

# Volunteer Lawyers Project

The Brooklyn Bar Association  
Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc.

123 Remsen Street, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn NY 11201  
Tel. 718 624 3894 Fax. 718 624 3926

Jeannie Costello, Esq.  
Executive Director

Sidney Cherubin, Esq.  
Supervising Attorney

Corina N. Stonebanks, Esq.  
Projects Director

Jessica Spiegel  
Pro bono Coordinator

Katherine A. Warren  
Family Law Paralegal

## WHAT IS THE VLP?

Since its founding in 1990 by the Brooklyn Bar Association and its incorporation as an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit in 1992, the Volunteer Lawyers Project has maintained as its objective the practical realization of justice for the poor. The VLP maintains a standing commitment to the principle that the legal system will fail unless it is accessible to all. Through the pro bono commitment of the private bar, the VLP solves legal problems affecting people's fundamental rights. The VLP is an invaluable and unique expression of all that is noble in the legal profession, and it is the only organization of its kind operating borough-wide in Brooklyn.

## HOW DO WE HELP?

The VLP provides an efficient and highly effective means of delivering critical legal services to Brooklyn residents who could not otherwise protect their rights and access the legal system. We rely on members of the private bar, including members of the BBA with whom we maintain a historically dynamic connection, to participate in our exciting and innovative pro bono programs. The VLP fully supports its volunteer attorneys with training and mentoring and with the guidance of our Supervising Attorney, Sidney Cherubin.

## AREAS OF ASSISTANCE

The VLP's practice areas include family law, consumer law and elder law. In cases outside these areas or for those who fail to meet our financial or residential eligibility requirements, the VLP also provides referrals to other legal service agencies or the BBA Lawyer Referral Service. For more information or to get help, please call us at (718) 624-3894.

#### Family Law

We offer direct representation in custody and visitation disputes and in matters of child support. Through its Pro Se Uncontested Divorce Clinic, the VLP also provides help to individuals filing uncontested divorce papers. In addition, the VLP will provide assistance in matters relating to Orders of Protection. In 2009, the VLP is launching a new program in pro se assistance and direct representation in Article 17A Guardianships of Mentally Retarded and Physically Disabled Persons.

#### Bankruptcy And Consumer Debt Law

The VLP offers direct representation and advice and counsel in matters relating to Chapter 7 bankruptcy filings. In an innovative and highly successful program in partnership with Brooklyn Law School, assistance is also offered to pro se debtors being sued in consumer debt matters through the Civil Legal Advice and Resource Office ("CLARO") every Thursday from 2:30-4:30 and 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Kings County Civil Court in downtown Brooklyn.

#### Elder Law

VLP attorneys come to the aid of the elderly in matters relating to advance medical directives and the drafting of wills, visiting the homes or hospitals of disabled or ill clients if required. As part of our Family Law Program, we provide direct representation in custody and visitation matters involving grandparents' rights as well.

In a longstanding and highly respected program, our volunteer attorneys provide valuable legal education and assistance to the elderly in senior centers throughout Brooklyn through the Senior Legal Education and Assistance Project ("Senior LEAP") on critical life issues such as the importance of advance medical directives and fraud prevention for seniors.

#### Foreclosure Intervention

Addressing today's most pressing legal issue, the VLP is undertaking a new pro bono initiative offering direct representation and advice and counsel to assist poor and low income families caught in the wave of foreclosures decimating Brooklyn's neighborhoods. In partnership with South Brooklyn Legal Services, pro bono attorneys will assist homeowners through limited representation at mandatory court settlement conferences.

#### THINKING OF VOLUNTEERING?

Whether you are an experienced attorney or just starting out, the VLP can offer you the means to use your legal skills to give back to your community pro bono publico. It is incredibly rewarding to receive the heartfelt thanks of someone in need, and to be reminded of why you chose the law as a career path!

#### CLE Credits

In addition to attending accredited CLE training sessions, experienced attorneys may earn CLE credits for pro bono work at the rate of 1 (one) MCLE credit for every 50 minutes of eligible work.

### Training & Mentoring

Need help getting started? The VLP provides training and mentoring for our volunteer attorneys. In addition, our Supervising Attorney, Sidney Cherubin, is always ready to provide guidance and assistance in your pro bono matters.

If taking on direct representation in a pro bono case is not for you, you may wish to participate at the CLARO clinic or at a Senior LEAP presentation (discussed above) Sign up to "shadow" an attorney at your first clinic or presentation by contacting our Pro Bono Coordinator, Jessica Spiegel, at [jspiegel@brooklynvlp.org](mailto:jspiegel@brooklynvlp.org).

Warning: having someone sincerely thank you for your legal advice is not only rewarding, it is addictive! CONTACT THE VLP ABOUT VOLUNTEERING TODAY at [info@brooklynvlp.org](mailto:info@brooklynvlp.org) or click here to download a volunteer application form and fax it to us at 718.624.3926.