



FY 23

IMPACT REPORT

VOLUNTEERS OF LEGAL SERVICE



A Message From Our Team

To the VOLS Community:

New Yorkers know that for every electric, vibrant moment, New York City can also be a tough place to live. In this city where nearly 8 million people have something to offer, not all New Yorkers are equally able to afford an attorney to guide them in accessing justice for their civil legal challenges. That's why access to justice through pro bono has been VOLS' innovative, foundational principle for nearly four decades. As VOLS looks forward to celebrating our 40th anniversary this spring, there is much to share about the remarkable growth of our organization and the availability of pro bono legal services throughout all five boroughs.

In our last fiscal year, more than 6,200 New Yorkers benefited from VOLS' high-quality, free civil legal service projects, and many thousands more attended community legal education workshops and trainings, and accessed our know-your-rights guides and materials. We handled more matters for clients than in the history of our organization and worked with the private bar to support over \$17.8 million in free legal services for immigrant youth, incarcerated mothers, older adults, veterans, small business owners, individuals entitled to public benefits, children and their families.

This impact report features some -- though nowhere near all -- of VOLS' work over the past fiscal year. [Thank you to our clients for trusting VOLS with their dreams, to our pro bono and community partners for their time and collaboration, and to our supporters for providing the means that move the work forward.](#)

With gratitude,

The VOLS Team

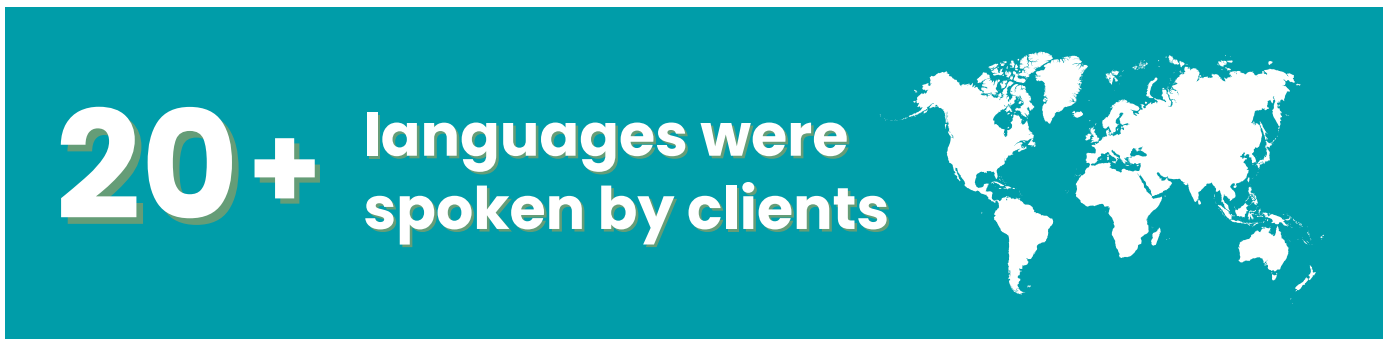
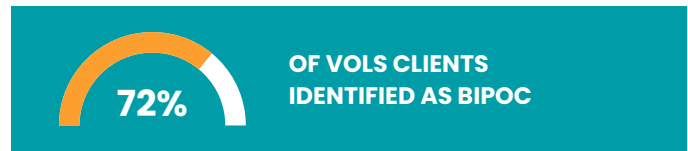
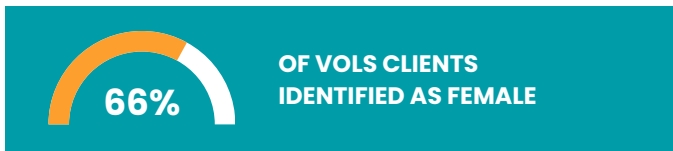


By The Numbers

In Our Last Fiscal Year



Our Clients



“ I cannot overstate the change that we've seen in our students - all newly arrived to the country - since we have partnered with VOLS. To be a young person who has gone through so much and be able to sit with a lawyer for free to understand what comes next is an incredible gift. VOLS provides hope. It is a place our families can trust. I can't even say how important it is for our school community. ”

-Jaclyn Valane, Principal
International High School at LaGuardia Community College
Community Partner, VOLS Immigration Project



Our Model

VOLS' model is to first identify legal issues facing low-income New Yorkers through our relationships with community-based organizations and then to organize programming, staffing, and pro bono support that address these real needs. Our model provides us with extensive opportunity for feedback and guidance from the community and lets our team focus on the legal challenges that need to be addressed.

