



Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

Because equal access to justice is everyone's fight.



LAWYERS HELPING OUR COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINIC

Upcoming Events

August 31 - Child Support Workshop; 1:00 pm; Zoom; bit.ly/315LtJX

September 7 - CVLS Closed; Labor Day

September 9 - Seminar: Covid-19 Loss Mitigation Strategies; 12:15 pm; Zoom; bit.ly/2PVkuuk

September 23 - Seminar: Estate Planning; 12:15 pm; Zoom; bit.ly/3kRZO4p

November 12 - Vino + Van Gogh; 6 pm; Zoom; cvls.org/vinovangogh

PANDEMIC RESULTS IN NEW CLINIC

Chicago's Chinatown is one of many neighborhoods in the city feeling the harsh effects of COVID-19. In addition to the economic and health-related impacts of the virus felt by everyone, Asian American communities face unique challenges.



Eric Zhi, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Eric Zhi from Kirkland & Ellis LLP and Erica Yang from Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP were looking for a way to specifically address the needs of the Chinatown community. They wondered if a clinic could be set up specifically to help clients with coronavirus-related legal issues. It would have to be held remotely to protect the health of volunteers and clients while also being easily accessible online and by phone.



Erica Yang, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP

members of the community, including small business owners. It has over 50 volunteers - both attorneys and student translators - and clients are already accessing services online.

With all of this in mind, the duo reached out to Kathy, Phil, and Meg at CVLS to pitch their idea. In less than a month, the Lawyers Helping Our Community (LHOC) Clinic was created!

To learn more about the LHOC clinic, including information on how to seek legal assistance or to sign up as a volunteer, please visit www.cvls.org.

The new LHOC clinic focuses on assisting non-English speaking

STAY UP-TO-DATE

Reading our newsletter is great, but if you want to stay informed of the latest CVLS updates make sure you follow us on social media!

facebook.com/CVLSF

twitter.com/CVLS_legalaid

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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New FREE CLE seminars available online!

Cook County Property Tax Issues
Salvador Lopez, Robson & Lopez LLC
1 hour CLE credit
<https://bit.ly/3461KSe>

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status
*Matthew Hulstein, Supervisor, Chancery
Court Access to Justice Program*
1 hour CLE credit
<https://bit.ly/3gSdryh>

Zoom in the Time of COVID 19
Carol Casey, Cook County Public Guardian
1 hour CLE credit
<https://bit.ly/3fUSTDR>

More available at
cvls.org/onlinecle

VIDEO + VAN GOGH

Virtual New Chapter of
Beloved Event

In order to practice proper social distancing, CVLS' Junior Board will be hosting their much loved fall event online this year! That's right, even COVID-19 can't stop the party.

PAINT ALONG WITH US

To make up for not being able to see your friends in person, we've added an exciting new feature to the event. This year, a local artist will guide attendees through the steps to paint a fun twist on the classic Van Gogh piece. Paint supplies will be provided to all registered attendees and will be delivered to your home before the event.

GREAT RAFFLE PACKAGES

Raffle tickets will be available for purchase individually for \$5, or 5 tickets



Date: November 12

Time: 6pm - 8pm

Price: \$60

for \$20. Fans of Vino + Van Gogh's raffle will be pleased to know that the iconic Booze Wagon prize will make an appearance, as well as many great packages courtesy of many local Chicago Businesses.

Visit cvls.org/vinovangogh for details.

LANDLORD LEGAL CHALLENGE

CVLS fights to keep people in
their homes during pandemic

Last March, Governor Pritzker ordered a moratorium on evictions through July 31 as part of his lock-down order. In late June, when a group of landlords filed a lawsuit opposing the moratorium as unconstitutional, legal aid took on the challenge by filing an amicus brief. While attorneys at other organizations crafted legal arguments, CVLS organized nearly 30 organizations to sign on to the brief and Prairie State Legal Services finalized and filed it. The judge granted our motion for leave to file the amicus brief, carefully reviewing the concerns we raised. On July 15, the judge considered the landlord's motion for a TRO and the Governor's motion to dismiss. Thanks to our efforts, the court had a much better understanding of the extreme hardships our clients have faced.

