Pro Bono Crisis Lawyering: Challenges and Lessons Learned

October 22, 2021 – 4:00pm – 5:30pm
DISCLAIMERS

◈ The opinions expressed within the presentation are those of the speakers and do not reflect the opinions and beliefs of AABANY or the speakers' employers.

◈ For those requesting CLE credit, you must watch full presentation in order to receive 1 Skills credit.

◈ Please complete CLE evaluation form and submit to cle@aabany.org.
Program Description

-The program will examine how members of AABANY, consisting of lawyers and volunteers, unite for justice and equity in times of crisis to deploy their legal skills for communities in need. During the COVID-19 pandemic, attorneys and law students became crisis solvers and spearheaded numerous projects to support and provide legal access to low-income Asian Pacific Americans (APA) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) communities. These projects, aimed at helping indigent individuals, working-class families, and small businesses, which include: (1) community education through know-your-rights materials and presentations, (2) legal information and referrals to address particular legal needs, (3) pro bono services, (4) scholarly work and reporting on anti-Asian violence, and (5) advocacy to combat anti-Asian violence.
Pro bono & Community Services Committee

- [https://probono.aabany.org/](https://probono.aabany.org/)

- PBCS hosts walk-in legal clinics, free and open to all members of the community, every month at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, 62 Mott St. In-person capacity is limited and volunteers and clients have the option of attending remotely via Zoom.

- During the widespread shutdown of in-person services necessitated by the novel COVID-19 pandemic, AABANY’s Pro Bono and Community Service Committee redirected its volunteer resources towards establishing the [Remote Legal Clinic](https://probono.aabany.org/), which offered bilingual assistance by telephone and other virtual modalities. Thanks to AABANY’s dedicated and skilled volunteer attorneys, law students and interpreters, the Remote Clinic assisted over 400 callers on a myriad of legal matters involving housing, immigration, criminal law, fraud, family and matrimonial law, wills, and small business loans. After nearly nine months in effect through the COVID-19 pandemic, AABANY’s Pro Bono Remote Clinic ceased operations in March 2021.

- Going forward, PBCS will continue working with AAPI community partners and exploring collaboration opportunities with other community partners in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens to provide legal assistance to the community.
COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

* https://probono.aabany.org/resources-english#page-section-6108b1a8a68be63f250625b4

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS
Anti-Asian Harassment and Violence

The Asian American Bar Association of New York is hosting a series of “Know Your Rights” community presentations to discuss the rise in anti-Asian harassment and violence in New York, and what victims and bystanders can do if they experience these deplorable acts. This program will be offered by webinar in multiple languages.
As of March 1, 2021, the AABANY’s Pro Bono Remote Clinic will not take any calls from the telephone lines. Thanks to our volunteer attorneys, law students and interpreters, the Remote Clinic was able to assist over 400 callers since June 2020. The Remote Clinic was created as an emergency stopgap effort to provide Asian Americans with limited English proficiency access to necessary information and available resources during the pandemic when the city shut down and operation of AABANY’s Monthly Walk-In Legal Clinics had to be suspended.
In Fall 2020, AABANY launched the Legal Referral and Information Service (“LRIS”) as a public service primarily to help the general public, and especially the Asian American community. The goals of the LRIS are to provide information and referrals, to recommend lawyers or other resources to provide competent, ethical legal advice and representation, to educate the public about legal representation and to increase respect for the legal profession.

Community members in need of a legal referral can call one of several phone numbers depending on language spoken: 516.788.8820 (English), 516.788.8821 (Mandarin), 516.788.8822 (Cantonese), 516.788.8823 (Japanese), or 516.788.8825 (Korean).

For more information about LRIS, please visit legalreferral.aabany.org.
AABANY’s Legal Referral and Information Service (“LRIS”) connects members of the New York Asian American community with qualified legal counsel, overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers and increasing the accessibility of legal referral services in the Greater New York area for an underserved demographic.

This is a vital program for AABANY that we anticipate will greatly benefit our panelists and fellow members as well as the public, and especially the Asian American community. If you would like to apply to be considered for the LRIS panel, please fill out and submit the form below. If you have any questions, please send them to joinliris@aabany.org. If you have any questions, please send them to the same email address.
Hate Eradication Active Response Team ("HEART")

In response to heightened anti-Asian violence during the pandemic, AABANY’s Anti-Asian Violence Task Force created the Hate Eradication Active Response Team ("HEART") initiative to support community members who have suffered a bias incident or hate crime. HEART aims to help community members obtain a resolution consistent with their interests and desires, whether that means seeking justice under the law for a given hate incident or providing a referral to mental health or other services. The HEART initiative is ongoing, and more information can be found here.
On February 11, 2021, AABANY held a press conference to discuss the release of its report co-authored with Paul, Weiss, *A Rising Tide of Hate and Violence against Asian Americans in New York During COVID-19: Impact, Causes, Solutions*. Since the report’s release, news media across the country and around the world have summarized and cited its findings.
AABANY PRO BONO FUNDRAISER

The COVID-19 era has brought more challenges to our Asian American community in New York, with anti-Asian violence on the rise and many New Yorkers facing serious legal issues in housing and immigration, as well as challenges due to economic hardships. Our Pro Bono Clinic has gone remote to provide legal information and assistance.