Pro Bono Partners



VOLS works with 80 law firms and companies. We connect and support a network of nearly 1,800 active pro bono volunteer attorneys to provide legal services.

VOLS Staff



VOLS' staff provide free direct civil legal services; recruit, train & mentor pro bono volunteers; provide community education, training & know-your-rights materials in multiple languages.

Community-Based Organizations



VOLS works with 150 schools, hospitals, older adult centers, and other organizations to identify and support clients. We collaborate on community legal education, identifying emerging legal trends impacting communities and identify community members in need of support.



Each VOLS Legal Team Member

Screens clients and performs intakes; manages a caseload and directly provides clients with advice and counsel.

Trains and supports pro bono, significantly multiplying impact and numbers of clients served; creates guides and other resources and provides continuing legal education.

Presents community legal education, know-your-rights and other trainings; deepens relationships within the communities served.

VOLS Senior Law Project

Older adults deserve to age with dignity and have their wishes met by their chosen caregivers. VOLS Senior Law Project (SLP) assists older adults with limited income in securing legal documents, so they can make key decisions for incapacitation, end-of-life, and posthumous care. Our project takes a population-based approach, with specific initiatives for veteran, women, LGBTQ+, and Latine/Spanish-speaking New Yorkers that provide culturally competent legal services, respond to language access needs, and meet older adults where they live and congregate. In one thriving new community partnership, our team hosted legal clinics with Visions, the older adult center in Selis Manor, Manhattan, in order to serve older adults who are blind or have vision impairments. Our program will continue to ensure that clients with differing abilities are able to access VOLS SLP's life-planning services. This year the SLP provided legal services to more older adults- and drafted and executed more life planning documents- than ever before. We also are responsive to caregivers' needs. When our clients name an agent in a Health Care Proxy or Power of Attorney, their agent(s) often have questions about what this means and their responsibilities. VOLS SLP created two new guides for older adults and their caregivers to help demystify what it means to be an agent.



VOLS Benefits Law Project

After careful planning, in June 2023 the VOLS Unemployed Workers Project (UWP) became the VOLS Benefits Law Project (BLP). During the last fiscal year, VOLS UWP had provided unemployed workers with assistance on federal and state unemployment insurance, advising on eligibility, applications, claims, waivers and requests for hearings. We saw an increase in positive determinations for clients receiving assistance from our corps of pro bono attorneys and continued to work with coalitions to advocate for reforms at the New York State Department of Labor to improve the waiver system, improve accessibility, and increase transparency. Building on the success of UWP, on June 1, we officially expanded and launched the VOLS Benefits Law Project (BLP), empowering New Yorkers to access a wider range of public benefits, including the NYC Rent Freeze Program – Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE)/Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) – and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)/Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Our launch event at Hamilton-Madison House served 87 New Yorkers, and we look forward to assisting many more.

VOLS Incarcerated Mothers Law Project

A unique program in New York State, the VOLS Incarcerated Mothers Law Project (IMLP) provides high-quality, free family law services to mothers* in and recently released from prison and jail who are seeking information about their family law rights. We hear from mothers who have not seen or been given copies of their custody orders and do not know what their rights are or how to enforce them; who are not being given visitation or telephone access to their children despite a custody order that requires it; who are unable to get access to make a telephone call to their child from prison; who wish to contest an adoption or foster care placement; who need to arrange care for their children; whose letters are not being delivered to their children; whose children have been moved out of state against a custody order. This fiscal year, VOLS IMLP gained in-person access to correctional facilities following COVID-19 entry restrictions, including to Taconic Correctional Facility and to Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, where mothers have been waiting to speak with a family law attorney for many years.