Since then, multiple judges in Illinois have upheld Pritzker's authority under state law to govern the state by executive order for as long as the governor believes

the COVID-19 pandemic persists. At the time this article was written, Governor Pritzker extended his eviction moratorium to August 22. During the three week extension, state officials set up an Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program through the Illinois Housing Development Authority. This program allows renters who need help to apply for a \$5,000 rental assistance grant paid directly to their landlords. A similar Emergency Mortgage Assistance (EMA) Program was also created offering \$15,000 grants payable to loan companies for property owners who have fallen behind due to COVID-19.

CVLS is proud to partner with the IHDA on both of these programs, as well as offering mortgage forbearance through the national CARES act. Our attorneys have been working overtime preparing for the massive wave of eviction and foreclosure filings expected at the end of the moratorium. If you are an attorney with experience in eviction or other housing related cases, and want to lend a hand, please contact Matt Hulstein (mhulstein@cvls.org) for details.

NO HURT FEELINGS

Custody Case Closed

Family law cases are often complicated because of the emotions involved. This is especially true when the rights of access to one's children is at stake. Through our Child Representative program, CVLS volunteers try to sidestep this emotional turmoil to achieve the best possible result for the child.

CVLS was recently appointed to represent three children of a Spanish-speaking family who were facing parenting time dispute. The father of the children was seeking additional time with the children, but the mother restricted his access due to allegations of verbal abuse. Their youngest child was also recently diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and had special needs.

Charlotte Huffman, fluent in Spanish, offered to represent the children in this case. Using careful mediation, she was able to negotiate a temporary parenting time schedule for the father. Checking in with the parents throughout the case, she was able to communicate effectively in their native language while also keeping the focus on the best interests of the children.

Shortly after taking the case, Charlotte resolved this contested dispute that had been plaguing the Court's docket for years. The parties agreed to a full parenting plan, portions of which Charlotte translated from English to Spanish.

Charlotte's work on this case was invaluable to the family and to the Court. Thanks to the diverse skillsets of our volunteers, CVLS is able provide legal services to as many clients and families as possible.



Charlotte Huffman, Neal & Leroy, LLC

LIFE-ALTERING ASYLUM

Client and Daughter Escape Danger with Help of AILA

It's no secret that CVLS supports clients through some of the most difficult times in their lives. We believe that legal representation can sometimes completely change the course of a person's life. No client knows this more than R.

R. is from Nigeria. She came to the United States with her young daughter on a temporary visa in 2018. R.'s goal in coming to the U.S. was to protect her daughter from a horrible, predetermined future.

Certain tribes in Nigeria practice female genital mutilation. A family bloodline placed R. and her daughter in a prominent

tribe with that same tradition. As a child, R. was a victim of this practice herself. Those who refused, including some of R.'s siblings, were murdered.

In a recent decree, the tribe decided that R.'s seven-year-old daughter was to undergo female genital mutilation. She was also to marry the tribe's elderly chief and become one of his several wives. This all had to happen by the age of nine.

The tribe attempted to kidnap R.'s child to enforce the decree. When R. refused to turn the child over, the tribe ordered that R. be put to death. R. sought the help of local law enforcement. They turned her away, telling her they would not intervene.

Her two adult sons having already escaped to the U.S., R. had no choice but to flee with her daughter. She came to CVLS' AILA clinic, seeking help with an asylum application to protect herself and the child. After hearing her story, Laura Hoover of the Children's Legal Center had to help. She advocated for R. and acted as her voice in front of the immigration authorities.

We learned in early July that R. was granted asylum. She and her children now live together safely and legally in the United States. Through the intervention of a pro bono attorney, the destinies of R. and her daughter were fundamentally and drastically altered. This was truly amazing work done by Laura. We would like to thank her and the rest of the AILA volunteers for their dedication to bettering the lives of our clients.



