The programs funded through IOLA for year two of this grant 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 1,006,206 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 more than 948 new pro bono volunteers for nonprofits and legal aid organizations through our platforms, and supported 351 organizations across the state in delivering vital legal services to low income and vulnerable New Yorkers. We expanded our pro bono support for new constituencies in February 2019, when we launched a new LGBT practice area on probono.net/ny, in partnership with the LGBT Bar Association of New York.

More than 155,000 court forms and legal documents were assembled in New York using Pro Bono Net’s LawHelp Interactive program, and 8,737 Family Offense Petition (Order for Protection) forms were completed using LHI. The LawHelpNY websites garnered over 489,450 visits of which, 369,899 were unique visits. Visitors accessed Know Your Rights resources 393,826 times and accessed referral information 173,973 times. LawHelpNY’s trained volunteer operators provided information and referral-finding assistance to more than 900 individuals a month during this reporting period, almost 43% of which are CourtHelp-related. 183 LiveHelp volunteers from 20 law schools contributed over 4,564 hours of pro bono assistance through LiveHelp. In addition to presentations to community groups and the brochures we have sent to partners for distribution, we delivered trainings to over 600 LiveHelp Volunteers and 87 trainings in the use of Citizenshipworks to partner organization staff and volunteers.

We partnered with Legal Services NYC and JustFix to redesign the Housing Repairs and Landlord Harassment in NYC microsite on LawHelpNY (https://www.lawhelpny.org/nyc-housing-repairs) with a new LHI form, access to the JustFix app and know your rights resources. We also continued our partnership with Nassau Suffolk Law Services to expand resources for Long Island communities.

During this reporting period, we partnered with the Office of Victim Services, Empire Justice Center and the University at Albany’s Center for Human Services Research to launch the New York Crime Victims Legal Help Network (crimevictimshelpny.org). The website’s screening tool and legal help directory will help connect crime victims with advocates and non-profit legal organizations that may be able to assist them. Referral information is sourced from the LawHelpNY directory and LawHelpNY’s LiveHelp volunteers staff the chat.

During the grant period our Immigration Advocates Network (IAN) provided referrals to nearly 47,000 individuals in New York across their platforms and conducted trainings for more than 80 additional staff and volunteers at organizations around New York on the use of Citizenshipworks, our award-winning platform for naturalization. More than 1000 New Yorkers completed filable N-400 forms through Citizenshipworks during the grant period. Our IAN team also engaged in a series of strategy meetings with Make the Road NY to help their work on wage theft cases in NYC.

**Population Served:** General Low Income Population

**Area Served:** Statewide

**Total Funding:** $1,569,393

**Total IOLA Grant:** $780,000

**Staffing - Full Time Equivalents:**

- **Total Staff:** 11.32
- **Lawyers:** 5.25
- **Others:** 6.07
Other Legal Related Services: Overview

Through probono.net/ny, we connect volunteer attorneys to community legal education through webinars, newsletters, calendars of training events, and other 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 can promote volunteer opportunities and equip volunteers with resources to provide high quality pro bono assistance. As noted above, we recently launched a new practice area to support pro bono attorneys, legal services advocates, law students and faculty who are representing and advocating for the LGBTQ+ community on issues such as harassment, violence and discrimination.

Through LawHelpNY.org, we provide individuals with know-your-rights resources, self-help tools, court information, and local referral information. LawHelpNY is also designed to provide rapid access to referral information for intake workers, hotline staff, and community organizations.

Pro Bono Net’s LHI program allows low-income people without access to a lawyer to prepare their own legal forms online for free and gives overstretched attorneys a tool to improve their efficiency. Commonly used forms include those for consumer debt; family law, including child custody and support; and eviction defense and other landlord-tenant issues. LHI is also the backbone for many civil legal aid and court-based assistance programs in New York State and powers the New York Courts DIY forms program. As previously mentioned, LHI supports the award-winning Family Offense Petition program, which allows trained advocates at DV agencies in every county in New York to help litigants complete and e-file petitions to obtain orders of protection.

In addition, we have partnered with JASA and the Center for Elder Law & Justice to develop and expand usage of the Legal Risk Detector in New York, a legal issue-spotting and referral tool designed for use by social workers, medical personnel and other professionals working with older Americans. The Legal Risk Detector expands preventative legal outreach and assistance to the disabled, homebound and other elderly populations who are difficult to reach through traditional legal services models.

