some instances volunteers may be offered pro bono cases. Participation in the panel does not require, however, that a volunteer agree to take cases.

**Substantive area of law:**

Trusts and Estates  
Transactional / non-litigation

- **Student Debt.** LSNYC helps low-income people who are struggling with unpaid federal student debt-often from attending predatory, for profit educational institutions. Pro bono advocates negotiate with debt services to secure fair repayment plans, consolidate, or even discharge federal student loan debt in certain circumstances.

**Substantive area of law:**

Consumer debt  
Transactional / non-litigation

- **Civil Orders of Protection.** Survivors of domestic violence often face threats and violence, even after leaving an abusive partner. An Order of Protection signed by a family court judge requires the abuser to stop the violence and threats. It can also order the abuser to stay away from a home, school, or job. If the order is violated, the abuser can be arrested and prosecuted. Orders of protection are hugely significant for clients, but provide an opportunity for pro bono attorneys to take on a discrete matter. The work consists of client interviews, simple fact discovery, drafting papers, and one to three appearances in Family Court to conduct a hearing.

**Substantive areas of law:**

Family  
Litigation

- **Naturalizations.** Low-income immigrants who are ready to become U.S. citizens frequently find the process of confusing and intimidating, leading to delay and sometimes to unnecessary rejection. Pro bono attorneys will prepare all aspects of the naturalization proceeding, including assisting with preparation of the application, requesting any relevant waivers, preparing the client for the naturalization interview, and accompanying the client to his or her naturalization interview.

**Substantive areas of law:**

Immigration  
Transactional / non-litigation

- **VAWA Self-Petitions.** This initiative connects immigrant survivors of domestic violence who are or were married to their abusers with pro bono attorneys to obtain legal status in the United States. Self petitions under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)- commonly called “VAWA Self-Petitions”- are available to immigrants who are or were married to abusers who are United States Citizens. Pro bono attorneys prepare VAWA self-petitions for LSNYC clients from start to finish. Although the number of hours varies by case, each should require no more than 40 hours of time. Time spent preparing the application can be spread out over several months. Note that many of these clients speak Spanish or another language, and may require an interpreter.

**Substantive areas of law:**

Immigration  
Transactional / non-litigation

**Areas of Substantive Law**

**Family**

**Immigration**

**Bankruptcy**

**Housing**

**Trusts and Estates**

**Consumer Debt**

**Benefits**

**Tax**

**Employment**

**Anti-Discrimination**

**Veterans Benefits**

**Education**

**Disaster Relief**

### **General Notes**

**Capacity:** LSNYC capacity varies depending on current staff levels and by season. LSNYC can usually host between 10 and 20 emeritus attorneys citywide.

**Experience:** To volunteer with our wills clinics or Trusts and Estates Panel, prior probate / Trust and Estates experience is required.

**Supervision:** Trusts and Estates attorneys, however, will be expected to bring their expertise to their cases, with LSNYC staff available for technical support when needed.

Updated 3.30.2015