*Laura J. Hoover, Executive Director,
Children's Legal Center*

IN GOOD COMPANY

CHICAGO
VOLUNTEER
LEGAL
SERVICES

SERVING CHICAGO DURING CRISIS

Chicago knows the disaster of COVID-19 firsthand—1.5M Illinois workers have filed for unemployment and nearly 21% of the workforce is now unemployed; 42% of Illinois residents can't pay their rent and the courts expect almost half a million eviction cases to be filed by the end of 2020.

Front line social justice legal services are more critical than ever.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services has been on the front line for decades, delivering essential legal aid to struggling families. Now, thanks to the generosity of these Race Judicata® 2020 sponsors, CVLS can continue to help people living or working in poverty. Instead of stepping back and hunkering down, our stalwart partners stood up for us.

When Chicago's legal community stands together no obstacle is too great.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank these sponsors for their true and lasting commitment to **Chicago Pro Bono**.



Margaret Benson
Executive Director



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GETTING OUT OF HIS COMFORT ZONE

Private Litigator Makes Excellent GAL

Brian Roth is a partner at the law firm of Gordon & Rees. Day to day, he focuses on business, employment, toxic tort, and product liability litigation.

But did you know Brian also has a soft spot for representing the best interests of children? In fact, he is an award-winning volunteer in the CVLS Guardian ad Litem (GAL) for Minors Program!



Brian Roth, Partner,
Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani, LLP

It should come as no surprise then that he handles his pro bono GAL appointments with the same commitment and expertise as the cases at his firm. As a recent example, Brian advocated for three minors (ages 5, 9, and 12) in one guardianship case. The children's grandmother sought guardianship of the children after they had been abandoned by their biological mother.

As always, Brian conducted a full investigation to ensure that the proposed guardian would act as a proper caretaker. He spoke to and quickly established rapport with the children in order to best advocate for their interests. The Court agreed with Brian's recommendation to grant guardianship, and the case was closed with a positive and amicable result.

CVLS functions so well because of its volunteers. They are the cogs to a well-oiled machine that represents thousands of low-income Chicagoans each year. We wouldn't be able to do this work without attorneys like Brian. Well done!

COVID RELIEF

CVLS Partners with IHDA to Offer Housing Relief

The Illinois General Assembly dedicated \$396 million of its \$3.5 billion in federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to providing COVID-19 rental and mortgage assistance. The Illinois Housing and Development Authority, the state's housing finance agency, announced the distribution of these funds through the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) and Emergency Mortgage Assistance (EMA) programs.

Both programs required that an adult member of the household suffered a loss of income due to COVID-19, in addition to maximum household income limits, and that a payment was missed after March 1, 2020. The ERA is offered as a \$5,000 grant payable to landlords to bring their tenants up-to-date with their payments. The EMA program works in a similar way, but as a \$15,000 grant payable directly to the lender.

Illinois community advocate and legal aid organizations like CVLS educated the public about the programs, and assisted with the application process. Since funds were extremely limited, the application windows were very short, and this assistance proved crucial for hopeful applicants trying to submit their documentation in time. To make things even easier, CVLS created a dedicated hotline for applicants looking for assistance to call. This hotline, monitored by CVLS staff, was an excellent tool to connect struggling renters and homeowners with a team of law students ready and excited to help.

The selection process is currently underway, and CVLS is proud to have collaborated on such a worthy program.



**ILLINOIS HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Get Involved in 2020

Become a Chicago Pro Bono Volunteer

CVLS offers attorneys and law firms a wide range of pro bono transactional and litigation opportunities, from brief consultations or transactional projects to representation in pending litigation. With a vast array of training and support materials, our dedicated and knowledgeable staff can help you develop the pro bono program that is right for you.

Interpreters

We connect volunteer attorneys with low-income clients who are in need of legal representation which is a linguistically diverse population. Our clients sometime need interpreters to help communicate with attorneys in depositions, at trial, and in the completion of paperwork. Your language skills could be critical in helping these clients receive essential legal assistance.

Join the fight

cvls.org/volunteer



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