

LAWYERS ALLIANCE FOR NEW YORK

INDIVIDUAL HONOREE

ELIZABETH HOOK, *Citi*

Strengthening the Nonprofit Workforce through Expert Counsel

Elizabeth Hook is Director and Associate General Counsel in the Employment Law Unit of Citi. She received a B.A. from Lehman College in 1975 and her J.D. from Pace University School of Law in 1991.

Ms. Hook helped **Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy**, a nonprofit supporting the creative, educational, and vocational development of 7,000 youth and families in Flatbush, Brooklyn, with its employment law needs. She reviewed the classification of individuals engaged as independent contractors to ensure they were correctly classified. Ms. Hook also updated Ifetayo's independent contractor agreement, providing it with a well-rounded template, and reviewed its employee manual. These documents and advice enable Ifetayo to manage its workforce in compliance with employment laws. Renee Smith, Ifetayo's Director of Operations and Digital Strategies, says, "These documents are still living with our organization, which is a testament to the quality of Liz's work."

Sunnyside Community Services, established in 1974, has grown to the largest community-based social services center in Western Queens, reaching more than 14,000 residents with home and center care for seniors and programs for children and teens. Ms. Hook reviewed Sunnyside's employee classifications, job descriptions, and pay practices with respect to certain exempt and non-exempt employees. She also conducted labor law presentations for the organization's managers and directors. David Espinosa, Sunnyside's Associate Executive Director of Operations, says, "Liz is patient, knowledgeable, flexible, and accommodating – a great employment law asset. She helped us formulate policies and better manage programs and has become like a legal arm of our agency."

Ms. Hook conducted a sexual harassment and discrimination prevention training for the staff of the **Jericho Project**, which provides housing and employment services to 1,600 adults and children in New York City. Gary Bernstein, the organization's Chief Program Officer, says, "Liz was very knowledgeable. She worked around our needs, both in scheduling and content for the audience, which included 100 employees from direct service staff to management." Ms. Hook conducted two harassment prevention trainings for **Brooklyn Community Services (BCS)**, a social service agency serving 13,000 families, children, and persons with disabilities throughout Brooklyn. Maryclare Scerbo, BCS' Deputy Chief Operating Officer, says, "Liz had a good rapport with the audience and really knows her subject." Ms. Hook also advised **Public Policy Lab** on a Department of Labor matter.

Says Ms. Hook, "Working with Lawyers Alliance clients has provided me with the opportunity to help those organizations that provide critical services to the community, and so in my own way, give back to the community as well. My work with these nonprofits has given me insight into just how much they do, and how much they are able to accomplish with the resources available. I continue to be impressed with the quality and dedication of those with whom I have worked."

