We obtained $150,000 in damages for a class of individuals who reside in a community-based supported housing program. These individuals were improperly charged for rent by their supported housing provider.

We obtained $103,626.95 to support vocational training and education for employment and $22,849.17 for clients who did not receive appropriate vocational supports. For example, we assisted a client who was seeking graduate school sponsorship to obtain his masters in social work. DRNY obtained full sponsorship ($8,555.00) for our client to attend Hunter College School of Social Work graduate program, including tuition, books, and transportation. We also obtained $11,949.68 in back pay for two clients who were discriminated against, and wrongfully terminated from their jobs.

We obtained large impact class settlements improve access for people with disabilities: (1) A nationwide settlement that requires Dollar General Stores across the United States to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and (2) A settlement guaranteeing an accessible vote-by-mail system that allows blind people and people with print disabilities to fill out a remote, accessible vote-by-mail ballot online, print it out, and mail or return it to their county boards of elections.

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Population Served: Persons with disabilities

Area Served: Statewide

Total IOLA Grant: $152,228

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 48
- Lawyers: 30
- Paralegals: 15
- Other: 13
Direct Legal Services: Cases

**Income Maintenance:**
Our client had been living in her own apartment with the support of the Traumatic Brain Injury waiver, where she received 24/7 healthcare and was able to attend a day program four days a week. After being hospitalized, her family member stole her SNAP benefits card and manipulated the client’s representative payee into sending her the client’s SSDI checks. The family member also began emptying our client’s apartment so she would remain institutionalized. We assisted in restoring her SSDI funds and SNAP benefits ($1200 monthly) and ensured that the facility immediately began working to transition her home.

**Education:**
Our client, a young adult with autism, was unable to benefit from remote learning offered to him throughout the pandemic. Nevertheless, the school district denied him any compensatory services and informed his parents he was no longer eligible to attend his public school. New York parents were promised by lawmakers that their children would be permitted to stay in school for another year, but permissive language has made this hard to enforce. Through our representation, the school district agreed to offer our client an additional year of education in his pre-pandemic special education program. In a thank you note to DRNY, his parents praised the attorneys on the case, who “wasted no time, delving deeply into the thickness of the case... working past their usual business hours. Their smart, savvy, confident, and dedicated presence won over not only our utmost respect, but also that of the school district personnel...” The cost of the educational program is estimated to be $45,904.

**Cases by Legal Problem Area**

- **Individual Rights**: 90%
- **Health**: 4%
- **Consumer**: 1%
- **Family**: 1%
- **Education**: 2%

2,762 people benefitted from 2,449 legal cases closed
Other Services: Overview

DRNY ensures that individuals with disabilities and the people who serve them are aware of the availability of federal, state, and local services through the use of remote monitoring and through training. DRNY provides information about the rights of individuals including: employment services, voting access, community integration in and outside institutions, health care choice, and self-determination. During this reporting period, DRNY hosted virtual and in-person roundtable events and regularly provides rights trainings to individuals with disabilities, families, and providers throughout New York.

Number of People who Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>12,971</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Assistance</td>
<td>3,300</td>
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</table>

16,796 People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation

Other Services: Technology and Other Innovations

During this reporting period DRNY continued to address end of life technology and equipment. DRNY worked with our contractor, CNS, to evaluate all current equipment and to replace older or end of life systems such as desktops, laptops, servers and printers/copiers.

DRNY has a strong investment in technological infrastructure which has helped DRNY to continue to serve our clients even when we were forced to close our office spaces because of the current pandemic. DRNY supplies the equipment and technology necessary to allow all staff to work remotely. We have adapted and expanded procedures and systems to improve our use of technology and our communication capabilities. This includes developing resources and training to ensure that staff are capable of using these technological platforms and supplying new equipment to address the need of a remote working staff.
Other Services: Trainings

We send staff to national and state training events, we conduct in-house trainings, state bar association trainings, and webinars through our video conferencing platform.

All new staff and board members are required to attend the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) annual conference. DRNY also sends other staff as funding permits. This is a week-long training that targets the work of the Protection and Advocacy system in each state and territory. This year all staff were eligible to attend because the conference was held virtually.

DRNY creates Continue Legal Education (CLE) and skills development programming for our staff. Lawyers and non-lawyers attend our in-house programs that include the following sessions: Deposing Expert Witnesses, Remote Depositions, Cross-Examination, Oral Argument Preparation, and Developing Effective Co-Counsel Relationships. Staff are also registered for and regularly attend no-cost CLE programing offered by the Practicing Law Institute (www.pli.org).

Lunch-and-Learn sessions are a core feature of DRNY’s in-house educational programs. These sessions included: Legal Writing Training, Monitoring, Reporting, and Educating Policy Makers, Interviewing Techniques For Challenging Clients, Emotional Support Animals, and Intersectional Claims Involving Race and Disability. Staff may attend these training in-person or by video conferencing. Trainings are recorded and shown to new staff during on-boarding.

DRNY holds two annual events with mandatory staff training. This reporting period we held our annual event virtually. The five day event featured sessions on work-life balance, and healing justice.

Significant Collaborations

In order for DRNY to facilitate lasting systemic change in areas that adversely impact on people with disabilities, DRNY must successfully promote its mission and its unique role as New York State’s P&A. DRNY connects and collaborates with community partners and leaders who promote the rights of people with disabilities.