**VOLS IMLP serves parents in women's correctional facilities inclusive of gender identity.*

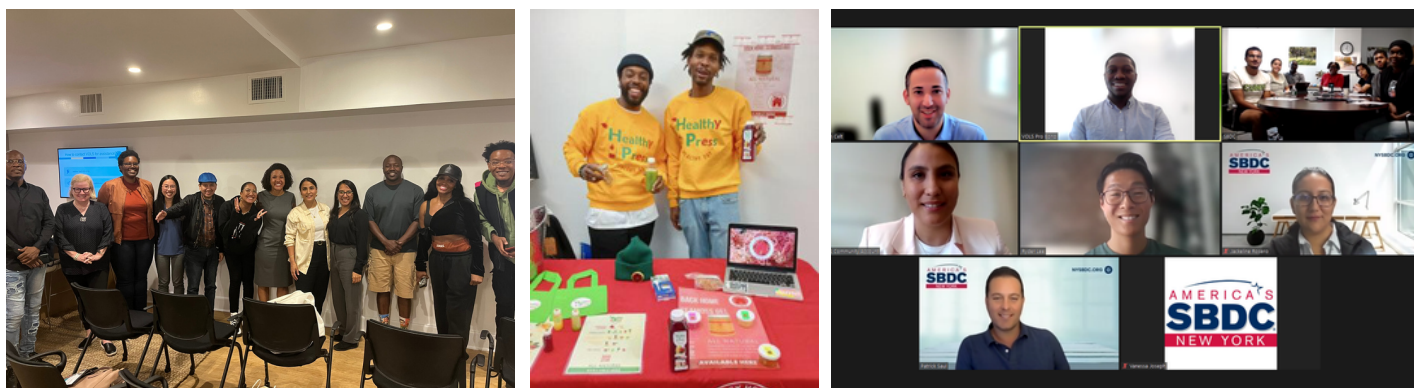


VOLS Immigration Project

VOLS Immigration Project (IP) serves one of the most resilient populations in the city: immigrant youth. In providing free, high-quality immigration legal services, we help ensure access – and continued access – to education and economic opportunity for the young people we serve. Whether it was addressing the needs of DACA clients to maintain post-secondary educational and employment opportunities or helping address the needs of young new arrivals, our model focused on increasing accessibility to immigration legal services by reaching youth in their communities. That's why this year, when International High School at Laguardia Community College needed help educating staff and new arrival families on options for relief, VOLS was their first call. VOLS provided an Immigration 101 training that was Zoomed into every classroom for the school. School staff said the impact was transformational – empowering students to approach VOLS for legal assistance and providing hope and assistance for the future.

VOLS Microenterprise Project

Our VOLS Microenterprise Project (MEP) clients never fail to impress us with their ingenuity and drive. This year, VOLS MEP provided free legal advice and services to new and existing low- and moderate-income small business owners in all five boroughs. We significantly increased access to legal services for an important group of New York City’s microentrepreneurs: New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) small business owner residents. We formed a new relationship with the Fedcap Jobs-Plus program, which offers place-based employment services program for working-age NYCHA residents, and participated in Progress Playbook’s NYC Safe Pitch Competition, which identifies and incubates NYCHA-resident entrepreneurs to provide participants with legal clinics about entity formation, contracts, and intellectual property basics. We also worked closely with pro bono subject matter experts to create new presentations for clients on cybersecurity and privacy as well as entity tax advice, responding to how many people have needed – but could not afford to access to – this information that is critical to running a modern business.



VOLS Children’s Project

VOLS knows that accessibility to legal services means showing up in the spaces where our clients most need us. That’s why the VOLS Children’s Project (CP) is a unique program that matches and supports pro bono partner law firms with hospitals and schools in order to provide children and families with free legal services in hospital and school-based settings. VOLS housing and immigration specialists and legal team provides as-needed legal services, in one example supporting a lawsuit on behalf a child at PS 188 The Island School in downtown Manhattan whose apartment was overrun with mold and no action was being taken. Through our advocacy, VOLS legal team and our pro bono partners secured an agreement to make the repairs and a six month rent abatement for the family.

VOLS Clients

NM, Client, VOLS Senior Law Project Senior Women's Empowerment Initiative

After NM was diagnosed with early dementia, her caseworker reached out to VOLS to help get her life planning documents in order. NM lived with her long-term partner who she had wanted to name as power of attorney and health care proxy. After receiving the referral, VOLS immediately got into contact with the client and her partner, who also wanted to prepare her life planning documents. VOLS worked with both women and prepared their Wills, Powers of Attorney, Health Care Proxies, Living Will, and Control of Remains forms. For this loving, legally blind couple, VOLS' work was vital to ensuring that their wishes were carried out. As an LGBTQ+ couple who never married or registered as domestic partners, without legal authority, they would face barriers when making health care decisions on each other's behalf and did not have spousal inheritance rights. It was essential to get these documents prepared and executed so the clients' wishes could be carried out while they both still had the capacity to do so. VOLS is proud to offer culturally competent services that allow older adults to take control of their future and live with dignity in the places they call home.

