
VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED/ TRAINING FOR ATTORNEYS

VLA offers many 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 our bi-monthly Wednesday clinic, advising artists during half hour, in-person consultations typically held 4 to 7 p.m. in the VLA office. 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 work exclusively with artists on a pre-arranged date ("Sponsored Clinics").
- **New in 2008, 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 service 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.
- **New in 2008, "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 is: \$50 for VLA Members; \$75 for nonmembers.
- **Case List:** Attorneys can pick up cases for low-income artists and nonprofit arts organizations for pro bono representation from our bimonthly case list. Please email our pro bono coordinator, Kate Nelson, at knelson@vlany.org, to join the mailing list, or look at a list of available cases in the Art Law section of probono.net. 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 lists 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.

Please contact Alexei O. Auld, Esq., VLA's Director of Legal Services, for more information, at aauld@vlany.org, or 212.319.319.2787, ext 12.

- **Educational Programs**

- **CLE Classes: Ongoing Programs:** VLA is accredited by the New York Bar to provide continuing legal education credit (CLE), including: copyright and trademark basics; contract basics for arts professionals; legal issues in film; and nonprofit incorporation and tax-exemption.
- **Private CLE and Other Classes:** VLA also creates and presents 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.
- **New in 2008, Brown Bag CLE Lunch Series with VLA's Executive Director and Director of Legal Services:** Bring your lunch (we'll provide drinks and dessert) for an intimate conversation exploring common concerns and approaches for VLA's most typical matters. Program Fee: \$75 for VLA Members; \$125 for nonmembers.
- **Writing Opportunities:** On occasion, VLA seeks a volunteer attorney to prepare articles on legal issues of interest to the arts community.
- **Career Development/ Private Counseling:** For VLA Members only, the Executive Director and Director of Legal Services provide private career counseling. Program Fee: \$35 for VLA Student Members; \$50 VLA Legal Professional Members.

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

- **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.
- **New in 2008, Negotiation Counseling:** Serve 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. MediateArt's Spring 2008 Training Program will next be held on March 19-20, 2008. If you register by February 20, the registration fee is \$375 (includes 16 CLE credit hours).

Please contact Ben Brandow, VLA's Director of MediateArt, at bbrandow@vlany.org or at 212.319.2787 x16, for more information or to register for the training.

- **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 VLA's *pro bono* coordinator, Kate Nelson, at knelson@vlany.org, or 212.319.2787 x14, for more information, or to schedule an in-house presentation.