



Volunteers Needed for the Staten Island CLARO Project *Pro Bono* Project for *Pro Se* Debtor Defendants

Staten Island CLARO (Civil Legal Advice and Resource Office) volunteers are needed for an innovative, advice-only, volunteer lawyer program for pro se defendants with Civil Court cases in Richmond County. Staten Island CLARO sponsors include:

- the Richmond County Bar Association,
- the Staten Island Women's Bar Association, and
- Wagner College.

CLARO'S MISSION. Volunteer lawyers assist the unprecedented numbers of individuals who must defend themselves in consumer debt collection cases. In 2009, creditors filed over 240,000 consumer credit cases in New York City Civil Court, 15,269 of them in Richmond County. Of these cases, only 179 (or 1%) debtor defendants had attorneys representing them. Debt collection matters can be overwhelming for *pro se* litigants. Often, debtors first learn of a lawsuit after their wages have been garnished or their bank accounts frozen. CLARO provides limited legal assistance to unrepresented debtor defendants with consumer debt cases in Civil Court.

HOURS OF OPERATION. Starting on **January 20, 2011**, CLARO sessions will take place on Thursdays, from 5pm to 7pm, in Richmond County Supreme Court, located at 18 Richmond Terrace, in Room 300.

TRAINING. A three-hour training session for Staten Island CLARO will be held on **Wednesday, January 12, 2011, from 6pm to 9pm at the Central Jury Room, located at 126 Stuyvesant Place and directly behind Richmond County Supreme Court.** Three CLE credits (non-transitional, professional practice) will be offered for free to those who attend the training and volunteer 6 hours for Staten Island CLARO. To register, please visit:

<http://law.fordham.edu/Statenisland-clarotraining1-12-11>.

For more information, please contact Dora Galacatos of the Feerick Center for Social Justice at Fordham Law School at galacatos@law.fordham.edu. The Feerick Center and the New York City Civil Court Committee are providing support in helping launch Staten Island CLARO.

Any attorney who attends this training program can also volunteer for:

- Brooklyn CLARO
- Bronx CLARO
- Queens CLARO
- Manhattan CLARO (NYCLA members and Fordham Law School alumni only)
- NYS Unified Court System's Volunteer Attorney Programs