

**ASSOCIATION  
OF THE BAR OF  
THE CITY OF  
NEW YORK FUND**

2022-2023

# OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

The City Bar Justice Center (Justice Center) delivered a range of civil legal services this grant period benefiting 25,003 New Yorkers of low income – a roughly 6% increase over last year. With our 34-FTE team leveraging thousands of pro bono hours from 1,753 pro bono volunteers, we helped clients obtain over \$8.9 million in benefits, monetary awards, and settlements (a 46% increase over last year) and save nearly \$2.4 million through debt prevention and the preservation of resources (an 11% increase over last year). Our clients also benefited from almost \$23 million worth of legal services donated by pro bono partners – a 77% increase over last year. Also of note this grant period:

- Our Legal Hotline responded to 11,460 inquiries received primarily via phone and our online intake (an 8.4% increase over last year); covered landlord-tenant, custody and child support, consumer debt, divorce and employment matters; provided brief services (e.g., sending legal information, links, or referrals by email, and reviewing or drafting legal documents) to 3,059 patrons (an 87% increase); all while staff attorneys kept updated on changing laws and court policies.
- Our Cancer Advocacy and Elder Law Projects (CAP/ELP) provided services for 136 elderly New Yorkers and 57 cancer patients and survivors. CAP/ELP also reached 26,304 individuals through online distribution of educational materials including videos, guides, and articles on issues involving employment discrimination, disability benefits, medical debt, and estate planning.
- Our Immigrant Justice Project (IJP) provided legal assistance to 253 people from 41 different countries, submitting 187 individual immigration applications.
- Our Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project (NELP) held 49 community-based programs, including legal clinics and presentations, that supported 959 entrepreneurs with the assistance of 487 pro bono volunteers.



**Population Served: Under-Resourced New Yorkers**

**Total Funding: \$4,132,823**

**Total IOLA Grant: \$537,500**

**Staffing Full Time Equivalents:**

- Total Staff: 34.32
- Paralegals: 10.50
- Lawyers: 18.92
- Other: 4.90

# DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES: CASES

## Immigration:

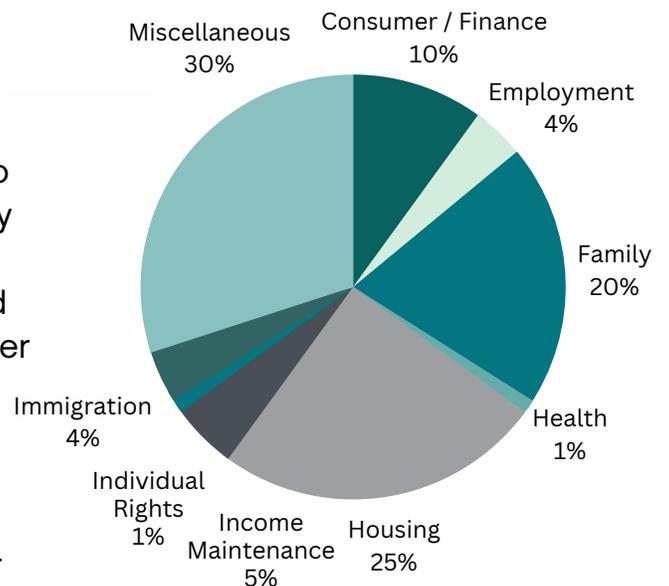
The Justice Center’s Immigrant Justice Project (IJP) not only provides broad immigration law-based advocacy but often mobilizes into action when an immigration crisis occurs in NYC.

During the grant year, IJP launched the NYC Migrant Youth Initiative, a partnership with Covenant House New York to assist with NYC’s migrant arrivals crisis. IJP recruited pro bono partners to host immigration relief screenings and Freedom of Information Act clinics and presentations, connecting eligible youth with full legal representation. Through the initiative, IJP provided a comprehensive legal assessment and assistance to Mr. V, a 19-year-old, newly arrived migrant youth from Nicaragua. After determining that he was eligible for asylum at a legal clinic in December 2022, based on his political opinion and sexual orientation, and possibly also Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status, IJP quickly located pro bono counsel to provide him with full legal representation. IJP worked closely with Mr. V and his legal team to timely file his application for asylum in February 2023, just one week before his one-year filing deadline. IJP is currently working with Mr. V and his team to file for work authorization and further explore SIJ status.

## Health:

The Cancer Advocacy Project (CAP) helps individuals with cancer gain some order in their lives as well as peace of mind in times of their health crisis. A case in point: Mr. X had leukemia and was in active treatment when he contacted CAP for a Power of Attorney and Health Care Proxy. Due to an infection requiring hospitalization, Mr. X was unable to travel and could not provide witnesses.