Nia Hooper-Mason Client, VOLS Microenterprise Project

Nia Hooper-Mason is passionate about how her work supports the community. She is the founder and owner of the online store, Love Joy Originals (lovejoyoriginals.com), that sells sustainable childrenswear with positive affirmations for mamas to inspire their children to be great. VOLS worked with Nia to update her corporate governance documents, create website policies and advised her about best practices in cybersecurity. This year, VOLS partnered with pro bono to launch cybersecurity and privacy trainings that support business owners like Nia to navigate law and technology. As a result, Nia can confidently move forward with her business, knowing she has legal protections in place.



GV, Client, VOLS Immigration Project

At two years old GV - now 19 - came to the United States with her mother. Her immigration journey reflects so much of how VOLS works with youth to access safety, education, and employment opportunities and support them in fulfilling their goals and how we maintain ongoing support for our clients to address recurring or new immigration law issues. GV has been represented by VOLS since 2020, first in Family Court, where she was granted a Special Immigration Juvenile Status (SIJS) predicate order that allowed her to file an application for SIJS, along with a green card application. SIJS is granted for young immigrants under the age of 21 who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by one or both parents, a situation GV unfortunately experienced. VOLS then worked with GV so that her green card application was approved, making her a lawful permanent resident of the United States and providing her with the ability to attend Lehman College and apply for scholarships and financial aid that were previously not available to her. GV is currently attending Lehman College, furthering her education and planning for her future. In five years, she will be able to naturalize to become a U.S. citizen. We are so proud to support her on this journey!

Events at VOLS

VOLS 2023 Pro Bono Partners Convening

In March 2023, VOLS gathered lawyers from legal services organizations, law firms and corporate pro bono partners for the VOLS 2023 Pro Bono Partners Convening. Small group discussions provided opportunities for thoughtful, frank, and productive conversations about collaboration between pro bono volunteers and legal services organizations in New York City. We're grateful to Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP for hosting the event, and to our colleagues at Her Justice, New York City Bar Justice Center, and Safe Passage Project for helping to co-facilitate along with the VOLS team.

VOLS New York, Together Gala: Celebrating Pro Bono Stories

By participating in VOLS' programs, we not only help others in need, but we make ourselves better lawyers and we make our profession stronger.

-James H.R. Windels, Director, VOLS

Nearly 300 members of the VOLS community came together to celebrate and honor pro bono leadership at our second in-person Gala! VOLS was proud to honor partners Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP and Societe Generale Americas for their outstanding pro bono leadership. We were lucky to have phenomenal weather as we offered an engaging and insightful conversation about the role of pro bono from our featured guests Preet Bharara, Partner, WilmerHale, and Former U.S. Attorney for the SDNY, and Kate Shaw, Professor of Law, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law and Co-host, Strict Scrutiny podcast. We also heard from former clients in a poignant reminder of the direct impact of free civil legal services, not only on their own lives but for thousands of New Yorkers in need. We are grateful to our generous sponsors, Board of Directors, Pro Bono Advocates Council, and our honorees, who made it a phenomenal night. The evening raised nearly \$780,000 for VOLS!



Executive Director Abja Midha honored Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP, accepted by Jim Windels and Dara Sheinfeld.



Preet Bahara and Kate Shaw shared insights on the importance of pro bono.



Jane Shvets presented the award for Societe Generale Americas to their General Counsel, Laura Schisgall.



Board members gather to celebrate VOLS and pro bono!

