



Recent & Upcoming Events

- Presentation in Spanish on “Estructuras legales comerciales” at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at New York City College of Technology
- Small Business Legal Clinic at Upper Manhattan Business Solutions Center
- Presentation on Legal Structures for Businesses at the Queens Economic Development Corporation
- Small Business Legal Clinic at the Brooklyn Business Library
- Presentation on Legal Structures for Businesses at the Brooklyn Business Library
- Presentation on Worker Classification at the Brooklyn Business Library
- Small Business Legal Clinic at the Queens Business Solutions Center
- Presentation on Commercial Leasing at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at New York City College of Technology
- Small Business Legal Clinic at the Queens Economic Development Corporation
- Presentation on “Understanding Intellectual Property Rights & Protecting Your Ideas” at the Brooklyn Business Library

NELP Partners 2009–2011

Law Firms & Corporate Legal Departments

- Alba Law Firm, P.C.
- American Express
- Barclays Capital
- Blank Rome, LLP
- Chadbourne & Parke, LLP
- Citigroup
- Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton, LLP
- Covington & Burling, LLP
- Davis, Polk & Wardwell, LLP
- Debevoise & Plimpton, LLP
- Dechert, LLP
- Dewey & LeBeouf, LLP
- DLA Piper, LLP
- Duane Morris, LLP
- Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto
- Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson, LLP
- Fulbright & Jaworski, LLP
- Goldman Sachs & Co.
- Greenberg Traurig, LLP
- Hogan & Hartson, LLP
- Hunton & Williams, LLP
- Ingram, Yuzek, Gainen, Carroll & Bertolotti, LLP
- J.P. Morgan Chase & Co
- K&L Gates, LLP
- Kaye Scholer, LLP
- Kirkland & Ellis, LLP
- Latham & Watkins, LLP
- Law Office of Darlene Campbell

- Law Offices of Albert Rizzo, P.C.
- Law Offices of Kenneth Volandes
- Law Offices of Toni Agard
- Linklaters, LLP
- Mayer Brown, LLP
- McDermott, Will & Emery
- Merrill Lynch
- Metlife
- Miskin & Tsui Yip, LLP
- New York City Law Department
- O’Melveny & Meyers, LLP
- Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, LLP
- Proskauer & Rose, LLP
- Robert L. Slater & Associates
- Shearman & Sterling, LLP
- Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP & Affiliates
- SNR Denton
- Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, LLP
- Sullivan & Cromwell, LLP
- T.W. Lewis & Co., LLC
- The Drakeford Company
- Weil, Gotshal & Manges, LLP

Community-Based Organizations

- Brooklyn Public Library’s Business Library
- Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation
- Business Outreach Center Network
- Chinatown Manpower Project
- Columbia – Harlem, Small Business Development Center
- Dwyer Cultural Center

- East Harlem Business Development Center
- Field Center for Entrepreneurship at Baruch College
- Flushing Library
- LaGuardia Community College
- Lehman College, Small Business Development Center
- Local Development Corporation of East New York (LDCENY)
- Moore Street Market (Williamsburg)
- New York City Technical College, Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- New York Public Library, Science, Industry & Business Library
- Organization of Latino Entrepreneurs (OLE)
- Queens Business Solutions Center
- Queens Economic Development Corporation (QEDC)
- South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBro)
- Thyphin Oltchick Institute for Women’s Entrepreneurship at FECS
- United Jewish Organization of Williamsburg
- Upper Manhattan Business Solutions Center
- Workshop in Business Opportunities (WIBO)

www.citybarjusticecenter.org



City Bar Justice Center
42 W. 44th St.
New York, NY 10036

Executive Director
Lynn Kelly
212.382.6678
lkelly@nycbar.org

Managing Attorney
Alice Morey
212.382.6682
amorey@nycbar.org

Director of Communications
Eric Friedman
212.382.6754
efriedman@nycbar.org

Director of Pro Bono Initiatives
Carol Bockner
212.382.4714
cbockner@nycbar.org

Contact
Director of the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project
Akira Arroyo
212.382.6722
aarroyo@nycbar.org