In addition to the 468 pro se individuals served through our Citizenshipworks in person clinics, 8737 individuals completed orders of protections using our Advocate Assisted Family Offense Petition Program. Individuals in this program are able to create and e-file offense petitions with the aid of trained advocates at shelters and legal aid centers throughout the state. An additional 122 pro se individuals were provided legal advice and assistance for their pro se cases through Closing the Gap.
**Other Legal Related Services—Examples**

The Crime Victims Legal Network, a collaboration of Pro Bono Net, the Office of Victim Services, Empire Justice Center, and the University at Albany’s Center for Human Services Research, launched in October of 2018. The website features a user-friendly screening tool that allows crime victims to identify what legal needs they may have and then locate relevant resources; a searchable legal service help directory with filters to isolate organizations that can assist with specific issues; a self-help resource library to inform them of their rights; and a live chat function to access referral information in real time. The resources focus on the most common civil legal problems identified by crime victims and service providers through a needs assessment conducted by the Center for Human Services Research: family, housing, finances, employment, and immigration matters. It is currently serving three NY counties, but by the end of next year, the screening tool and legal help directory will be available in the state’s 57 counties outside of New York City.

Our Legal Risk Detector is an innovative early intervention tool and community outreach strategy to support at-risk elderly New Yorkers. This legal health “check up” tool is 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. The tool proactively identifies issues that often go undetected or unreported among older adults, and facilitate referrals to legal services. Developed using the Neota Logic software and designed for use on tablets, laptops and mobile devices, the Risk Detector enables non-legal professionals to complete an interview with their client using the app’s clear and concise prompts about the elder’s possible risk areas. In the last grant period 1578 screenings were conducted, an approximate 30% increase over the first year of the grant period.

We have recently launched new projects that connect volunteer and public service attorneys to opportunities to volunteer and resources to assist them. This January we launched the new Catholic Charities New York Volunteer Engagement Site developed in partnership with Catholic Charities New York. The site is serving as the centerpiece of CCNY’s new statewide pro bono project, funded by the New York State Liberty Defense Project, to expand access to legal services for immigrant communities, particularly in dense and regionally isolated immigrant communities. In February we launched a new LGBT practice area under probono.net/NY in partnership with the LGBT Bar Association of New York. The practice area contains numerous resources to support the work of pro bono attorneys, civil legal aid attorneys, and other advocates working on behalf of the low-income LGBTQ+ population. It also includes a special Opportunities Guide set to show organizations that serve the LGBTQ+ communities in NY.
Significant Collaborations

Collaboration is key to Pro Bono Net’s approach. All of PBN’s programs have been developed in collaboration with direct legal services and other justice partners, ensuring a more coordinated and strategic allocation of resources, greater participation by volunteer attorneys and lay advocates, and shared technology investments that can readily be scaled and adopted statewide. Each of the practice areas on probono.net/ny was developed and is maintained with legal services organizations, pro bono programs and law firms. Among our most significant collaborations is a partnership with the City Bar Justice Center and The Legal Aid Society to administer the NYC Pro Bono Center. LHI’s collaboration with the NYS Courts Access to Justice Program enables self-help forms to reach individuals in need through Court Clerks across the state.

In 2018 and 2019, Pro Bono Net collaborated with the Center for Elder Law and Justice and JASA to expand the Risk Detector’s use, conducted user surveys to get feedback from the community, and worked with Neota Logic and replication partners to enhance the application to better serve those in need. This program is now serving as a national model, with significant replication interest from elder justice partners in other states.

Pro Bono Net operates LawHelpNY and is also a founding member of the LawHelpNY Consortium, which includes eleven organizations dedicated to advancing innovative and collaborative approaches to legal education delivery and referral services. As discussed in our previous GAR, LawHelpNY partnered with Nassau Suffolk Law Services Committee to launch 13 new bilingual know your rights resources, based on a needs assessment performed by our summer ATJ Tech Fellow.

Pro Bono Net and LawHelpNY continued our partnership with the Crime Victim Legal Network including Empire Justice Center, the Center for Human Services Research at SUNY Albany and the New York Office of Victims Services to launch the NY Crime Victims Help website described above.

During this reporting period, LawHelpNY continued its LiveHelp partnership with the New York Courts for the provision of LiveHelp on the Families and Children section of the CourtHelp website and Foreclosure section, which has resulted in a significant growth in LiveHelp chats. Additionally, LiveHelp expanded onto a new site, crimevictimshelpny.org. LawHelpNY, in collaboration with Empire Justice Center, developed a training on cultural competency, vicarious trauma and how to offer legal information assistance to crime victims. LiveHelp is now available on all LawHelpNY microsites, the NY Crime Victims Help website, and CourtHelp. To our knowledge, this is the most extensive LiveHelp collaboration in the country.

