PRO BONO NET

2022-2023

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Pro Bono Net programs funded through IOLA leverage technology to ensure access to a full continuum of legal options for low income and vulnerable individuals in New York State, ranging from early intervention tools and self-advocacy resources to limited scope pro bono and full representation. During this reporting period, a total of 1,192,545 individuals were reached through community legal education, pro se assistance, referral information, and online outreach by Pro Bono Net's IOLA-funded programs. Our programs also recruited over 170 new pro bono volunteers from nonprofits and legal aid organizations through our platforms, and supported 468 organizations across the state in delivering vital legal services to low income and vulnerable New Yorkers.

During the reporting period, 143,249 court forms and legal documents were assembled by New Yorkers using Pro Bono Net's LawHelp Interactive program, including 11,967 Family Offense Petition (Order of Protection) forms. There were over 557,000 visits to LawHelpNY and the Crime Victims Legal Network (CVLN), with over 3,330 using LawHelpNY Guides on navigating debt collection, housing repairs, and child custody. Over 200,000 legal aid referral listings were viewed after visitors conducted a legal help directory search on LawHelpNY and CVLN. Trained law student volunteers for our LiveHelp chat service provided information and attorney referral assistance to an average of 700 individuals a month during this reporting period, while 169 LiveHelp volunteers from 33 law schools contributed 5,300 hours of pro bono assistance. CVLN's Victim Compensation Guide was viewed 42,693 times and the companion Compensation Claim Navigator, a screening tool to help victims find out if they're eligible for compensation, was used to conduct 760 guided interviews.

Justicia Lab (formerly the Immigration Advocates Network) provided referrals to 76,957 New Yorkers across our Immigration LawHelp, Citizenshipworks and Immi

Service Area:
Statewide

Population Served: General Low Income Population

Total Funding: $2,372,920

Total IOLA Grant: $550,000

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:

- **Total Staff:** 31
- **Lawyers:** 7
- **Paralegals:** 11
- **Other:** 13

platforms, and conducted trainings for staff and volunteers at organizations around New York on the use of Citizenshipworks, our award-winning platform for naturalization. Justicia Lab also launched ¡Reclamo! digital tool to combat wage theft, designed for use by workers and non-lawyer advocates, developed in partnership with Make the Road New York. Since October 2022, ¡Reclamo! has helped workers in the high-violation construction industry file over $1M in wage theft claims with the NYS Department of Labor.

LawHelp Interactive (LHI) continues to be a cornerstone of access to justice services for lowincome and self-represented New Yorkers. LHI allows unrepresented litigants to prepare their own legal forms online for free. It is also the backbone for many civil legal aid and court-based assistance programs throughout the state. During this reporting period, LHI created 12,021 free court document packages for victims of domestic violence, and more than 143,251 free document packages across other areas of need, including consumer debt, family law (including child custody and support) and landlordtenant issues. Pro Bono Net continued regular system updates to LHI for both security and accessibility. In addition, LHI staff provided end user support to more than 1,000 New Yorkers using the forms who reached out through our Help Desk with questions about how to use the forms, how to file them, and other technical or process issues

Our Remote Legal Connect (RLC) platform connects volunteer lawyers with pro se litigants who would otherwise not have been able to receive brief legal advice for their consumer, housing, and family cases due to transportation barriers, job, and childcare responsibilities. RLC was used by partnering legal aid organizations to provide pro bono legal help to 528 clients.

For the grant year, 955 screenings were conducted on Pro Bono Net's Legal Risk Detector, a legal health "check up" tool designed for use by nurses, social workers and allied professionals to screen seniors - particularly the homebound and disabled or isolated - for legal issues related to housing, consumer debt and financial exploitation.

During this period, TenantHelpNY resources were viewed over 48,900 times and provided tenants outside New York City with information about their rights if they had a pending eviction case. The traffic to this site was due in large part to the expanded resources and work our team did to make it a more comprehensive resource, along with a new guided interview that allows users to complete a letter requesting a stay in their eviction case if they submitted an application for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

Through LawHelpNY, we provide individuals with know-your-rights resources, self-help tools, court information, and attorney referral information. LawHelpNY also provides rapid access to resources for intake workers, hotline staff, and community organizations. Additionally, LawHelpNY's referral directory is now available via API to make it accessible on other websites that individuals visit for legal help.