Pro Bono Powered

Asia Archey Riddick

Volunteer, VOLS Incarcerated Mothers Law Project
Associate, Katten Munchin Rosenman LLP
Member, Pro Bono Advocates Council

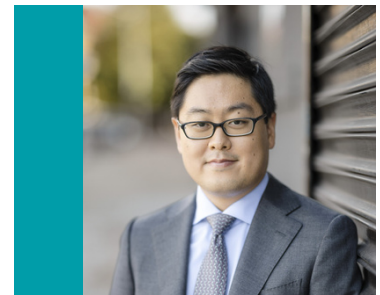
As an outcome for my clients, I'm hoping that they are able to have a voice in what is a very convoluted system for mothers and women. To empower these women to realize rights to their children I think is fundamentally empowering, for me too, and a way to give back.



Nathan Noh

Volunteer, VOLS Children's Project
Associate, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP
Member, VOLS Pro Bono Advocates Council

I consider myself extremely fortunate to work with many different members of the VOLS team, as the types of cases that come out of the Children's Hospital are varied in substance, and many families come to us requiring legal assistance in multiple different areas of law. It always feels like a true partnership between Cravath and VOLS, where we get to assemble a giant cohesive team with a single unified purpose to improve outcomes for our young client. I never feel unsupported, which enables me to take ownership over my pro bono cases, even if I'm working in an area where I lack significant experience or confidence. I should probably feel more guilty about taking up the time of the VOLS team, but their willing, close involvement in every case along the way is a competitive advantage in the world of nonprofit/private firm pro bono partnerships, especially as they come with the greatest amount of substantive experience and wisdom so that we may tackle all our cases intelligently and creatively.



Rebecca Lock

Volunteer, VOLS Immigration Project
Partner, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

I worked really closely with the team. For our client, one of the VOLS' team members who was helping do some of the translations went to our client's apartment repeatedly to make sure that he was getting the messages. It was such a collaborative effort and there's no way we could have made the filing on time without their help. I was so impressed that someone would go above and beyond like that to help. And so appreciative.



Pro Bono Powered

2023 VOLS Pro Bono Dean's List

VOLS Pro Bono Dean's List celebrates the memory of William J. Dean, VOLS' former Executive Director of 25 years, by recognizing hardworking and dedicated individuals who have made a tremendous impact in helping VOLS' clients. This year's list:

Gabriel Eisenberger, Associate, Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP

Leah Friedman, Counsel, **Sami M. El-Kebbi**, Associate, & **Lauren Sun**, Associate, Latham & Watkins LLP

Loretta A. Ippolito, Partner, & **Kimberly A. DeMaro**, Counsel, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

Rebecca Lock, Partner, & **Matthew C. Burner**, Associate, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Bradford Meisel, Counsel - Investments, MetLife Investment Management

Nathan Noh, Associate, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

Peter F. Olberg, Partner, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP

Asia Archey Riddick, Associate, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP

Matthew Rutchik, Associate, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP

Ned Terrace, Associate, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

Melissa Wallis, Counsel, Dechert LLP

VOLS PBAC Summer Picnic

We enjoyed delicious treats, drinks, and lawn games and great conversation at the second annual VOLS Pro Bono Advocates Council (PBAC) Summer Picnic in Central Park. VOLS's team, PBAC members, friends, and colleagues came together for a summer celebration that raised funds to support our free legal services to low-income New Yorkers. We are grateful to our PBAC and the event's sponsors, Bracewell LLP, Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP, Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP, Latham & Watkins LLP, and Morrison Foerster LLP.



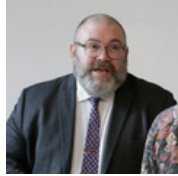
2023 VOLS PBAC Summer Picnic, Central Park.

Who We Are

Leadership Team



Abja Midha
Executive Director



Peter Kempner,
Legal Director &
Senior Law Project
Director



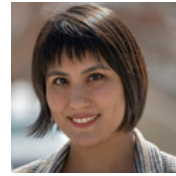
Amy Bonderoff,
Director,
Development and
Communications



