2021 ANNUAL REPORT

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS

VLANY.ORG
2021 was quite a year for VLA. Faced with changing circumstances and ongoing challenges, we adapted, adjusted, and pivoted. Our commitment to New York’s artists and arts organizations, however, remains deep and unchanged. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who continue to make it possible for us to pursue our mission.

Our volunteer attorneys provided more than $20 million in pro bono legal services in VLA’s 2021 fiscal year – over Zoom – to artists and arts organizations at a time when they needed help more than ever. These artists came to VLA for assistance with a broad variety of legal problems, involving contracts, protection of intellectual property and the need to navigate the legal landscape arising from any number of COVID 19-related issues. When we hear from someone like Joy Parisi, a small arts business owner severely impacted by the pandemic, that “Without VLA, I would have had nowhere to turn,” we know that the work of our staff and network of volunteer attorneys is making a difference in the life of the New York arts community. Everyone associated with VLA is firmly committed to continuing this important work.

With thanks for your support of VLA,

Jay Cohen
VLA Chair
Since 1969, VLA has been dedicated to protecting the rights of artists and helping to ensure the continued vibrancy of New York’s cultural landscape. In today’s challenging environment, VLA’s work matters more than ever. I am pleased to share this report on our activities from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, our 2021 fiscal year. During this time, as the arts community was deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, VLA was there to help artists and arts administrators navigate legal issues and continue their creative pursuits despite ongoing challenges.

Together with our volunteer attorneys, Board and staff, VLA maintained, and even grew, our service to the arts community in new virtual formats. This success was due in large part to the steadfast support of our donors and funders and the tireless efforts of VLA’s staff. In addition to our regular programming serving thousands of artists, we continued to provide pandemic-related expedited legal services, resources, and free educational webinars.

As the arts and cultural sector emerges from this very challenging period, we look forward to continue working with all of you — artists, arts organizations, volunteers, and supporters — to protect and advance creativity in New York and beyond.

Sincerely,

Katie Wagner
VLA Executive Director
OUR TEAM

KATIE WAGNER, ESQ.
Executive Director

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Director of Legal Services

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VLA FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS

BNY Mellon Foundation
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
Jean & Louis Dreyfus Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
The Cowles Charitable Trust
The Lucille Lortel Foundation
The Reed Foundation
The Shubert Foundation
The Venable Foundation
United States Patent and Trademark Office

LAW FIRM & CORPORATE CONTRIBUTORS

Ballard Spahr LLP
Comcast NBCUniversal
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Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP
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AFFORDABLE LEGAL SERVICES
LEGAL SERVICES

VLA serves over 10,000 artists each year. VLA continued to operate all legal services, including consultations and clinics, virtually during 2021, to ensure artists receive assistance at a critical moment.

AT A GLANCE

$20M
Value of pro bono legal services

561
Number of artists and arts organizations who received pro bono legal services

3209
Art Law Line intakes

146
received in-house consultations

188
participated in legal clinics

227
placed with an outside attorney
LEGAL SERVICES

VLA provided critical legal support to artists struggling with the impacts of the pandemic.

COVID SPECIAL LEGAL SERVICES

- Expedited Legal Intake Process
- COVID Database of Resources
- Free COVID-Related Webinars

IMPACT

JOY PARISI
Founder of Paragraph, *Workspace for Writers*

“Without VLA, I would have had nowhere to turn.”

When COVID-19 hit, Joy Parisi was forced to temporarily shutter Paragraph, her coworking space for writers. She lost nearly all of her income and had no way to pay her rent.

The attorneys at VLA helped Joy negotiate with her landlords and keep her small arts organization in business.
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

VLA’s Legal Education Programs are a vital resource for the arts community and the lawyers who serve it. VLA offers foundational courses on legal fundamentals that apply across the arts and cultural sector as well as specialized classes addressing legal issues within individual creative disciplines.

In 2021, VLA continued to hold all educational programs virtually, both live and on-demand to ensure artists continued to receive support during the pandemic.

WEBINARS/ONLINE PROGRAMMING AT A GLANCE

TOPICS
- Contracts
- Copyright
- Dance and Choreography
- Digital Content/COVID
- Digital Media
- Employment Law
- Fair Use
- Film and Screenwriting
- Forming a Non-Profit
- Functional Design IP
- Immigration/COVID
- Legacy and Estate Planning
- Moral Rights for Visual Artists
- Music
- Paycheck Protection Program
- Photography
- Tenant Laws/COVID
- The CARES Act
- Theater and COVID Shutdowns

1,412
Number of artists and attorneys participating

63
Zoom webinars held

20
On-demand programs
As part of its effort to better serve the arts community, VLA partnered with a number of organizations to hold virtual events and programs:

**COVID Music Initiative:** Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts in New York, in collaboration with California Lawyers for the Arts and Volunteer Lawyers & Professionals for the Arts (VLPA) of the Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville to provide free and expedited legal services to the music community affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Mixed-Income Earner Relief:** VLA worked with other VLA and entertainment organizations to secure the passage of this legislation and to educate our artists on it.

