Overview of Achievements, 2018-2019

During the period of April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019, the Safe Horizon Domestic Violence Law Project (DVLP) and the Immigration Law Project (ILP) provided high quality, comprehensive legal information, brief services, and representation on approximately 1823 cases throughout New York City. DVLP and ILP provide services in the areas of family law, matrimonial law, VAWA petitions, U-Visas, adjustment proceedings asylum, conditional residency, family petitions, green card renewals, naturalization, and removal proceedings.

Specifically, DVLP obtained legal benefits on 1463 family and matrimonial cases. ILP achieved legal benefits on 360 immigration cases. DVLP/ILP also provided trainings to communities throughout New York City on the basics of family law, housing law, immigration rights, and public assistance. Together, DVLP/ILP’s legal services benefitted 2374 people.

IOLA funding allowed the DVLP/ILP to provide victims of violence holistic services by ensuring legal services on-site at Safe Horizon’s numerous programs including our Community Programs, Domestic Violence Shelters, and Court Programs. Safe Horizon is the nation’s largest victim service provider. The continuum of services received by victims helps make certain that their safety needs will be met. By providing on-site legal services at Safe Horizon’s various programs the DVLP/ILP ensures that victims are aware of their legal rights and remedies. Victims are then able to access the justice system in an informed manner.

IOLA funding allows the DVLP/ILP to provide training to case managers and social workers throughout the city that work with victims of violence. These trainings provide social services staff with information about client’s legal rights in order to ensure that clients are receiving competent information. During this reporting period, DVLP/ILP staff provided trainings to client-facing staff at the New York City’s Family Justice Centers, Safe Horizon Crime Victim Advocate Programs, and Safe Horizon case managers and social workers.

Through DVLP’s representation in matrimonial, child support, and spousal support cases we were able to secure $158,077.79 in back awards and equitable distribution and $14,217.50 in monthly benefits which provided our clients and their families with economic stability.

Population Served: General Low Income Population
Area Served: New York City Metropolitan Area
Total Funding: $2,250,452
Total IOLA Grant: $320,000
Staffing - Full Time Equivalents:
• Total Staff: 20.00
• Lawyers: 13.00
• Paralegals: 3.00
• Other: 4.00
“SAC”, from Bangladesh, was the victim of domestic violence at the hands of her husband. SAC’s marriage was arranged and involved a dowry, which her family was unable to pay in full. Because of that, SAC’s husband subjected her to years of violence and abuse, including withholding money to pay for medical treatment once she learned she was diabetic. Because of her inability to get adequate treatment, she had to be hospitalized several times, requires dialysis, has serious issues with her kidneys and needs a walker to walk because of the pain. We applied for asylum for her and her case was referred to the Immigration Court. After a full hearing, the judge granted SAC asylum.

Safe Horizon Domestic Violence Law Project (DVLP) represented “Carmen” in her order of protection case in Kings County Integrated Domestic Violence Court. Carmen’s ex-boyfriend had, on several separate occasions, strangled, struck, and sexually assaulted Carmen. Carmen was anxious about testifying against her ex-boyfriend and about going into detail about the violence he perpetrated against her. Safe Horizon DVLP attempted to negotiate a resolution by asking for a two-year order of protection on consent without a finding. The negotiations fell apart and Safe Horizon DVLP prepared Carmen for the scheduled hearing date. Carmen provided compelling and credible testimony about her abuse on direct examination. After completion of Carmen’s direct examination, the Court closed for lunch. Opposing counsel approached Safe Horizon DVLP and stated that the ex-boyfriend was now willing to consent to a two-year order of protection. Safe Horizon DVLP discussed this offer with Carmen. Carmen, who was extremely anxious about her cross-examination, agreed to settle the case. Carmen did not wish to continue the hearing and did not want to return on another date for her ex-boyfriend to present testimony and evidence against her. Carmen was pleased with the result and relieved that she would no longer have to appear in court alongside her abuser.
Other Services...

Number of People Benefitted by Services
Other Than Direct Legal Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>161 people</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>161 people</td>
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Other Legal Related Services: Overview

The DVLP/ILP routinely presents at community meetings throughout various New York City communities to provide information on domestic violence and the services provided by DVLP/ILP. Safe Horizon is the largest provider of victim services throughout New York City. DVLP/ILP utilizes this established infrastructure to reach people in need of services. Staff Attorneys regularly provide trainings at Safe Horizons community programs, precinct programs, shelters, and child advocacy centers.

Other Legal Related Services: Examples

- DVLP offers an uncontested divorce clinic twice a month at our Brooklyn office and once per month at our Staten Island office for victims of violence. DVLP attorneys assist pro se clients in preparing the documents necessary to initiate a divorce. The client is provided all the initial forms and instructions for filing and service. After service the client is able to return to complete the final paperwork. A DVLP staff attorney and paralegal are available to answer any questions throughout the divorce process.

- DVLP provides “know your rights” clinics at the Safe Horizon Brooklyn and Queens, and Manhattan Community and Court programs as well as at Safe Horizon’s New York City Domestic Violence Shelters. At these clinics, an attorney provides information to participants on family law and domestic violence. After the initial presentation the attorney provides information on an individual basis for participants with questions.