**25,003**  
people  
benefitted  
from  
**12,275** legal  
cases closed



**Cases by Legal Problem Area**

The volunteer attorney assigned to Mr. X traveled to the hospital to meet with him. As the client was unable to provide his own witnesses, the drafting attorney arranged for witnesses to attend the document execution, which took place in the hospital, allowing Mr. X to complete the process of the POA and HCP.

### **Veterans:**

The Veterans Assistance Project helps veterans gain service-connected disability benefits that provide long-term financial stability. Ms. P is a 46-year-old veteran who served in the Air Force and currently lives in Queens with her son. During her years in the service, she spent time lifting heavy medical equipment and patients as a flight medic and technician, regularly lifting over 250 pounds at a time. Only two years into the service, she noticed intense knee pain and migraine headaches. In later years, the knee pain spread to her hips, spine, neck, and back. In 2013, Ms. P was diagnosed with degenerative joint disease and femoroacetabular impingement in the hip. When Ms. P first came to VAP looking for legal assistance, she was not receiving any service-connected disability compensation. After a successful appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals, Ms. P was given a combined rating of 100% effective in 2015. She will now be receiving \$3,621.95 in monthly benefits and retroactive benefits going back to 2015. This compensation is extremely significant for Ms. P and will allow her to provide a financially stable future for herself and her son.

### **Miscellaneous:**

During this period, 3,008 brief advice and counsel cases were classified as “miscellaneous,” demonstrating the breadth of legal issues that New Yorkers in need bring to our organization. Of those cases, 95% were handled by our Legal Hotline, which demonstrates our staff’s diverse expertise and ability to assist on matters that fall outside existing reporting categories. Our Hotline handles inquiries from all over New York City on a wide range of issues. We do our best to help with all inquiries received, even when matters fall outside the scope of what we do. While not reported in the statistical portion, this includes criminal matters where our staff provides resources and redirects people for further assistance. Examples of cases reported under this category include people that were advised on next steps and provided with general information about their case appeals, suing and filing complaints, or other general legal questions. In such cases, our staff often spends significant time helping individuals think through their legal issues or explaining why legal redress may not be feasible. Other matters commonly coded as miscellaneous include attorney grievances, wills and estates, and roommate housing matters.

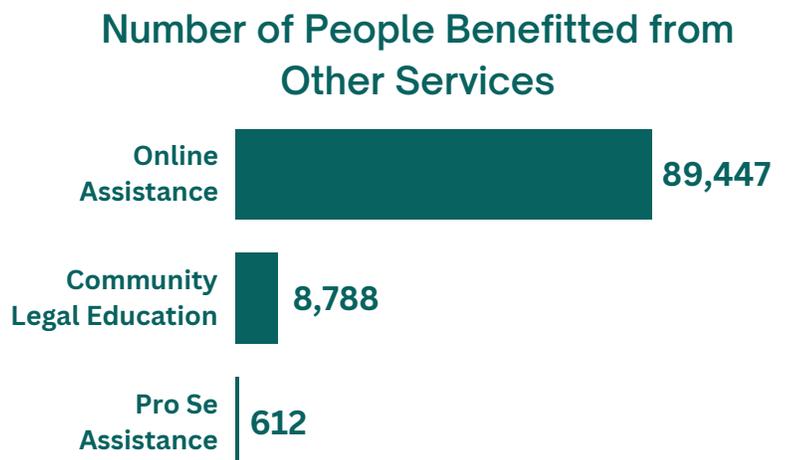
# OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

The Justice Center provides community legal education, pro se assistance, and outreach to thousands of New Yorkers of limited income through presentations, workshops, clinics, distribution of materials, and online resources. During this grant year, our staff and attorney volunteers provided 8,788 New Yorkers with legal information and/or advice via presentations and distributed materials. They also assisted 187 people at pro se clinics addressing varied topics (often also providing short, one-on-one follow-up consultations). In total, our provision of Other Legal Related Services was supported by 82 pro bono volunteers providing 3,637 hours of service. In addition, during this grant year, the Justice Center’s website and numerous online resources were viewed and/or downloaded 89,447 times.

Our Federal Pro Se Legal Assistance Project partnered with the Paul Weiss law firm on a remote clinic that educated pro se litigants about the discovery process in federal court. In follow-up, individual volunteer attorneys offered phone consultations for pro se litigants to address questions more specifically related to their own cases – a model demonstrating the value in connecting broad community legal education efforts, particularly for pro se litigants, to more tailored brief services.

