

# New York Legal Assistance Group - NYLAG

## *Contact Information*

**Website:** <http://www.nylag.org/>

**Phone:** (212) 613-5000

**Address:** 450 West 33rd St.  
New York, NY 10001

## *Description of Organization*

The New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) provides free civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers. NYLAG clients include immigrants, seniors, the homebound, families facing foreclosure, renters facing eviction, low-income consumers, those in need of government assistance, children in need of special education, domestic violence survivors, persons with disabilities, patients with chronic illness or disease, low-wage workers, low-income members of the LGBT community, Holocaust survivors, and others in need.

## *Volunteer Opportunities*

**General Legal Services:** NYLAG's experienced group of attorneys, paralegals and volunteer case handlers secure entitlements including food stamps, home care, Medicaid, SSI and other vital government support services for eligible, low income individuals.

**Holocaust Compensation Assistance Project:** NYLAG launched the Holocaust Compensation Assistance Project (H-CAP) in 2000 to provide the survivor community with accurate information and legal assistance regarding compensation and restitution programs, as well as other areas of concern. Many of the survivors who contact NYLAG are financially needy. Our staff attorneys and trained volunteers (including some who are Holocaust survivors) deal empathetically with this aging population, answering legal questions about Holocaust programs and also referring survivors, when appropriate, to social service agencies and/or other units within NYLAG.

**Immigrant Protection Unit:** The IPU focuses its efforts on assisting low-income immigrants in citizenship and naturalization, adjustment of status, and other immigration processes. NYLAG's IPU also has unique expertise in representing clients in entitlement cases when critical benefits depend on immigration status. In addition to providing direct consultation and representation to clients, IPU attorneys have been actively involved in immigrant advocacy and impact litigation helping thousands of immigrants.

**LegalHealth:** LegalHealth provides free legal services to patients within the medical setting and educates healthcare professionals to better address their patients' needs. LegalHealth delivers services to a growing number of New York City hospitals and community organizations. These services include individual case consultations, counseling, and direct representation.

**Matrimonial and Family Law Unit:** LGBT Law Project, Domestic Violence Clinical Center. NYLAG's Domestic Violence Clinical Center (DVCC) assists clients in obtaining orders of protection and provides representation in custody and visitation matters in family court. The DVCC operates as a collaborative project between NYLAG and area law schools. DVCC students litigate family offense and domestic violence-related visitation and custody cases. In addition, students are taught family, immigration and criminal law, as they relate to domestic violence.

**Special Education Unit:** NYLAG's Special Education Unit offers consultation and representation to low-income families on a variety of educational issues, including adequacy of child's Individual Education Plan (IEP), appropriateness of child's school placement, need for after-school tutoring or other services, securing individual paraprofessionals for overactive students, special tutors for dyslexic students, extensions of services to cover a 12-month school year, placement in private schools where necessary, and special needs for autistic children. A special education attorney provides individual case consultation, counseling and/or direct representation. The attorney represents disabled children at all stages of the special education process, including the initial meeting with the Committee on Special Education, representation at Impartial Hearings and the State Review Office, and appeals to state or federal court.

**Special Litigation Unit:** NYLAG's Special Litigation Unit (SLU) serves as a watchdog that monitors the delivery of government benefits and services, as well as the changes in basic entitlements. When systemic problems become evident, we initiate class action and other impact lawsuits on behalf of groups of individuals who experience a problem representative of a broad failure in the system. Current NYLAG impact litigation addresses issues ranging from the ability of low-income New Yorkers to access food stamps to the right of the disabled elderly to receive government-funded home care.

**Total Life Choices (TLC): Advanced Directives Project:** TLC serves as a no-fee, electronic database of advance directives (living wills and health care proxies) to be accessed by authorized representatives and medical professionals in determining the direction of medical care for those registered in the electronic database. TLC staff provide trainings for medical and social services professionals and educational seminars for the general population about advance directives. Once a living will and/or a health care proxy have been completed, a TLC attorney reviews them for legal sufficiency before scanning them into the secure online database. If the individual is ever admitted to a medical facility and unable to communicate their wishes regarding medical care, medical professionals will be able to quickly obtain copies of their advance directives and administer medical care based on such directives.

### ***Areas of Substantive Law***

**Civil Rights  
Family Law  
Health Care  
Immigration Law**

**Public Benefits  
Special Education  
Wills**

### ***General Notes***

**Capacity:** NYLAG has the capacity to supervise and manage 20 more volunteers. The volunteer must work from NYLAG's office.

**Experience:** Previous experience in substantive law is not required.

**Supervision:** All volunteers are assigned a supervising attorney to work closely on a daily basis. The supervisors are more like mentors - every case has a mentor.