- ILP staff works closely with community based organizations throughout the five boroughs, in order to conduct ‘know your rights’ trainings and provide information on possible forms of immigration relief.

Dollar Benefits Achieved for Clients

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<tr>
<td>Child Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spousal Support</td>
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<td>Equitable Distribution of Assets</td>
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Significant Collaborations

Safe Horizon’s DVLP/ILP provides comprehensive legal services that meet the needs of New York City’s poor and indigent population who otherwise could not afford legal assistance. Outside of Safe Horizon, DVLP/ILP partners primarily with Sanctuary for Families, Feerick Center at Fordham University Law School, the Legal Aid Society, Urban Justice Center, New York Legal Assistance Group, HerJustice, and Legal Services NYC. We work together to ensure that services are not duplicated, and we often make cross-referrals for specific services.

DVLP/ILP works within Safe Horizon and with external agencies and partners to build networks, develop materials, conduct trainings, enhance inter-disciplinary understanding, and expand legal representation options for low-income victims of domestic violence. DVLP/ILP also actively builds networks throughout the city with other legal service providers and activists in areas of housing, public benefits, and financial literacy in order to comprehensively address the many needs of domestic violence victims. DVLP/ILP attorneys actively participate in numerous task forces and committees related to domestic violence throughout NYC.

DVLP/ILP attorneys regularly attend monthly meetings of the Lawyers Committee Against Domestic Violence (LCADV), a working group of more than 50 domestic violence family law attorneys, advocates, judges, and courtroom staff. The purpose of LCADV is to identify and address obstacles facing domestic violence victims, increase the knowledge and skills of advocates, and enhance communication among domestic violence attorneys, prosecutors, and advocates. DVLP/ILP attorneys continue to play an integral role in the Practice Workshop Series, which provides training, practical resources, and a networking program among LCADV’s new attorneys. The practice group successfully increases the skills and knowledge of attorneys new to the practice by providing trainings on various issues, such as abuse, neglect, working with pro-se litigants and matrimonial cases.

Likewise, all of our attorneys participate in borough specific subcommittees called the Judge’s Working Groups, which meets periodically with the Chief Judges of the Family Courts citywide. DVLP staff attorneys participate in stakeholder meetings in each borough’s Integrated Domestic Violence Court.

DVLP/ILP attorneys partner with the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence by providing on-site services at the Queens Family Justice Center (QFJC), Staten Island, Bronx, and Brooklyn Family Justice Center (BKFJC). Attorneys at the FJCs meet with clients to provide legal advice, pro se assistance, and representation.

A DVLP Staff Attorney is actively involved in the Domestic Violence Committee of the New York City Bar Association, which is comprised of judges, attorneys, child welfare policy analysts, and advocates, and meets monthly to strategize on ways to make Family Courts more effective and efficient and address the underserved population of victims of domestic violence.
DVLP/ILP maintains strong relationships with New York City’s law schools and utilizes law students to meet the needs to domestic violence victims. During the summer, six law student interns volunteer full time for ten weeks at DVLP/ILP averaging thirty-five hours per week.

At the beginning of the internship program, interns are provided with a DVLP/ILP training manual created by staff. The manual includes office policies, how to operate the Legal Helpline, and detailed information on family law matters. The internship begins with a three-day intensive training provided by different legal service organizations in the city covering relevant areas, including family law, criminal law, immigration law, domestic violence, housing, and other related topics. Also, in order to help interns understand other issues that affect clients’ lives, DVLP provides ongoing training with a weekly brownbag lunch discussion which addresses other relevant areas. Examples of brownbag lunches include presentations in Government Affairs, issues addressing violence in the LGBT Community, Consumer Debt/Credit, trafficking, the New York District Attorney’s Office Sex Crimes Unit, the Legal Aid Juvenile Rights Division, the Bronx County District Attorney’s office, and a mental health counselor discussed the possible mental health implications subsequent to a domestic violence incident. One of the brownbag lunch discussions is allocated to a session on career development, including what an ideal resume and cover letter would look like.

Each attorney supervises one or two interns and also serves as a mentor. The mentors meet with the interns on a regular basis to review their progress and address any issues that may arise. Attorneys closely monitor interns during the course of the internship and two formal evaluations are conducted at the midpoint and final point of the internship program. The DVLP/ILP attorneys complete an evaluation form on each intern’s performance for the intern’s work to their corresponding law school professor.

All interns work on a variety of assignments including conducting intake interviews with prospective clients, drafting petitions, motions, and other court related documents, researching pertinent legal issues and conducting extensive legal writing. Interns also assist attorneys in preparation for trial and correspond with third-party agencies on behalf of the client. Occasionally, interns answer Helpline calls and provide information and referrals to clients. Finally, interns accompany DVLP attorneys to court appearances to observe proceedings and advocate for clients under the student practice order.

By the end of the program, interns learn to manage their own caseload, prepare for trial, interview clients, draft court documents and improve their writing and practical lawyering skills. Interns also become familiar with numerous resources and remedies available in the city for domestic violence survivors. Interns learn to assist experienced attorneys in representing domestic violence survivors in court, and help domestic violence survivors empower themselves and live free from abuse.

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**Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement**

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**Pro Bono Statistics**

| Law Students: | 10 Volunteers | 350 Hours |

**Sources Of Funding**

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