



Connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities

Request for Legal Assistance

Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. Our network of pro bono lawyers from law firms and corporations and staff of experienced attorneys work together, delivering expert corporate, tax, real estate, employment, and other legal services to community organizations. By *connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities*, we help nonprofits to develop affordable housing, stimulate economic development, and operate vital programs for children and young people, the elderly, recent immigrants, and other low-income New Yorkers.

Lawyers Alliance provides legal assistance for a full range of issues facing community-based and not-for-profit organizations, including incorporation, tax exemption, corporate governance, contracts, real estate financings, restructurings, tax matters, personnel issues, and compliance with federal and state laws regulating nonprofits. Our legal assistance can strengthen your nonprofit's organizational and operational infrastructure, making it better equipped to fulfill its charitable purposes.

How to Apply for Legal Assistance

If your organization is a nonprofit (or an organization seeking not-for-profit status) operating ongoing programs or activities in New York City that benefit low-income individuals or communities, then it meets Lawyers Alliance's threshold eligibility requirement. The next step is to complete and return the attached application form.

We review *complete* applications to determine whether the organization's work supports Lawyers Alliance's mission and if the organization appears to have a legal matter that we can address. We then invite potential clients to an introductory meeting with one of our staff to discuss the organization's application and legal needs in more detail. If Lawyers Alliance agrees to assist your organization, we will try to place the legal matter with a pro bono attorney, in which case a Lawyers Alliance staff attorney will serve as co-counsel; alternatively, we will assign the entire matter to one of our staff attorneys.

What Does it Cost?

New clients pay \$375.00, to cover a portion of the administrative costs of screening and placement. It is *not* necessary to send this fee when you submit the application. The \$375.00 payment is due upon being accepted as a client. There will be no charge for legal services provided by a volunteer attorney.

For services provided exclusively by Lawyers Alliance staff attorneys, we charge a below market rate on an hourly or per transaction basis, depending on the matter.

Your organization will also be responsible for any filing or court fees incurred.



Request for Legal Assistance Form Instructions

The following guidelines will assist you in completing the attached application:

1. Answer all the questions, providing as much detail as possible, and attach additional sheets if necessary to complete the questions thoroughly. The more we know about a prospective client, the easier it will be for us to review its application and assess its legal needs.
2. Enclose the documents requested on page 3.
3. Include brochures and other materials that show the mission, activities, staff, and other special features of your organization.
4. Include documents related to the current legal need (i.e. copies of contracts, personnel policies, audits), if such information is known to you.
5. **Newly-forming organizations MUST provide:**
 - a) A business plan or narrative description of existing and planned programs;
 - b) Documents confirming the amount and sources of funding; if you have not secured funding, provide copies of grant proposals or a fundraising plan;
 - c) A three-year proposed income/expense statement; and
 - d) Names and addresses of the organization's initial board of directors.
6. Please make sure that you have included ALL of the required attachments.
7. Mail your application to:

REQUEST FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE
Lawyers Alliance for New York
171 Madison Avenue, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10016

If you have any questions, contact Lawyers Alliance Program Associate for Client Relations at 212-219-1800, x 278.



Request for Legal Assistance Form

Please see page ii for instructions.

- 1. a. Name of Organization _____
- b. Address _____

- c. Phone Number () _____
- d. Fax Number () _____
- e. Website _____

- 2. a. Name of Contact Person _____
- b. Position in/Relationship to Organization _____
- c. Address (if different from above) _____

- d. Work Phone () _____ Home Phone () _____
- e. Email Address _____

Please place a check mark by the address and telephone number at which you would like Lawyers Alliance to contact the contact person.

- 3. Please list the purpose and/or mission of the organization.

- 4. Please list your organization’s activities and programs. If you have written brochures or other materials, please include them.

- 5. Please list any plans of the organization for future activities and/or programs. You may indicate here whether past programs will be ongoing.

6. a. How long has the organization existed? _____
- b. Is the organization incorporated? ___YES ___NO Tax-Exempt? ___YES ___NO

If incorporated, enclose a copy of your certificate of incorporation, by-laws and any amendments thereto. If tax-exempt, please enclose a copy of the IRS letter indicating your status.

7. a. How many members does the organization's board of directors have? _____
Attach names, titles, and addresses of board members.
- b. How many employees does the organization have? _____
Attach names and titles of the organization's management staff.

8. a. How many people does the organization currently serve (or if newly forming, how many people does the organization plan to serve)? _____
- b. What geographic region does the organization currently serve (or if newly forming, what geographic region does the organization plan to serve)? _____

9. a. How much money has the organization received this year? _____
- b. Does this year's budget or funding include a line for legal fees? _____
- c. How much money has the organization spent in the last year? _____

Please include an annual report or income/expense statement (with a breakdown of income sources and expenses) for the most recent fiscal year. If you are starting a new organization, attach a three-year proposed income/expense statement—example attached.