The Legal Clinic for the Homeless (LCH) contacted 78 former and current LCH clients to inform them of the termination of Covid-related SNAP Emergency Allotments to ensure clients were prepared for a drop in SNAP assistance. LCH also used social media to get this critical information out to NY SNAP benefits recipients and reviewed SNAP budgets of clients who believed they were not receiving the correct amount of regular SNAP benefits and advocated for SNAP increases where warranted.

**98,847 People Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Services**



## OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

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The Justice Center recognizes the vital role technology plays in efficiently delivering services to New Yorkers in need and is increasing the use of technology across our work, from enhancing the use of social media to publish educational materials to developing more topical webinars and client-friendly videos. We recently fully transitioned to Microsoft Office 365, moving essential work tools online and document management to a cloud. We completely upgraded the IT system in newly renovated offices that include dedicated space where clients who do not have tech access at home can come to use a computer in a quiet office to complete case documents or connect remotely with a pro bono volunteer or online programming. We also have continued seeing increased use of our online intake systems (thus providing a 24/7 entry point to our services) and processed 4,127 online intakes this grant period, a 26% increase from last year, as we continue to build out our online intake's guided navigation capacities. We also continue to lead the collaborative NYC Consumer HelpFinder, an online intake tool that uses an intelligent case routing system to provide access to legal assistance from any web browser.

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## OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

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Internally, the Justice Center held a number of trainings to support staff during the grant period, including on a variety of DEI-related topics such as Environmental Racism and Ethical Client Storytelling, and a presentation by our Legal Clinic for the Homeless staff on the history of welfare policy in the U.S and the impact of racism. We also held a virtual pro bono panel discussion with external law firm pro bono leaders and the combined staff of the Justice Center, Her Justice, and VOLS.

Justice Center staff also attended a range of external trainings during the grant period, including the ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference and LSC's Innovations in Technology Conference. At a project-specific level, Veterans Assistance Project staff attended the National Organization of Veterans' Advocates (NOVA) fall conference, an event intended for both new and experienced veteran law practitioners. Homeowner Stability Project staff attended the HOPP Albany conference and received training on reverse mortgages, appraisals, and best practices for housing counselor and legal advocate collaboration. They also attended the National Consumer Law Conference in Seattle, where attorneys received multiple training courses on areas related to their practice and presented to a national audience.

## IMPACT CASES

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Our Homeowner Stability Project continues to assist a group of Bronx homeowners involving a Department of Buildings notice and demand to repair a failing retaining wall along their properties. The failed wall threatens other commercial and residential properties below the wall and will require an estimated \$750,000-\$1,500,000+ in remediation work. If the DOB completes the work, it will result in significant liens on the individual homes and potential loss if NYC eventually forecloses on those liens.

The Justice Center and pro bono counsel from Patterson Belknap have represented a Marine veteran and her three now adult children since 2020 in an FTCA case against the U.S. Navy alleging injuries sustained due to poisoned water at Marine Base Camp Lejeune – an issue recently in the news because Congress passed a new law affording relief and a waiver of sovereign immunity for eligible cases tied to Camp Lejeune water poisoning.

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## PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

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The City Bar Justice Center continues to maintain longstanding relationships with dozens of private law firms and corporate legal departments that partner with us on pro bono work and provides opportunities for individual volunteers to participate in our programming, including law firm and corporate attorneys and non-attorneys, law students including pro bono scholars, law graduates seeking to satisfy their 50-hour pro bono requirement for bar admission, solo practitioners, and retired attorneys participating in the Attorney Emeritus Program. During this reporting cycle, we maintained a roster of 1,671 volunteers who provided nearly 31,000 hours of service on direct client matters and 82 volunteers who provided 3,637 hours in other services. We saw an increase in the number of “other volunteers” as we’ve provided more opportunities that allow attorneys to work in teams with non-lawyers. We also saw a modest increase in the number of enrolled volunteers available to take on new matters or become involved in new pro bono programming on the horizon. For example, we are about to launch a vital records correction project.

Our pro bono opportunities include advice-only clinics, limited scope and full representation, assistance with pro se matters, research and writing projects, and presentations. We also develop initiatives to address emerging needs of the communities we serve. For example, our Immigrant Justice Project (IJP) partnered with Covenant House NY to address the overwhelming needs of newly arrived migrant youth facing homelessness. IJP launched the Migrant Youth Initiative and recruited and trained volunteers to host regular Freedom of Information Act and immigration relief screening clinics, and also connected eligible youth with full legal representation.

Each of our legal projects is led by a director with subject matter expertise who provides training that not only includes substantive law but also strives to include cultural competency and skills-based components that are beneficial to working with clients struggling with poverty. Our project directors remain available throughout the pendency of a pro bono assignment for ongoing supervision and mentorship, and malpractice insurance is provided to those who are not covered. The Justice Center also provides guidance to smaller law firms and corporate legal departments interested in setting up or further developing their pro bono programs.