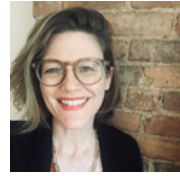
Eileen Eng,
Operations Director



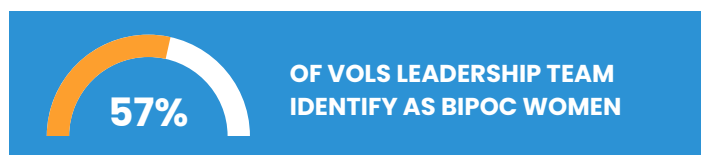
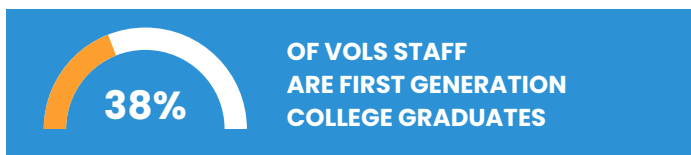
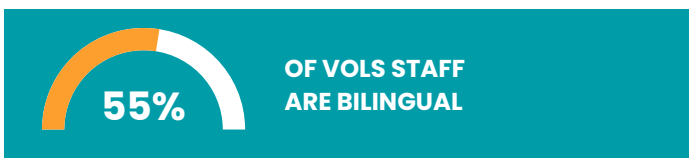
Dorian Rojas,
Director,
Immigration Project



Andrea Tan,
Director,
Microenterprise
Project

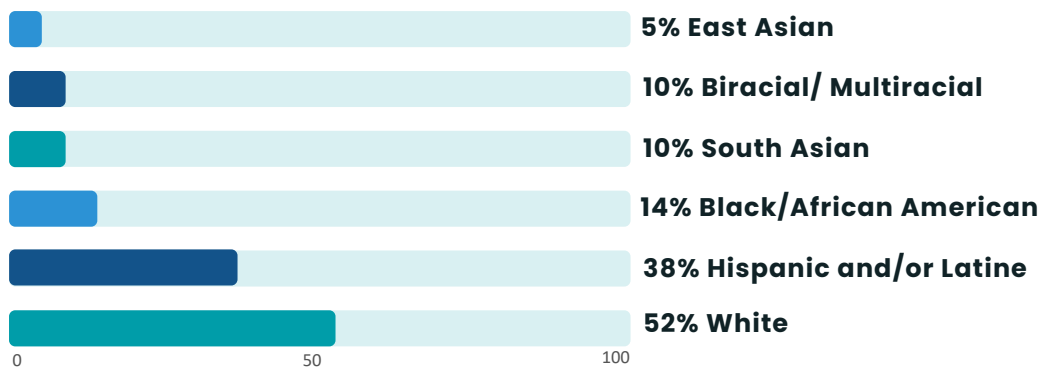


Stephanie Taylor,
Director, Incarcerated
Mothers Law Project
and Benefits Law
Project



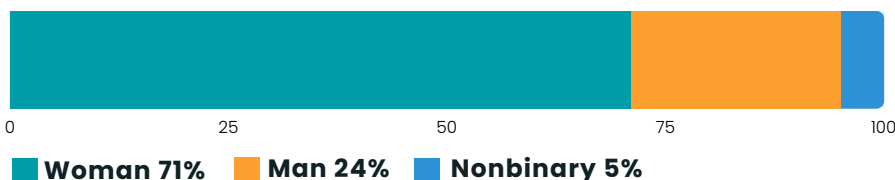
Staff Demographic Survey: FY23

Racial/Ethnic Identity



*respondents were able to select all that applied when reporting racial/ethnic identity

Gender Identity



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*Former Chair

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Associate, Kelley Drye & Warren LLP

Alexa Kissinger
Associate, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Yuliana Kletsun
Enterprise Data Counsel, Bloomberg LP

Daiana Kostova
Associate, Davis Polk & Wardell LLP

Alena Markley
Associate, Greenberg Traurig, LLP

Nathan Noh
Associate, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

Cindy Pan
Associate, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale & Dorr LLP

Asia Archey Riddick
Associate, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP

Gordana Vasic
Assistant General Counsel, Financial Lines Insurance, AIG

Diane Xu
Associate, Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Jeff Xu
Associate, Morrison & Foerster LLP

Kevin Zhen

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Genpact

Gibson, Dunn, & Crutcher LLP
Goldman Sachs
Goodwin Procter LLP
Greenberg Traurig, LLP
Haug Partners LLP
Herrick Feinstein LLP
Hogan Lovells US LLP
Holland & Knight LLP
Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP
JPMorgan Chase & Co.
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP
Kelley Drye & Warren LLP
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Winston & Strawn LLP