- d. If the organization received funding this year, please list the sources and amounts.
- _____
- _____
- _____

- e. Please indicate if the organization receives funding from any of the following sources:

- ___ New York Foundation
- ___ United Way of New York City
- ___ Fund for the City of New York

- f. If the organization is newly forming, please list specifically where the organization has sought or plans to seek funding. _____
- _____

10. Describe as specifically as possible the legal problem for which the organization seeks assistance. * If you have documents such as project proposals and budgets, legal papers, contracts, or letters relevant to your problem, include copies of them. _____

**Please note that Lawyers Alliance, as a matter of policy, provides only non-litigation legal services.*

11. Are there any affiliates of your organization involved in this matter? If so, please list them below. Please attach the certificate of incorporation, by-laws, 501 (c)(3) determination letter, and names, titles, and addresses of all board members, for each affiliate.

12. Does your organization have any other affiliates that are not involved in this matter? If so, please list them below.

13. Please identify the other party(ies) involved in this matter, if applicable, and explain their role.

14. If the organization has a need for ongoing legal advice, please list those issues for which it needs advice.

15. a. Has a lawyer worked with the organization before on the problem described in question 10 above? YES NO

b. If so, what is that lawyer's name and affiliation?

c. What work has been done?

d. Why is she/he no longer representing the organization in this matter?

16. a. Aside from this problem, has the organization had a lawyer's help in the past? YES NO

b. If so, what is that lawyer's name and affiliation?

c. What assistance did she/he provide?

17. How and from whom did you hear about Lawyers Alliance's legal services? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance mailing | <input type="checkbox"/> Law firm or attorney |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> Government funder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance e-mails | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundation funder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Another nonprofit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/Co-worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers Alliance website | <input type="checkbox"/> Conference/ meeting (not hosted by Lawyers Alliance) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Name of referring source: _____

NOTE: Please be sure that you have included all of the following. Your application will not be processed until our office receives all required information:

- Program outline, brochures and/or other descriptive materials
- Certificate of incorporation and amendments
- By-Laws
- IRS Confirmation of tax exempt status (i.e., determination letter), if any
- Lists of officers and directors, and senior staff members
- Annual report or income & expense statement (or three-year proposed budget if organization is newly forming)—example attached.
- Proposal for project funding if newly forming

For each affiliate please provide:

- Certificate of incorporation and amendments
- By-Laws
- IRS Confirmation of tax-exempt status (i.e., determination letter), if any
- Lists of officers and directors, and senior staff members

Return the application and direct any questions to our office. We look forward to hearing from your organization and hope that we can be of assistance.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Title _____ Date _____

Example Three-Year Budget

The sample budget below is for your reference only. Please submit a budget that is tailored to your organization's needs. For organizations pursuing tax exemption, the budget submitted to Lawyers Alliance will be used as the basis for your organization's application to the IRS. As such try to be as detailed as possible, particularly with regard to specific anticipated sources of funding.

The listed amounts are just placeholders and should NOT be used as a basis for your decision making process while crafting your own budget.

Below are examples of specific government agencies as funding sources. Please similarly list specific institutions and the amounts you anticipate you will receive from them.

| <u>Income</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>2011</u> |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Department of Housing Services | 3,000 | 4,000 | 5,000 |
| Department of the Aging | 2,000 | 2,100 | 2,100 |
| DYCD | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,500 |
| <i>Total from Government Agencies</i> | <u>6,000</u> | <u>7,100</u> | <u>8,600</u> |
| Foundation 1 | 2,000 | 3,000 | 4,000 |
| Foundation 2 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,500 |
| <i>Total from Foundations</i> | <u>3,000</u> | <u>4,000</u> | <u>5,500</u> |
| Corporation 1 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Corporation 2 | 5,000 | 6,000 | 7,000 |
| Corporation 3 | 3,000 | 4,000 | 5,000 |
| <i>Total from Corporations</i> | <u>9,000</u> | <u>11,000</u> | <u>13,000</u> |
| Individuals | 1,500 | 2,200 | 3,800 |
| <i>Total from Individuals</i> | <u>1,500</u> | <u>2,200</u> | <u>3,800</u> |
| <i>Total Income</i> | <i>19,500</i> | <i>24,300</i> | <i>30,900</i> |
| <u>Expenditures</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>2011</u> |
| Rent | 1,000 | 1,250 | 1,500 |
| Telephone | 0 | 1,200 | 1,300 |
| Office Equipment | 600 | 660 | 750 |
| Postage | 600 | 660 | 800 |
| Printing | 2,000 | 2,200 | 2,450 |
| Travel | 1,000 | 1,100 | 1,250 |
| Staff Salaries | 10,000 | 13,000 | 17,250 |
| Insurance | 1,500 | 1,650 | 1,800 |
| Professional Services (including Architectural, Engineering, Accounting, and Legal) | 0 | 0 | 200 |
| Utilities | 1,500 | 1,600 | 1,750 |
| <i>Total Expenditures</i> | <i>18,200</i> | <i>23,320</i> | <i>29,050</i> |