Through http://probono.net/ny, Pro Bono Net connects volunteer attorneys to community legal education through webinars, newsletters, calendars of training events, and other

468
legal aid and community groups assisted

resources. Our online legal libraries provide pro bono attorneys with tools to quickly acquaint themselves with unfamiliar areas of law. The site also gives legal services organizations a platform through which they can promote volunteer opportunities and equip volunteers with resources to provide high quality pro bono assistance. In response to the ongoing disruption of place-based services, we continue to update our online Pro Bono Opportunities Guide with information about programs offering remote pro bono opportunities. The New York State Pro Bono Opportunities Guide was also visited over 10,500 times by law students and attorneys seeking volunteer opportunities with legal aid organizations and pro bono programs across the state. Additionally, there were 1,045 community legal education interactions with blog posts on our Connecting Justice Communities blog and Pro Bono Net appearances on podcasts.

23,420 Pro Se Assistance include self-help individuals who received assistance with filling out and submitting LawHelp Interactive's Family Offense Petition forms, assistance from LiveHelp online chat operators to locate know your rights, access to legal help, and court information, and assistance with remote consultations.

Pro Bono Net's LawHelp Interactive (LHI) platform allows low-income people without access to a lawyer to prepare their own legal forms online for free through online, language guided interviews. It also is also integrated with court-based and civil legal aid services for self-represented litigants throughout the state. LHI is also the only document assembly platform that provides end user support by supporting those
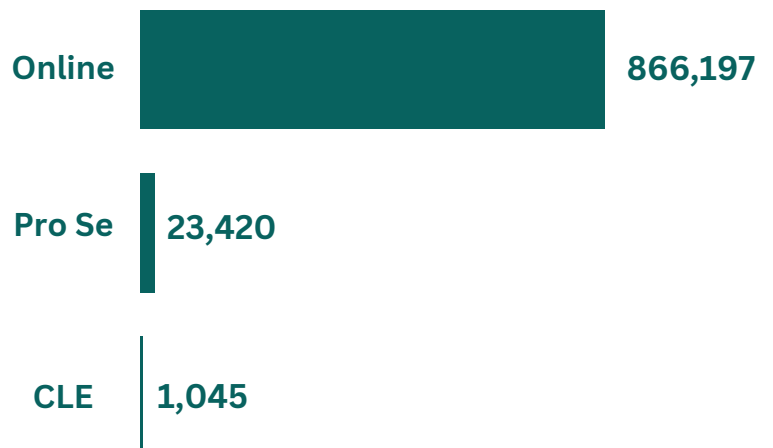
who have low literacy or are not able to complete forms to ensure they can create the forms they need and guide them through the process. This high touch is key for the populations we serve. In addition, LHI as a platform supports hundreds of New York-based nonprofits who join LHI so they can create advocate accounts to create forms. Most of the users of the New York forms come from the New York Courts website, however they also come from the Crime Victims Legal Help web pages and LawHelpNY, as well as from the advocate-driven Family Offense Petition program. During the reporting period, the Family Offense Petition program, a collaboration between LHI, the New York Courts, and DV agencies, was used to complete more than 12,000 free forms for DV survivors across the state. Across all issue areas, LHI completed more than 143,251 document packages, providing an essential legal lifeline for low income and vulnerable New Yorkers navigating court on their own.

Remote Legal Connect's (RLC) New York-based partner organizations provided legal assistance to 528 new pro bono clients using our RLC technology. RLC consultations are scheduled in advance and are between a pro bono attorney and a client. During this period, pro bono attorneys, and clients were also able to use RLC to collaborate on and share nearly 1,000 case documents with each other. Family Legal Care, through its Remote Legal Connect initiative, served clients in over 40 counties.