**1,557 Attorneys volunteered 26,296 hours**

**27 Law Students volunteered 5,202 hours**

**169 Other Volunteers volunteered 3,085 hours**

Each  icon is equal to 175.3 volunteers.

Attorneys are represented through the Green Figure.

Law Students and Other Volunteers are represented through the Grey Figure.

# SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

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All Justice Center staff collaborate with the public interest legal community and with law firms, corporate legal departments, and members of the private bar who comprise our pro bono partner network; many of our staff sit on NYC Bar Association or other subject matter-related committees or partnerships, and/or collaborate with the judiciary, law schools, and government to increase access to justice; our executive director sits on the board of the New York Legal Services Coalition, and our director of legal services sits on the LawHelpNY advisory board. Other examples of significant collaborations this grant year include:

Our Legal Hotline collaborates with OCA's Access to Justice Program through a NYC Civil Court Project, which deploys pro bono volunteers supervised by our staff to provide legal advice, information, and brief services to patrons of the Civil Court Help Centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

The Civil Court Project receives inquiries from the public via an online portal that lives on both the Court's and Justice Center's websites.

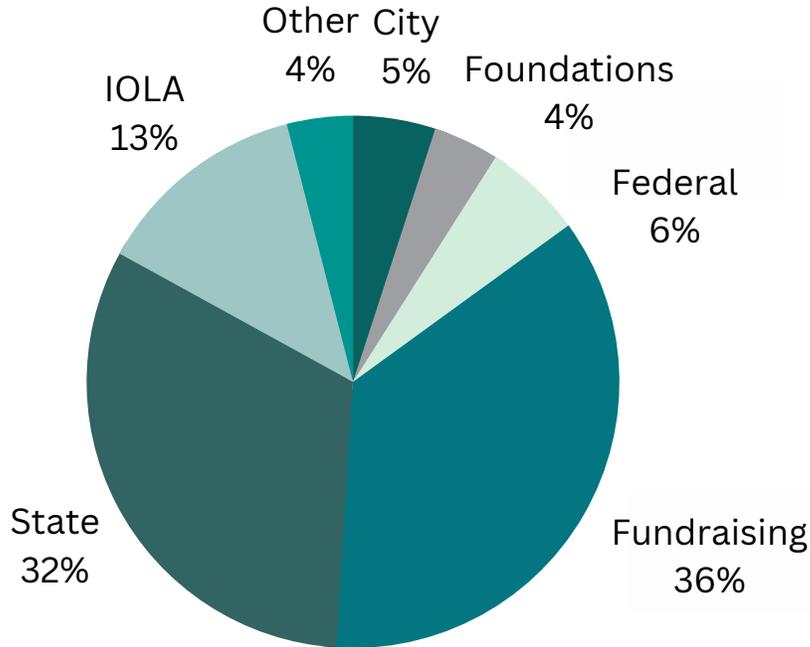
The Planning & Estates Law Project (PELP) continues its collaboration with Mount Sinai Hospital's Medical Partnership. PELP staff and pro bono volunteers provide patients with emergency life planning and counsel families of dying patients on how to handle end-of-life legal matters. Our Cancer Advocacy Project (CAP) maintains relationships with over 90 cancer-related organizations and individuals, including Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Care Center, Calvary Hospital, and The American Cancer Society. CAP conducted presentations for some of these groups during the IOLA grant year.

The Elder Law Project (ELP) also maintains relationships with over 50 senior centers and regularly receives requests from senior centers to schedule remote presentations on life planning documents and medical debt. ELP often consults with other legal services providers, such as Volunteers of Legal Service, to remain aware of each other's services in order to provide appropriate referrals.

The Consumer Bankruptcy Project (CBP) is a member of the collaborative Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP) and provides advocacy and community education on student loan debt relief options, including by explaining the limited circumstances in which student loan debt can be discharged in bankruptcy (a service capacity that distinguishes CBP from certain other providers). CBP provides these services through individual legal assistance, community outreach, and by distributing written information brochures.

# SOURCES OF FUNDING

The City Bar Justice Center received **\$4,132,823** in total funding this past year



<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>\$1,471,448</b>
<b>State Funding</b>	<b>\$1,327,457</b>
<b>IOLA Grant</b>	<b>\$537,500</b>
<b>Federal Funding</b>	<b>\$261,285</b>
<b>City Funding</b>	<b>\$225,000</b>
<b>Foundations</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>
<b>Other Funding</b>	<b>\$130,133</b>