Community Partners

Senior Law Project

ARC XVI Fort Washinton Inc.
Bay Ridge Senior Center
BRC Senior Center
Breaking Ground
Brooklyn Public Library
Carter Burden Network
Catholic Charities
Center for Urban Pedagogy
Central Harlem Senior Citizens' Centers, Inc.
Chinese-American Planning Council Inc.
Community Access
Cooper Square Committee
Encore Community Services
Entertainment Community Fund
Fort Washington Consolidated
Feerick Center for Social Justice at Fordham Law School
Greenwich House
Grow Brooklyn
Goddard-Riverside Older Adults Center
Hamilton-Madison House
Harlem Advocates for Seniors
Heights and Hills
Henry Street Settlement
Housing and Services, Inc.
Hudson Guild Adult Services
JASA
Lennox Hill Neighborhood House
Lighthouse Guild
Little Brother's – Friends of the Elderly
LiveOnNY
Lifeforce in Later Years
MJHS
Neighborhood SHOPP
New York Foundation for Senior Citizens
New York State Division of Veterans Services
New York Public Library
NYC Department of Veterans Services
NY Connects
OATS
Osborne
Penn South Program for Seniors
Phipps Neighborhoods
Project Find
Project Guardianship
PSS
R.A.I.N. Senior Centers
RiseBoro
Riverstone Senior Life Services
SAGE

**VOLUNTEERS OF LEGAL SERVICE
IMPACT REPORT, FY23**

Search and Care
SelfHelp
Selis Manor
Service Program for Older People
Services Now for Adult Persons (SNAP)
Senior Planet
St. George's Society
St. Nicks Alliance
St. Margaret's House HDFC
Stanley Isaacs Senior Center
Stonewall Community Development Corp.
Sunnyside Community Services, Inc.
Trinity Church Wall Street
Tuttle Fund Stipendiary Program
United Jewish Council of the East Side
University Settlement
VA Harbor NY Health Care System
Visions
Visiting Nurse Services of New York
VillageCare
VetConnectNYC
Washington Heights Inwood Council on Aging
West Side Federation for Senior & Supportive Housing, Inc
YM&YWA of Washington Heights & Inwood
YWCA of Brooklyn

Benefits Law Project

Breaking Ground
Chhaya CDC
DSI International
Garden of Hope
Hamilton-Madison House
Heights & Hills
Jahajee Sisters
La Colmena
Nido de Esperanza
Mixteca
Sakhi
Voces Latinas
University Settlement NORC

Community Partners

Immigration Project – School Partners

Brooklyn College Immigrant Student Success Center
Academy of Government and Law
Academy for Language and Technology
City-As-School High School
Community Health Academy of the Heights
CUNY John Jay College Immigrant Student Success Center
Essex Street Academy
Flushing International High School
High School for Dual Language and Asian Studies
International High School at Lafayette
International High School at Prospect Heights
James Baldwin High School
Lower Manhattan Arts Academy
New Design High School
New York Collective of Radical Educators
Union Settlement Esperanza Preparatory Academy
Urban Academy School for Law & Justice
William E. Macaulay Honors Program at CUNY

Immigration Project – Community Partners

Ali Forney Community Center
Chinese American Planning Council
Community Healthcare Network
Consulate General of Mexico in New York
DSI International
Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project
Henry Street Settlement
ImmSchools
Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA)
La Jornada
Mixteca
New York Collective of Radical Educators
New York Immigration Coalition
New York State Youth Leadership Council
Riseboro

Children’s Project

Dream Charter School
Jericho Project
KIPP Academy
Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital New York-Presbyterian
Public School 188/Middle School 188
The Children’s Hospital at Montefiore

