

Nonprofits Join Forces to Provide Free COVID-Related Legal Services To Music Community

NEW YORK, NY, May 1, 2020

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts in New York, in collaboration with California Lawyers for the Arts and Volunteer Lawyers & Professionals for the Arts of the Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville, announces today the launch of an initiative to provide free and expedited legal services to the music community affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. VLA, CLA and VLPA will connect those suffering financial hardship with attorneys to address urgent legal issues that arise from the COVID-19 crisis such as contract disputes over cancellations of performances, non-payment and collaborations; insurance issues; freelancer's unemployment assistance; labor and employment questions; and, small business relief.

During this challenging time, music is more important than ever. At the same time, with canceled gigs and the struggle to maintain partnerships and fans while isolated at home, the music community is facing an unprecedented financial strain, finding it harder to continue their work. The three volunteer arts legal service organizations anticipate that this initiative will lend support to those at the heart of the music industry. The collaboration between VLA, CLA and VLPA will offer local legal services in states that have large music communities, while also seeking to provide nationwide assistance where possible.

To access legal services, contact VLA at vlany@vlany.org or fill out an inquiry form online at vlany.org; CLA at (888)775-8995 or fill out an inquiry www.calawyersforthearts.org; and VLPA at (615) 460-8274 or vlpa@abcnashville.org.

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA) has been the leading legal aid and education organization dedicated to New York's artists and arts and cultural organizations (ACOs) for more than 50 years. VLA's mission is to facilitate pro bono legal representation for these low-income artists and ACOs; offer legal counseling, education programs, advocacy, and alternative dispute resolution services; train lawyers to better serve the arts community; and advocate on behalf of artists in need to ensure that their voice is heard. Each year, VLA serves more than 10,000 artists and arts organizations from every discipline. With the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, VLA is providing expedited legal services to assist those affected. VLA has also created new, free education programming for freelancers, self-employed artists, and nonprofit organizations to navigate COVID-19 resources available to them including unemployment assistance, contracts, immigration and emergency funding. These programs are accessible on VLA's website on demand. For more information, please visit www.vlany.org.

California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1974 to provide legal services to artists and members of the creative arts community. In 1987, Bay Area Lawyers for the Arts [BALA] joined forces with Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts-Los Angeles [VLA] to form

California Lawyers for the Arts as a statewide organization. With staffed offices in San Diego, Los Angeles, Berkeley, San Francisco and Sacramento, CLA serves more than 12,000 artists, arts organizations and arts businesses annually. CLA is active in an informal network of “Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts” programs that serve artists through state-based organizations throughout the United States. A statewide panel of attorneys provides legal assistance involving employment, contracts, intellectual property, landlord/tenant, non-profit and business formation, and other issues. In addition, the organization provides mediation, negotiations counselling, and other forms of conflict resolution for situations that can be resolved out of court, such as disputes about pay, collaborations, employment and organizational transitions. CLA's educational programs now include a robust list of webinars on legal topics that can be accessed online. For more information, please visit calawyersforthearts.org.

The Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville leverages and unites the unique resources of the arts and business communities to create a thriving, sustainable creative culture in Nashville. To this end, the Arts & Business Council provides pro bono legal and business services to income-qualified artists and creative entrepreneurs of all disciplines, as well as nonprofit arts organizations, through the Volunteer Lawyers & Professionals for the Arts (VLPA) program. VLPA provides assistance for arts-related matters including: drafting and reviewing contracts, protecting work with copyright and trademark, resolving arts-related disputes, and nonprofit formation. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, VLPA has waived the required service fees for artists and organizations suffering financial hardship, and has expanded services to offer assistance with insurance and labor and employment issues relevant and concerning during this unprecedented time. In addition to VLPA, the Arts & Business Council connects artists and arts organizations with the education and resources they need through its other programs: Education for the Creative Community, Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training, Fiscal Sponsorship, Creative Exchange, and Arts Board Matching, among many other services and opportunities. For more information, please visit www.abcnashville.org.

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