To raise funds for our Pro Bono Clinic, AABANY member Joane Siyan Wong has created a "One Humanity Against the Virus" button.
AABANY’s Student Outreach Committee seeks to equip APA students with concrete skills to excel academically and professionally. In addition, the Committee acts as a bridge between law students and attorneys, encouraging APA students to be active in the APA legal community. To achieve these goals, the Committee sponsors career programs, networking events, and social activities. Currently, there are more than 300 APA law student members in AABANY, and the Committee works with approximately 18 law schools in the tri-state region.
The Asian American Bar Association of New York ("AABANY") just concluded a virtual phone clinic to assist Mandarin and Cantonese speaking tenants in applying for the NYS Homes and Community Renewal’s (HCR) COVID Rent Relief Extension Program. This HCR program allowed NYS renters to seek a one-time rental subsidy for the months of April – July 2020. The program originally opened for submission in late July 2020, extended to August 8, 2020, and then re-opened the application process on December 18, 2020 until February 1, 2021. We assisted 83 callers in total: 87.5% of those callers had limited English proficiency, with most callers speaking Cantonese (41.1%) and Mandarin (46.4%). We handled this call volume with a dedicated team of 24 volunteers.

In response to the program’s second extension, AABANY organized a coalition to get bilingual information and resources out to the community. Articles ran in ethnic newspapers during the weekend of January 17, 2021, announcing our COVID Rent Relief Project 2.0. The goal of the project remote clinic was (1) to provide information to callers on how to apply, (2) if necessary, to have the volunteer and caller contact HCR’s Call Center together to reach an interpreter, and/or (3) to have the volunteer act as the interpreter. No legal advice or legal representation was provided.

At a time of increasing isolation due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and in the face of language access barriers for Mandarin and Cantonese speaking NYC residents, the AABANY Virtual Phone Clinic provided a welcome opportunity to build relationships in the community and provide assistance.
SOC’s COMMUNITY OUTREACH
FREE LEGAL INFORMATION

Visit our Pro Bono Website or Pro Bono Legal Clinic

COVID-19 LEGAL RELIEF
SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF
ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE KNOW YOUR RIGHTS
HATE ERADICATION ACTIVE RESPONSE TEAM (HEART)
PRO BONO LEGAL CLINIC
HOUSING
IMMIGRATION

Tentative pro bono legal clinic

Date: Saturday, September 18, 2021
Time: 12:30 PM – 3:30 PM EST
Location: Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association
62 Mott Street, New York, NY 10013
Register: Call 212-226-6280 or email ccbastafts@gmail.com

Digital Resources
- Small Business Labor and Employment
- Restructuring and Bankruptcy
- Anti-Asian Violence, Know Your Rights
- In Mandarin
- In Cantonese
- In Korean
- Chinese and Korean FAQ Pages
- Additional Resources
  - In Chinese
  - In Korean
  - In Japanese

Need Help? Contact AABANY’s Pro Bono Clinic
Call: (929) 251-3022
Email: probono@aabany.org

Generously Co-Sponsored By:

ALSTON & BIRD
Littler
Simpson Thacher

Supported By The Following Asian Pacific American Law Student Associations:
NYU, Brooklyn, Cardozo, Columbia, CUNY, Hofstra, New York Law School, St. John’s, Fordham, Harvard Law School and Cornell Law School
SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO ORGANIZERS OF THE PRO BONO CLINICS

- 2015 - 2016: Co-chairs of PBCS - Samuel Lui, June K. Lee
- 2016 - 2017: Co-chairs of PBCS - Samuel Lui, June K. Lee, Ariana Alcasabas Pabalan
  Vice-chairs of PBCS - Kwok Kei Ng and Zhixian Jessie Liu
- 2020 - 2021: Co-chairs of PBCS - Asako Aiba, Judy (Ming Chu) Lee, Karen Lin, Karen Kithan Yau
  Vice-chairs of PBCS - Kwok Kei Ng and Zhixian Jessie Liu
- 2021 - 2022: Co-chairs of PBCS - Karen King, Judy (Ming Chu) Lee, Karen Lin, and Kwok Kei Ng
  Vice-chairs of PBCS - Eugene Love Kim, Olympia Moy, and May Wong
  Pro Bono Secondee - Megan Gao
And none of this would’ve been possible without you, our dedicated volunteers!
So please contact probono@aabany.org if you are interested in volunteering at our upcoming pro bono clinics!!!
FREE SATURDAY (PRO BONO) LEGAL CLINICS

OCTOBER 16, 2021
NOVEMBER 13, 2021
DECEMBER 11, 2021
12:30-3:30 PM

Location: CCBA, 62 Mott St., 2nd Floor*, New York, NY 10013

To register, call (212) 226-0280 or email
ccbastaafs@gmail.com for a 30-minute one-on-one informational consultation with a volunteer attorney. Please bring all relevant documents.

APPOINTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM. IN-PERSON CAPACITY LIMITED. FACE MASKS REQUIRED.

Visit us online:
PROBONO.AABANY.ORG

co-sponsors:

FREE (PRO BONO) LEGAL & APPLICATION CLINICS

Volunteers will assist individuals in applying for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and reviewing legal documents. Please bring all relevant documents to your appointment.

Priority will be given to those who register by calling 212-979-8988, texting 646-630-7385, or emailing
luna_fu@aafe.org for a 30-minute appointment.

Appointments are available in person and virtually (via Zoom). In-person capacity is limited and masks are required.

MANHATTAN LOCATION:
AAFE
2 Allen St, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10002

QUEENS LOCATION:
AAFE
One Flushing Community Center
133-39 41st Ave, 2nd Floor
Flushing, NY 11354

DATES:
October 16, 2021* 11am-5:30pm
November 6, 2021 11am-5:30pm
December 4, 2021 11am-5:30pm

DATES:
October 30, 2021 11am-5:30pm
November 13, 2021 11am-5:30pm
December 11, 2021 11am-5:30pm

* The October 16 clinic will be located at CCBA, 62 Mott St., 2nd Floor.

CO-SPONSORS:

Asian American Bar Association of New York
ASIAN AMERICANS FOR EQUALITY