REPORT

Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project
Building Communities One Business at a Time

2011

Who We Are

The City Bar Justice Center, a part of the City Bar Fund, Inc., is the 501(c)(3) affiliate of the New York City Bar, one of the largest local voluntary bar associations in the country. The City Bar Justice Center uses staff attorneys and pro bono attorneys to assist 25,000 clients each year and operates the largest general free civil legal hotline in New York City. The Justice Center’s close relationship with the private bar, and long experience responding to emerging legal needs, gives us a unique ability to leverage civil legal services.

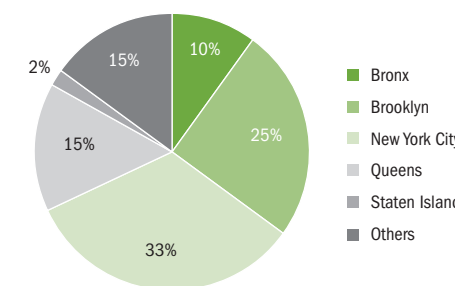
Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project at the City Bar Justice Center

Small businesses are the foundation of our economy, accounting for up to 80% of net new jobs over the last decade and employing half of all private sector workers, according to the Small Business Administration. But starting a business is not easy, especially for lower income individuals. Without an understanding of the relevant laws or the resources to access legal assistance, many potentially successful projects fail.

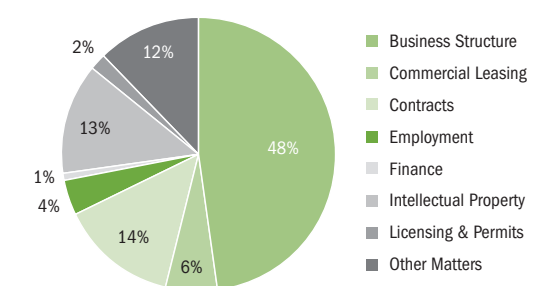
Recognizing the vital role small businesses play, the City Bar Justice Center launched the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project (NELP) in 2003 to provide low to mid-income micro-entrepreneurs with the legal services necessary to get their businesses started off on as sound a footing as possible. NELP’s volunteer attorneys guide clients through such matters as incorporation and tax issues, commercial lease negotiations, copyrights, trademarks and patents, and license and permit applications. Volunteer attorneys also offer presentations and legal clinics at community-based organizations on issues of concern to micro-entrepreneurs.

To date NELP has partnered with more than 56 law firms, 10 corporate legal departments and over 30 community-based organizations to assist more than 9,000 clients through the provision of brief services, direct representation, legal clinics and community presentations. In 2010 alone, NELP held 30 legal clinics serving 448 clients.

NELP Clients by Borough:



NELP Clients – Type of Case



A Unique Volunteer Opportunity

The Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project offers a unique opportunity for transactional attorneys to work on pro bono cases that are more in line with their practice area than traditional pro bono litigation work. The Project also provides training for attorneys who are new to transactional work, as well as access to mentors and other attorneys experienced in the field.



Lessons Learned in Working with Small Business Owners

Based on five years of experience, the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project has come up with the following tips for working with small businesses.

- **Work closely with the referring organization** to understand the clients and how best to help them. For example, NELP will make sure clients qualify for pro bono assistance and will do the initial assessment of legal needs. Throughout the process, NELP works as a facilitator between the volunteer lawyer and the client, making sure that the lines of communication are open, assisting if any issues arise and providing additional resources or mentors if needed.
- When working with NELP clients it is important to **think small**. While many micro-entrepreneurs may dream big, they need pro bono counsel to help them focus on the minute details of their small businesses. The primary need for most micro-entrepreneurs is for assistance in realizing their short-term goals, such as selecting the best corporate structure for their current situation, protecting their intellectual property rights and making sure they have the necessary licenses to get their business up and running.
- Volunteer attorneys may want to get their feet wet by participating in one of the Project's more **discrete pro bono activities**, such as a community-based

Examples of services provided by NELP attorneys:

Formation of a limited liability company for a steel die manufacturing enterprise, owned and operated by an immigrant entrepreneur.