**School of Visual Arts Virtual Fair and Dance NYC Virtual Symposium**

**United States Patent & Trademark Office:** VLA partners with the USPTO to facilitate pro bono representation for artists seeking patents.
INCOME FY21

- 16% Other
- 36% Special Events
- 11% Earned Income from Programming
- 16% Law Firms and Companies
- 4% Foundations
- 5% Individual Donors
- 12% Government Grants
EXPENSES FY21

81% Programs and Services

10% Fundraising

9% Administrative
FUNDRAISING
FUNDRAISING EVENTS

2020 COCKTAILS FOR A CAUSE

In November 2020, VLA held its annual Cocktails for a Cause for #GivingTuesday in a virtual format. Approximately 40 attendees joined the event, which featured a cocktail making class and live music performance.

Rebecca Pinnell & Virtual Cocktail Class

Performance by Musician Lyle Divinsky

2021 VIRTUAL GALA

On April 20, 2021 VLA held its first ever virtual Champions of the Arts awards and gala. The event was a resounding success that far exceeded the budgeted goal.

HONOREES

JORDAN FASBENDER
Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary iHeartMedia

MICHAEL D. FRICKLAS
Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary Advance

FEATURED

Dance Performance by Yin Yue • Musical Performance by Beethoven • Virtual Paddle Raise
FUNDRAISING EVENTS

2021 VIRTUAL GALA SPONSORS

GOLD

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP
Jenner & Block LLP
Jones Lang LaSalle Brokerage, Inc.
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Ropes & Gray LLP
Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

SILVER

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Dentons US LLP
Goldman Sachs
Greenberg Traurig, LLP
Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP
Jackson Lewis P.C.
Kendall Brill & Kelly LLP
King & Spalding LLP
Leichtman Law PLLC
Loeb & Loeb LLP
Lowenstein Sandler LLP
Mitchell Silberber & Knupp LLP
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Shearman & Sterling LLP
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP
Vinson & Elkins LLP
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Leichtman Law PLLC

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Peter R. Stern
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Ziffren Brittenham LLP
HOW TO SUPPORT THE MISSION
GET INVOLVED

VOLUNTEER

VLA’s success relies on the generous commitment made by its volunteer attorneys. Volunteer attorneys provide valuable legal assistance to artists who otherwise would be unable to afford it. This is an exciting opportunity to work with artists and make a meaningful contribution to their work and livelihoods.

Receive CLE Credits for Pro Bono Work
VLA is approved to provide CLE credit to attorneys who provide pro bono legal services through our organization.

Visit VLANY.ORG/TRAINING to learn more and get started through our new attorney orientation.

BECOME A MEMBER

Becoming a member is a meaningfully way to support VLA’s efforts on behalf of the arts community. VLA offers attorney and institutional memberships.

Individual Attorney Membership Benefits:

- Opportunities to volunteer for in-house consultations with artists (for attorneys with more than three years of experience, or in conjunction with a more senior attorney)
- Discounted VLA Educational and CLE programs
- Access to career counseling services
- Opportunities to be a speaker for in-person classes in your area of expertise
- Exclusive “Members Only” preview of VLA Pro Bono Caselist

Institutional Membership Benefits:

- Private Volunteer Attorney Orientation at a Member’s firm or company
- Option, based on availability and member level, to arrange for Member-hosted VLA Clinic(s)
- Opportunities for Member’s attorneys to volunteer for in-house consultations with artists
- Attorney member rate on VLA Educational and CLE programs for Member’s attorneys
- CLE class(es) conducted at Member’s firm upon request
- Exclusive “Members Only” preview of VLA Pro Bono Caselist
- Public Acknowledgement as VLA member based on investment level

Visit VLANY.ORG/JOIN to learn more about becoming a member. VLA also offers memberships for artists. Visit the address above to learn more.
Your support helps New York’s low-income artists access free legal aid. By making a donation, you are helping artists such as Viola and Taylor:

VIOLA A. YEŞILTAÇ  
Visual Artist  
“Without VLA I would not have been able to retrieve my artworks. The attorney made sure my rights are not only protected but also more importantly, made me aware of my rights as an artist in New York.”

TAYLOR SISK  
Writer, Editor, Filmmaker  
“Without VLA, I don’t know that I would have ever recovered my footage...It made all the difference.”

Make your contribution to VLA today to give thousands of artists access to critical legal assistance and help the New York arts community in its continued recovery.

Your support helps provide thousands of hours of free legal representation and education programming to New York’s low-income artists. Visit our website to donate today, or send a check to Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, 729 7th Avenue, Suite 1401, New York, NY 10019.

“`It was life changing.”  
– Elisabeth Condon, VLA Client and Visual Artist