
VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED/ TRAINING FOR ATTORNEYS

VLA offers different training and volunteer opportunities for lawyers interested in working with the arts community, including both individual artists and arts organizations, on transactional, business organization, dispute resolution or litigation matters.

- **Legal Services**

- ***VLA Legal Clinic:*** Once approved by VLA, attorneys can volunteer at the VLA Clinic, advising artists during half hour, in-person consultations. VLA Law Firm/Corporate Members may also sponsor a private clinic session at VLA, or at the member's office, that allows the VLA Member's attorneys to host a clinic on a pre-arranged date ("Sponsored Clinic").
- ***Custom, Private Clinic Training for VLA Law Firm/Corporate Members:*** In advance of a Sponsored Clinic, VLA's Executive Director will train participating attorneys for the specific legal and business matters the artists and arts organizations are bringing to the clinic. Attorneys new to VLA, or to counseling clients in the arts/entertainment and nonprofit arena, have found this opportunity to be of particular value. At the training, VLA may also recommend resources and additional services (VLA or otherwise) to the attorneys for the artists; also, the attorneys will be matched with the matters presented at the clinic. This service is available exclusively to VLA's Law Firm/Corporate Members.
- ***"On the Job" Training at VLA:*** Attorneys can spend a ½ day at VLA working with the Director of Legal Services providing direct services to the arts community. This training is suggested for attorneys new to VLA and mandatory for less-experienced attorneys seeking to be approved to volunteer at the VLA Legal Clinic. Program fee: \$199
- ***Case List:*** Attorneys can take on the pro bono representation of low-income artists and nonprofit arts organizations through VLA and those cases are posted via the VLA Caselist that is emailed twice a month. Please email Benjamin Brandow at bbrandow@vlany.org to join the distribution list. VLA Law Firm/Corporate Members enjoy a 48-hour case list preview period as a benefit of that membership. NYCLE credit may be available for some pro bono work.
- ***Advocacy:*** On occasion, VLA seeks volunteer attorneys to represent VLA in its capacity as an advocate on behalf of the arts community. In these cases, commonly related to the First Amendment, the attorney typically prepares amicus briefs in matters that affect the larger arts community, or may assist VLA in analyzing pending legislation.
- ***Additional Resources:*** VLA offers a list of recommended books and web-based resources, as well as a small library to its volunteers. Mentoring conversations with VLA staff, and other arts and entertainment lawyers, may also be arranged.
- ***Career Development/ Private Counseling:*** The Executive Director and Director of Legal Services provide private career counseling. Program Fee: \$199

Please contact Alexei O. Auld, Esq., VLA's Director of Legal Services at aauld@vlany.org, or 212.319.319.2787, x12 for more information

- **Educational Programs**

- **CLE Classes: Ongoing Programs:** VLA is accredited by the New York Bar to provide continuing legal education credit (CLE) and teaches many classes, including the Film • Music • Interactive Legal & Business Bootcamp™; legal issues in contemporary art: copyright law; Film CLE Ethics Class; contract basics for arts professionals; legal issues in film; and nonprofit incorporation and tax-exemption.
- **Private CLE and Other Classes:** VLA also offers private and/or customized CLE and other workshops for law firms, corporate law departments and the arts community. Most of our workshops can also be customized to specific arts disciplines or to address specific concerns of the target audience. For example, VLA has selected a group of available *pro bono* nonprofit incorporation cases and trained the attending attorneys to handle those cases. Beyond technical training, this program is a unique opportunity for VLA and the participating attorneys to meet face-to-face and to talk about issues specific to the cases available for pro bono placement. Program fees start at \$1,500 for VLA Law Firm/Corporate Members.
- **Writing Opportunities:** On occasion, VLA seeks a volunteer attorney to prepare articles on legal issues of interest to the arts community.

Please contact Sergio Muñoz Sarmiento, Esq., VLA's Associate Director at ssarmiento@vlany.org, or 212.319.2787 x13 for more information.

- **Mediation**

VLA's MediateArt Program provides an opportunity for attorneys to:

- Serve as volunteer mediators for artists and arts organizations interested in amicable negotiations for resolving arts-related disputes. MediateArt's services are also available to negotiate contracts, business partnerships, and other collaborations so volunteers may also act as a negotiation counselor to help prepare artists for their contract negotiations.
- Volunteers are required to complete the MediateArt CLE Training Program to volunteer in this program. At the training, attendees will learn about the most common issues in arts and entertainment disputes and practice essential mediation skills. The MediateArt's training program is offered on a regular basis.

Please contact Benjamin Brandow, VLA's Assistant Director of Legal Services, at bbrandow@vlany.org or 212.319.2787 x14 for more information.

- **To Get Started: New Attorney Orientation**

VLA requires new volunteers to attend an orientation, held monthly, before working with VLA. VLA also offers private orientations at firms and corporate legal departments. Please contact Ben Brandow at bbrandow@vlany.org for more information, or to schedule an in-house presentation.