- Unified Court System Advisory Committee on Access for People with Disabilities: We work with court staff and other key stakeholders to improve access to State Courts. This includes increasing access to assistive listening devices, ensuring buildings and court rooms are accessible, improving the reasonable accommodation process through the piloting of an accessible online accommodation form.
Significant Collaborations

- **Albany County Access to Justice Committee:** We serve on the Third Judicial District’s Access to Justice Committee which includes other legal service providers, community groups, county officials, public libraries and the court.

- **Supported Decision Making:** DRNY continued to collaborate with the City University of New York Hunter College, after a five-year pilot project ended in March 2021. We assisted the Supported Decision Making project by working to restore the rights of four individuals and educating those seeking guardianship on the alternative of supported decision making.

- **Community of Practice:** DRNY collaborates with three University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, and DDPC to target underserved Spanish and Chinese speaking individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We partnered on a three-day Language Access Summit that attracted 175 participants. We also assisted a state agency on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategies and collaborated on community training.

- **Native American Partnerships:** DRNY has continued to carefully cultivated relationships to build trust and a better understanding of the services we provide. DRNY is now known and welcomed among all the Tribal Nations in the State. We collaborated with the Seneca Nation of Indians Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), and Nation American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc. (NACS).

- **Voter Access:** DRNY collaborated with 23 community groups to host voter registration drives throughout New York State. DRNY trained over 660 people about NYS’s voting program and DRNY’s services and registered over 20 new voters.

### Sources of Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IOLA Grant</td>
<td>$152,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Funding</td>
<td>$7,630,976</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,171,464</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Federal Funding:** 93%
- **IOLA Grant:** 2%
- **Foundations:** 2%
- **Other:** 3%
Impact Cases


DRNY brought a lawsuit on behalf of individuals who were repeatedly unable to navigate through her local Dollar General store because of mobility disabilities. **MILESTONE:** In May 2021, a federal court approved a comprehensive settlement agreement that requires Dollar General Stores to ensure that its access routes are accessible for people with disabilities, including keeping stores’ aisles clear of merchandise, keeping the route to the public water fountains and bathrooms accessible, and not blocking the pathways from the accessible parking to the store’s entrance and to emergency exits. The final agreement is found here: https://dollargeneraladasettlement.com/ DRNY estimated that given Dollar General Stores’ reach, 727,536 New York State residents with mobility disabilities are impacted by this settlement. Given the chain’s nationwide reach, millions more are impacted across the country.

**Brandon & Brown, et al v. Loeb House, Inc.**

DRNY filed a class action complaint after discovering that Loeb House, Inc., a provider of community-based supported housing, used a rent formula that charged supported housing residents more than thirty percent of their net income toward their monthly rent from February 1, 2009 through June 30, 2021. **MILESTONE:** We reached a settlement for $165,000.00. Over half the class submitted claim forms, which led to those class members receiving approximately 110% of what they were owed by Loeb House. Almost 50 people with serious mental illness benefitted from this settlement.

**Hernandez et al v. NYSBOE et al:**

We brought a class action lawsuit against the New York State Board of Elections (NYSBOE) to challenge its inaccessible absentee ballot program. **MILESTONE:** We obtained a settlement agreement under which the NYSBOE will create a statewide process to allow voters with disabilities to fill out a remote, accessible vote-by-mail ballot online, print it out, and mail or return it to their county board of elections. The settlement requires NYSBOE to choose a remote accessible vote-by-mail (RAVBM) system that allows blind people and people with print disabilities to use their own computers to read and mark a ballot, using their own screen-reader software that converts the ballot content into spoken word or into Braille displayed on a connected device. NYSBOE must also create a statewide portal that voters can use to require an accessible absentee ballot and train each of the fifty-eight county boards of elections on the use of the RAVBM system. 3,843 voters used the accessible absentee ballot system during this reporting period.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

DRNY actively recruits law students and other volunteers. DRNY again participated in the New York University Public Interest Legal Career Fair to establish a presence among other civil rights organizations recruiting for talent. DRNY works with several law schools to recruit law students. DRNY had 21 law students in our internship program.

DRNY also actively seeks host opportunities for law students funded by other grantors. DRNY was awarded the New York State Bar Association’s Corporate Counsel Section KGS Diversity Internship Program for a general counsel legal fellow for the summer of 2021.

DRNY also hosts volunteer students. This reporting period we had 1 volunteer assisting our advocacy department and 4 assisting our Marketing and Communication Department. DRNY’s Marketing and Communication Department creates outreach materials, manages our resources on-line, and provides resources to the people we serve through our social media platforms.

DRNY also works with volunteer attorneys. One of our two Attorney Emeritus volunteers was honored by members of the New York Bar for his outstanding pro bono services at DRNY. He devoted over 500 hours to creating the first issue of the New York Special Education Case Law Digest. The Digest provides summaries of cases on well over 100 special education issues. Since parents of students with disabilities are the primary enforcers of educational rights for students, there was a great need for a free resource dedicated to special education advocacy.

2 Attorneys volunteered 602.75 hours

21 Law Students volunteered 5,165.88 hours

6 Other Volunteers volunteered 356.05 hours