

Western New York Law Center

Contact Information

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Description of Organization

We are a nonprofit legal services organization in Buffalo, New York that specializes in mortgage foreclosure defense but also does work on bankruptcy, consumer rights, fair debt collection, and related issues. Home loan modification efforts often highlight homeowners' financial pressures beyond their mortgage, which led the Law Center to begin working with low to moderate income clients in related bankruptcy and consumer debt issues. The Law Center also engages in Fair Housing litigation, high impact class action lawsuits arising out of systemic legal problems affecting low-income people, and policy work. The Law Center works closely with New York State and national groups to shape policy to accommodate the needs of low-income and mid-income individuals and families.

As the Law Center develops its consumer rights practice area, we are especially interested in working with attorneys with a background in bankruptcy, consumer rights and/or Fair Debt Collection Practices work. The Law Center also seeks experienced attorneys interested in mentoring younger attorneys.

We are a fun, energetic team looking forward to working with attorneys who are generous enough to donate their time!

Volunteer Opportunities at Western New York Legal Center

Volunteer attorneys may provide legal services and/or conduct policy research in a variety of areas including bankruptcy, consumer debt, bank law, impact litigation, and mortgage foreclosure defense. Volunteer attorneys can choose to work with staff attorneys in a supportive capacity, handle cases individually, or provide limited legal advice on our intake hotline. Additionally, volunteers can assist with policy research or the development of educational materials. Volunteer attorneys may also serve as mentors to younger staff attorneys.

The following distinct volunteer opportunities are available at Western New York Legal Center:

Bankruptcy: Volunteers can work with staff attorneys on Chapter 7 bankruptcy petitions in a supportive capacity or handle cases individually; volunteers can also provide limited legal advice on our bankruptcy intake hotline.

Fair Debt Collection Practices Act: Volunteers develop public education materials to advise consumers about their rights under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act. This work could be done from home.

Impact Litigation: Volunteers conduct research and draft litigation documents related to impact litigation (such as Article 78 proceedings and federal and state class actions) on behalf of low-income people.

Residential Foreclosure Defense: The Western New York Law Center provides free foreclosure defense services for homeowners during the Mandatory Settlement Conference phase of a foreclosure action. Volunteers can work with staff attorneys on foreclosure cases in a supportive capacity or handle cases individually; volunteers can also provide limited legal advice on our foreclosure intake hotline.

Areas of Substantive Law

Bankruptcy

Bank Law

Consumer Rights

Fair Debt Collection Practices

Fair Housing

Impact Litigation

Mortgage Foreclosure

General Notes

Capacity: Western New York Law Center has the capacity for four volunteers.

Experience: Previous experience is not required for the Residential Foreclosure Defense opportunity, because Western New York Law Center has the capacity to train volunteers in that area of law. However, previous experience in one of the following areas of substantive law is necessary for volunteer opportunities involving: Bankruptcy, Impact Litigation, and Fair Debt Collection Practices Act. Litigation experience and/or class action lawsuit experience is a plus.

Supervision: For the Residential Foreclosure Defense volunteer opportunity, volunteer attorneys will be trained and supervised by staff attorneys. For the other volunteer opportunities, volunteer attorneys will not be closely supervised. However, Lauren Breen, the supervising attorney at Western New York Law Center, will be available as a resource and liaison to all volunteers.

[Apply to be a Volunteer](#)