On immigration issues, Pro Bono Net partners with the Brooklyn Public Library and local New Americans Campaign partners to host monthly technology-based naturalization events using Citizenshipworks. New Americans Campaign partners are listed in our previous GAR. Additionally, we continue to partner with more than 5 organizations on the ongoing #StandwithImmigrants campaign, also discussed in our previous GAR.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

Pro Bono Net involves pro bono attorneys and non-attorney volunteers in a number of ways. The LiveHelp program of LawHelpNY relies exclusively on volunteers to staff the chat service. Volunteers are typically seeking to fulfill the 50 hour pro bono requirement for admission to the New York State bar. The majority of our LiveHelp volunteers are law students or recent law graduates, though we occasionally have volunteers who are barred attorneys, both in New York and out. LiveHelp generally draws on 30 to 40 volunteers at any given point in time to ensure adequate coverage of the bilingual LiveHelp service Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm. Our volunteers help visitors navigate the site and find the information they need to move forward, but do not offer direct legal advice or services.

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 nine 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.

During this reporting period, probono.net/ny added nearly 700 new pro bono attorneys and law students as new members. In addition to the launch of the Catholic Charities New York volunteer engagement site and the new LGBT practice area on probono.net/ny, we partnered with CUNY School of Law and the Right to Counsel NYC Coalition to launch a Right to Counsel Jobs Board as part of the probono.net/ny Housing Practice area. The jobs board is being updated weekly to reflect jobs in NYC for housing attorneys with organizations funded by Universal Access, the law granting people living below 200% FPL the right to an attorney in eviction defense proceedings. It demonstrates the reach of RTCNYC, and serves as a one-stop shop for attorneys seeking employment as housing attorneys with legal service organizations.

This October we partnered with the Practising Law Institute to celebrate pro bono week with a one-hour CLE briefing on in house pro bono entitled *In-House Counsel Pro Bono: Challenges, Best Practices, and Opportunities for Engagement* moderated by PBN’s Pro Bono and Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Jessica Penkoff. More than 400 New York based law students and attorneys attended and were eligible for CLE credit from the Practising Law Institute. Grace Gilligan, Executive Director, Assistant General Counsel, at JPMorgan Chase & Co participated as a panelist. Grace was also awarded a Fellowship from JPMorgan Chase to work with Pro Bono Net for six months to develop new, technology-enabled pro bono mobilization strategies. Her Fellowship is centered on opportunities to increase participation by in-house counsel, and is coupled with significant in-kind technology development assistance from the JPMorgan Chase Force for Good program.
### Sources Of Funding

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### Technology and Other Innovations

PBN’s mission is centered on innovative uses of technology to increase access to justice and enhance access and quality of civil legal services. We are recognized national leaders in the use of technology to support new collaborations with non-traditional justice partners, including public libraries, social services providers, and community health partners. During this IOLA period, we enhanced our LawHelp Interactive platform through a professional plain language review and accessibility improvements in line with WCAG 2.0 standards, the prevailing accessibility guidelines for online services. In addition, we partnered with Just-Fix.nyc on a pilot project to integrate JustFix’s evidence-gathering functionality on housing repairs issues with the ability to complete an LHI-powered Housing Part Actions form. During this period, we also partnered with Legal Information for Families today to further adapt the Closing the Gap technology platform to serve as centerpiece for LIFT’s strategy to expand their services to rural areas through virtual pro bono attorney-client consultations. In October 2018, we launched crimevictimshelpny.org to connect victims with eight major categories of civil legal services. We are currently rolling out technology-enabled “warm referral” mechanisms between the site and newly created caseworker and attorney positions based at more than 60+ legal aid and victim services providers statewide, and also funded by the NYS Office of Victim Services.

With support from an LSC Technology Initiative Grant, Pro Bono Net updated the LawHelpNY platform to capture County usage information via the visitor browser location and IP-geolocation mapping. As a result, LawHelpNY is able to share new reports with county specific usage statistics with partners. One example of the new reports show the counts of resources by type of resource accessed by the visitor’s county and resource topic. These reports were created to inform resource creation and needs for additional services around the state. They will help LawHelpNY determine additional content needs or areas in which we should focus our outreach efforts around the state.

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**Pro Bono Statistics**

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![Sources of Funding Chart](image)