In addition, we continue to partner with JASA and the Center for Elder Law & Justice (CELJ) to expand usage of the Legal Risk Detector in New York, a legal issue-spotting and referral tool designed for use by social workers, medical personnels, and other professionals working with older Americans. We continue to work with CELJ to enhance and expand usage of the Senior Financial Safety Tool which was designed to help staff at community banking institutions and in community outreach settings

890,662
people benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Services

Number of People Benefitted from Other Services

Online	866,197
Pro Se	23,420
CLE	1,045

educate older adults about the risk of financial exploitation, screen them for vulnerabilities, and refer them to legal services if needed. The Legal Risk Detector and the Senior Financial Safety tool expand preventative legal outreach and assistance to the disabled, homebound and other elderly populations who are difficult to reach through traditional legal services models.

Citizenshipworks, our online naturalization platform, offers free and comprehensive support to immigrant New Yorkers at all stages of the citizenship process. In 2022, we established a partnership with the New York State Office of New Americans (ONA) to launch a New York State Citizenship Portal to bring naturalization services directly to New Yorkers, bridge the digital divide and increase access to legal assistance through in-person and virtual consultations. With the launch of this partnership, New Yorkers can now access free and trustworthy assistance with their citizenship application online and from the comfort of their home. In 2022, the Citizenshipworks team held 2 webinars with our partners at the New York State Office of New Amerians, with a combined total of 262 attendees. We conducted 33 individualized technical assistance training sessions to our 12 New Americans Campaign Partners and conducted 719 naturalization screenings using Citizenshipworks.

As mentioned above, the Family Offense Petition program, a collaboration between Pro Bono Net's LawHelp Interactive program, the New York Courts, and DV agencies, allows advocates, legal aid and government agencies to e-file petitions on behalf of survivors of abuse. The program is accessible through a network of trained advocates in every county in New York State. Once completed, the petition information is then electronically transferred directly into the court's case management system. This program was used to complete more than 12,000 free forms for DV survivors across the state during the reporting period, helping to ensure they can access critical services and support under the most difficult circumstances. For courts, the tool produces legible court forms from trained advocates, saves hours in data entry, allows them to adjudicate faster, and streamlines the process so that they can handle more cases each day.

OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

In July 2022, with support from Legal Assistance of Western NY, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, and the Legal Services Corporation, and with ongoing support from IOLA and other funding partners, the redesigned LawHelpNY was launched using Drupal, an open-source software and content management system. This was the culmination of a two-year effort that started in early 2020 with a human-centered

design process that included user research, feedback from the community, usability testing, and designing a prototype. LawHelpNY engaged the services of a highly regarded strategist Laura Quinn for a six-month period (May - November 2022) to develop and oversee a content strategy and 18-month development and implementation plan for the newly redesigned website.

During this reporting year, our team also focused on developing and testing two new significant new features for our Remote Legal Connect platform: 1) support for having multiple people in virtual consultation, which will enable RLC administrations, pro bono attorneys, and clients to invite other participants to a virtual consultation on RLC and 2) softphone support, to enable pro bono attorneys to call clients from a legal aid-designated phone number instead of their personal or law firm phone numbers.

OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

Pro Bono Net fosters the professional development of board and staff through several methods. All board members are provided with on-boarding to the organization and our programs. Staff receive a professional development stipend and are encouraged and supported in identifying training and conference opportunities relevant to their growth interests. Pro Bono Net also hosts monthly in-house Lunch & Learn gatherings open to all staff and focused on topics such as project management, website accessibility, machine learning and AI, grant writing, training and presentation design, and other core skills. We support Slack channels relevant to topics such as diversity, equity and inclusion and product management that we use to share professional development resources and training opportunities. Staff are also given the opportunity to serve as a co-chair of an internal practice group to further their leadership skills, and receive a stipend for doing so. During this reporting period, we also sponsored our Senior Programs Manager's participation in the New York Leadership Fellows program, a three-month professional development opportunity for mid-career nonprofit practitioners in the metropolitan New York City region culminating in an Executive Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership.

LawHelpNY provides extensive training to volunteers who staff the LiveHelp chat service, primarily law students and law graduates. Volunteers receive training on navigating and finding information on LawHelpNY, CourtHelp, the Crime Victims Legal Help Network, as well as the difference between legal information and legal advice. Additionally, volunteers participate in a live online training with the Program Manager that includes training on cultural competency and unconscious bias and webinars on the most common legal issues facing visitors to LawHelpNY. The Program Manager sends ongoing feedback and training for the LiveHelp Operators via weekly email

newsletter which incorporates program updates, tips on common questions and feedback on the chats that week. The LiveHelp team provides training and supervision to law student externs who participate in short-term projects that support the growth and improvement of LiveHelp and LawHelpNY.

PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

169 Law Students volunteered 5,300 hours

Pro Bono Net recruits, trains and deploys pro bono attorneys and non-attorney volunteers in a number of ways.

LiveHelp focused on developing our volunteer management system, Galaxy Digital, to enhance volunteer outreach and engagement. This included developing Galaxy to relaunch our weekly newsletter to increase volunteer engagement and reimplement volunteer spotlights to acknowledge the exceptional pro bono work completed by our law student volunteers. This enabled a more streamlined process so that staff and volunteers could focus on better serving visitors to LawHelpNY, CVLN, and other sites.

Pro Bono Net staff organized and/or served as trainers in webinars, podcasts, and CLE programs to promote pro bono involvement in various areas. These included "New Developments in Climate Disaster Response & Resilience" by the Practising Law Institute, "Nuts and Bolts of Standby Guardianship - A Substantive "Training on Standby Guardianship as a Tool in Future Planning" in partnership with Mobilization for Justice, Inc., and "Legal Services for Climate Emergencies" by the Legal Services Corporation.

Probono.net/ny offers a range of tools that support and facilitate the work of pro bono volunteers. Pro bono attorneys use probono.net/ny's seven practice areas to find volunteer opportunities, training materials, a calendar of local training events, and other support services that make it easier to get involved. These tools also increase the capacity of legal services providers to train and recruit volunteers, circulate available cases and communicate with their volunteers. In addition, the Pro Bono Resource Center of Justicia Lab (formerly Immigration Advocates Network) supports pro bono members in New York.

TenantHelpNY worked with a law student from Cornell Law School to expand the legal help content available through TenantHelpNY.org. This externship was supported by a grant Pro Bono Net received from Cornell Law School through its "Housing Justice for All: Developing a Network of Legal Access Across Tompkins County and Beyond" project.

SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

LawHelpNY continues to engage a broad based Advisory Committee for advice, feedback, and program improvement: City Bar Justice Center, Legal Services NYC, Legal Aid Society of New York City, Volunteers of Legal Service, Empire Justice Center, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, New York State Bar Association, Legal Assistance of Western NY, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, the Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, and New York Legal Assistance Group. Their contribution to our work is critical to help us target our efforts. Our legal director also met with staff and leadership at individual partner organizations to discuss how we might collaborate on community legal education and we are exploring ways to avoid duplication in the creation, editing and curation of high-quality, plain-language legal content for New Yorkers. Through this initiative, our partners at Legal Services of the Hudson Valley and Legal Services NYC are providing expert legal review of new plain language content. Legal Aid of Western NY and Empire Justice Center have expressed interest in future collaboration.

Crime Victims Legal Network (CVLN), a partnership of NY Office of Victim Services (OVS)- funded civil legal organizations and victim assistance programs, is developed and maintained by our program partners at Empire Justice Center and the Center for Human Services Research at the University at Albany, State University of New York. Advisory Committee members include the Center for Elder Law & Justice, Neighborhood Legal Services, In Your Own Voices, Legal Assistance of Western New York, Schuyler County District Attorney's Office, The Legal Project, NYS Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts, and Disability Rights New York. All of the more than 50 OVS-funded organizations are members of CVLN.

A key collaborator for LawHelp Interactive (LHI) continues to be the New York Courts, who create and edit the forms and are responsive when we report to them an issue or question brought up by an end user. In addition, the network of shelters and nonprofits that use the Family Offense Petition are key collaborators in using and filing that form in many counties. The partnership with the New York Courts on this e-filing project with non-attorneys is a key project for Pro Bono Net and LHI. In addition we have medical legal partnership teams using some of the LHI powered interviews.

