

Immigration Rights and Services

Co-Chairs:

John Befus

First Deputy Commissioner
Westchester County DSS

Margarita Garcia

Principal Court Attorney
9th JD



HUDSON VALLEY HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

Celebrating Hispanic HERITAGE Month

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 6:30pm on Zoom and Facebook Live

Theme: "Hispanics: Be Proud of Your Past, Embrace the Future"

Send your RSVP by September 14, 2020 to pablo368@hotmail.com
Event is limited to 100 seats

PANELISTS:
HON. NELSON ROMAN
FEDERAL JUDGE; CAROL ROBLES ROMAN, FORMER NYC DEPUTY MAYOR; ROBIN BIRHAL, IMMIGRATION LAW PRACTICE

Book Launch & Poetry Reading by Hon. Jose Castaneda
Flutist Carlos Jiménez

Logos for HVCBA, WWBA, and LJA are visible in the top right corner of the poster.

Hudson Valley Hispanic Bar Association



Judge Maria Vazquez-Doles,
and Judge Walter Rivera report
on the goals of the newly
formed Hudson Valley Hispanic
Bar Association

- Facilitate contact between Spanish speaking attorneys and the immigrant population
- Engage in community projects to provide training and enhance advocacy
- Provide CLE programs to its members on topics affecting the immigrant community
- Participate in forums on access to justice
- Provide networking opportunities for lawyers, advocates, public officials
- Create a lawyer referral program for Spanish speaking attorneys
- Encourage members to participate and qualify for assigned counsel program
- Encourage members to pursue Unified Court System employment opportunities

Legal Hand
and
Prevention
Committee

Sharon Matthie

Associate Court Attorney
Westchester Family Court

Crystal Collins

Assistant to the County
Executive for Advocacy,
Community Liaison & Faith
Based Partnership
Initiatives



Right to Counsel in Land/Lord Tenant Matters

Co-Chairs:

Barbara Finkelstein, Esq.

Diane Atkins



After results from a Yonkers pilot demonstrated providing counsel to tenants equates with lower evictions and less homelessness the program has expanded and is no longer Yonkers exclusive. Westchester County consolidated its legal services eviction prevention funding to Legal Services of the Hudson Valley offering a full range of services for tenants, from advice to full representation.

A large group of not for profit eviction and community- based organizations in Westchester created a Right to counsel coalition based on the belief that low income tenants should have access to legal representation as a part of the solution to the evection of low income tenants. The committee hopes to partner with this effort

Family Court Matters

Co-Chairs:

James M. McAllister
Maria-Alana Recine, Esq.
Cindy J. Kanusher



- Established a Court Navigator program in Westchester County Family court, where volunteers are available to direct litigants to the correct offices and also to help people use the public computers to complete the forms
- Created a pool of pro bono attorneys who can help with adoption cases
- Pre-Covid, created an SCU satellite office in White Plains, so litigants can be immediately referred for help while in the Courthouse.
- Added Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT) to services to litigants in the Westchester County Family Court in conjunction with other service providers already established in the Court.
- Creating a child support clinic in Westchester County Family Court, either using students (Pace) or volunteers (from Pace) who will help with the child support petition process (this will need dedicated resources to achieve).

SERVICES OFFERED



Access to private area to conduct and make a request for services



Congregation point person will be available to coordinate and provide access to equipment



Access to telephone, computer, printer and scanner



Access to and help with scheduling free legal assistance

Westchester County and The 9th Judicial District *in Partnership with* The Westchester County Faith Based Leadership



The purpose and mission of the program is to have these houses of worship operate as a safe haven for unrepresented persons who don't have access to personal home computer equipment

FAITH BASED COURT ACCESS INITIATIVE

PARTICIPATING HOUSES OF WORSHIP

St. Andrews Episcopal Church
22 Post Street
Yonkers, NY 10705

Pastor Richard Suero
414-242-0984 (Cell Phone)

Church Secretary is Beatriz
914.963.9523

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:30am-1:30pm



Church of the Assumption
131 Union Avenue
Peekskill, NY 10566

Father Esteban Sanchez
914.737.2071

Monday, Wednesday, Thurs. 9:30am-1:30pm



Bethesda Baptist Church
71 East Lincoln Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Reverend Allen Paul Weaver Jr.
914.632.6713

Tuesday 10:00am-1:00pm



Grace Baptist Church
52 South 6th Avenue
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Reverend Bill Mizell
914.664.2676

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:30am-1:30pm



Mount Hope A.M.E. Zion Church
65 Lake Street
White Plains, NY 10607

Reverend Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith
914.948.6372

Tuesday & Thursday 9:30am-1:30pm

PRESS RELEASE



Chief Judge Announces Westchester Initiative to Enhance Remote Access to the Courts, Legal Services to Underserved Communities Amid COVID Pandemic

New Faith-Based Court Access (FCA) Program Enables Unrepresented Litigants to Virtually Access the Westchester County Courts, Free Legal Services from Local Houses of Worship

Outreach and Communication through Technology

Co-Chairs:

Terry Kirchner
Executive Director
Westchester Library System

Valerie Buzzell
Principal LAN Administrator 9th JD



- Promoting Virtual Court Help Center and Faith Based Court Access Initiative through the public libraries, bar associations and county agencies and Court web site
- Virtual event is planned for December using Microsoft Teams for the Westchester Public Library staff on the services available in the Supreme Court Law Library, Virtual Help Center and Faith Based Court Access Initiative
- Working with the public libraries to include Courthelp and DIY links on the Westchester Public Libraries computer terminals
- Collaborating with Westchester County 211 Services to share and promote initiatives and resources

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Valerie Buzzell, 10/24/2020