Formation of an S-corporation and negotiation of a commercial lease for a beauty salon opened in Brooklyn by a female immigrant entrepreneur.

Application for a patent for a handheld juicer reviewed and submitted on behalf of a disabled woman living on a fixed income in Harlem.

Protection of a trade name and trademark for a t-shirt designer in Queens.

Formation of a limited liability company and negotiation of a sales contract for a small Mexican restaurant opened in Queens.

presentation or legal clinic. This provides the opportunity to meet and interact in person with a group of varied micro-entrepreneurs, and can even spark an interest to provide direct, ongoing legal representation to a client.

Presentations

Presentations are a great way to get involved with both clients and other attorneys. Materials are available for standard topics, and volunteers are generally required to make a time commitment of two to three hours.

Clinics

Clinics offer a team of interested attorneys the opportunity to provide brief counseling and limited assistance and guidance. Attorneys can assist a significant number of micro-entrepreneurs within a relatively short period of time, usually 30 minutes per client. A legal team may even be able to “sponsor” a site and provide clinics on a regular basis (i.e., quarterly or monthly).

Work in Teams

Attorneys may prefer to work with colleagues, as it allows for different opinions, varied expertise and a shared workload. Clients will also benefit from working with a team of attorneys, as there will always be someone available to address their concerns.

How NELP Provides Pro Bono Assistance to Micro-entrepreneurs

Upon initial contact, NELP staff interviews each client to ascertain the scope of his/her legal needs and eligibility for services. If the entrepreneur is approved for services, NELP staff will connect the client with a pro bono attorney, who will meet with the client and handle representation moving forward. Periodic follow-up calls and meetings are scheduled to make sure each client's needs are met.

New Ideas Brought to Life through NELP

Noticing the recent explosion in interest about the many benefits of acupuncture and the lack of access to this type of treatment for low-income people, Ms. B. and Ms. C. became interested in starting their own business dedicated to this alternative health-care treatment. In collaboration with NELP's volunteers, Ms. B. and Ms. C. were able to incorporate the business, negotiate a lease on a space, develop a partnership agreement and draft a client agreement. Ultimately, they have been able to open a successful business that is making a profit and offering greatly needed access to services for people of all economic backgrounds.

After surviving the ordeal of a bilateral mastectomy during her own battle with breast cancer, Ms. H. invented a fashionable new dressing accessory that allows a post-surgery breast cancer patient to focus on getting better, rather than on finding suitable clothing. Without having to pay extra legal fees on top of the medical expenses she was already dealing with, Ms. H. was able to file for a patent with the help of an intellectual property attorney and move another crucial step closer to improving the lives of fellow breast cancer survivors.

Ms. F. came to NELP as do many of the micro-entrepreneurs we serve, with great passion and a great idea. As a successful actress, singer, and writer, Ms. F. was interested in bringing her talents to the local community in a hands-on way through workshops and seminars. However, she needed assistance with the legal aspects of setting up her business and drafting contracts to govern her working relationships with interested clients and vendors. That's when NELP stepped in to match her with one of our enthusiastic volunteer attorneys. A year after our first contact with Ms. F., she has been able to personally conduct over one hundred seminars and workshops around the country, and has touched the lives of countless artists, teachers, parents, and students.

“We are two people with modest incomes, and the patent and incorporation process would have been nearly impossible without pro bono help. Everyone involved has been extremely supportive, reliable and accessible. Most importantly, despite our pro bono status, we have never been treated as though we were secondary to a paying client.”

— NELP CLIENTS