During the grant period Justicia Labs partnered with the New York State Office of New Americans to launch a New York State Citizenship Portal to bring naturalization services directly to New Yorkers, bridge the digital divide and increase access to legal assistance through in-person and virtual consultations. With the launch of this partnership, New Yorkers can now access free and trustworthy assistance with their citizenship application online and from home. We were also awarded a $1,000,000 grant from the Houston Endowment and a $500,000 grant from Google.org to revamp the technology underpinning Citizenshipworks with the goal of supporting a broader array of immigrant cases in New York State and around the country. These investments will allow us to continue to expand the capacity of Citizenshipworks to provide support to derivative cases, help applicants apply for a Green Card, and deliver assistance to immigrants and refugees seeking various forms of immigration relief. In addition, we work closely with Make the Road on development and training for ¡Reclamo!, our digital tool to combat wage theft.
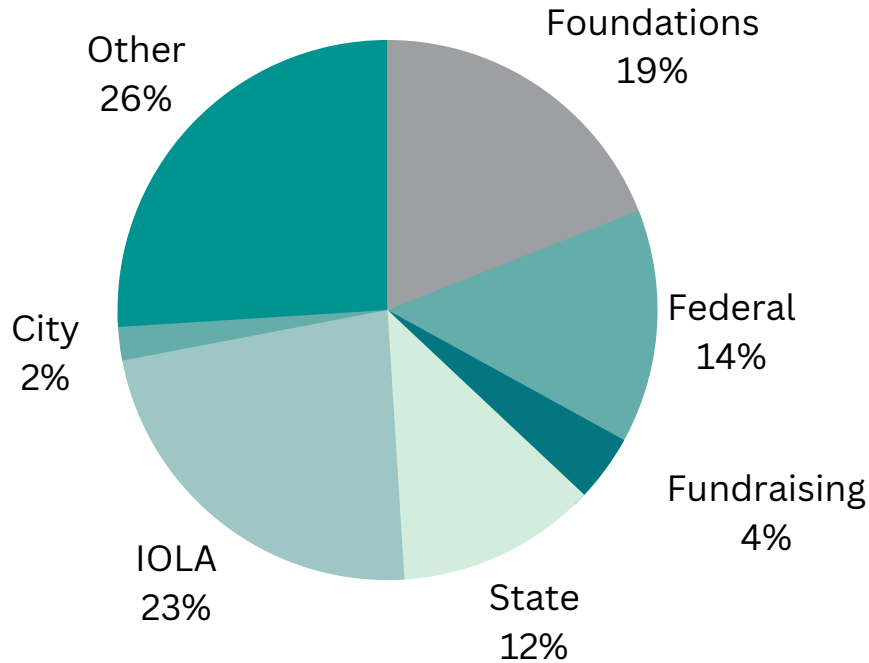
The Pro Bono Initiatives team partnered with the Urban Law Center at Fordham Law School to renew the New York City Right to Counsel Jobs Board, a project of the Right to Counsel NYC Coalition and Pro Bono Net to promote the involvement of new and current lawyers in the right-to-counsel movement. We also worked with Mobilization for Justice, Inc. to design a webinar on standby guardianship in New York City. The webinar had over 100 registrants from the legal aid community and lawyers interested in taking a pro bono case related to kinship law.

Remote Legal Connect (RLC) joined Family Legal Care, formerly Legal Information for Families Today, to share the success of its Remote Legal Connect program at the New York State Bar Association's Partnership Conference in Albany, NY: Hundreds Gather in Albany for NYSBA 2022 Partnership Conference. We also partnered with Hofstra Law School to onboard their MedicalLegal Partnership Program with Northwell Health to Remote Legal Connect. Hofstra Law and Pro Bono Net will present at the 2023 New York Statewide Civil Legal Aid Technology Conference to provide an overview of this new initiative.

Pro Bono Net partnered with Cornell Law School for a new project, "Housing Justice for All: Developing a Network of Legal Access Across Tompkins County and Beyond" to expand self-help resources available to tenants living in Ithaca. The project is a collaborative effort of Cornell Law School, Legal Assistance of Western New York, The Ithaca Tenants Union, The 6th Judicial District, The Ithaca Eviction/Displacement Defense Project, The City of Ithaca Common Council, The Robin Fund, and The New York State's Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, Housing Sub-Committee, Tompkins County Pilot.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Pro Bono Net received
$2,372,920
in total funding this past year

Foundations	$443,410
IOLA Grant	$550,000
City and County Funding	$41,000
Fundraising	$93,388
State Funding	$292,139
Federal Funding	$322,647
Other	$630,335
Total	$2,372,920