Incarcerated Mothers Law Project

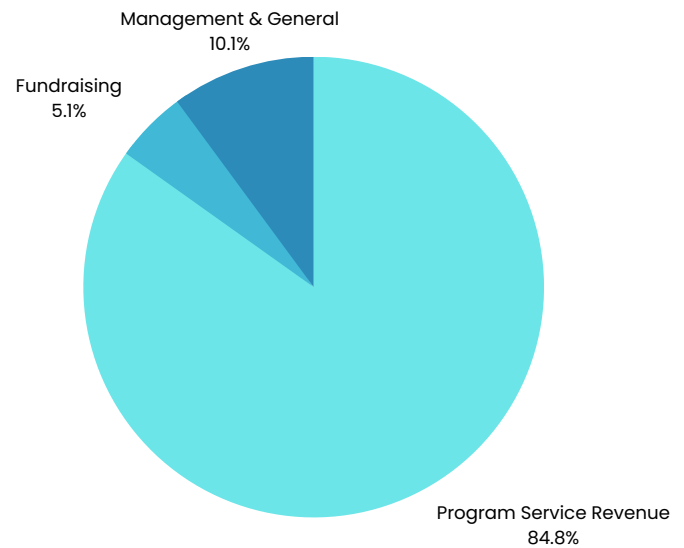
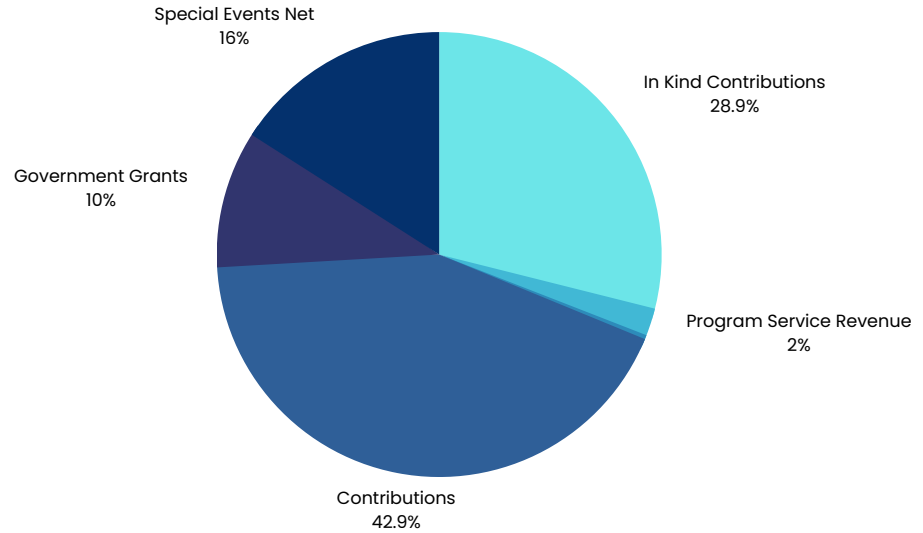
Hour Children
Osborne Association

Microenterprise Project

Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation – Brooklyn
Black Chamber of Commerce of New York City
Black Entrepreneurs NYC (BE NYC)
Business Center
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
Brooklyn Small Business Development Center
Evergreen
Fedcap
Harlem Business Alliance
Local Development Corporation of East New York
Bronx Small Business Development Center
Columbia University – Harlem Small Business Development Center
Manhattan Small Business Development Center
NYC Business Solutions – Upper Manhattan
Chhaya Community Development Center
NYC Business Solutions – Queens
Queens-LaGuardia Small Business Development Center
NYC Business Solutions – Staten Island
Business Outreach Center Network
Progress Playbook
Small Business Legal Relief Alliance (SBLRA)
TakeRoot Justice

Financial Information

REVENUE	FY22-23
Contributions	\$1,697,182
Government Grants	\$404,828
Special Events Net	\$613,817
In Kind Contributions	\$1,160,486
Program Service Revenue	\$63,333
Net Investment Income	\$13,206
Total Revenue	\$3,952,852
EXPENSES	
Microenterprise	\$637,531
Immigration	\$722,596
Senior Law	\$1,090,695
Unemployed Workers	\$646,320
Other Projects	\$133,514
Programs Services	\$3,230,656
Management & General	\$394,900
Fundraising	\$202,173
Total Expenses	\$3,827,729



Source: FY23 Audited Financial Statement

About Volunteers of Legal Service

Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS) was founded in 1984 by private bar leaders in response to severe federal government budget cuts to legal services. In forming VOLS, they committed to help close the access to justice gap by dramatically increasing pro bono service. Over the past four decades, pro bono has become understood as an integral part and ethical duty of New York City's major law firms and, increasingly, corporate law departments. VOLS operates as an independent legal services organization that continues to provide leadership in this regard and to help anchor the safety net for New Yorkers. Through our direct services, community partnerships, and robust pro bono program, VOLS has harnessed the power of New York City's bar to provide free civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers during crises such as the 1980s HIV/AIDS epidemic, 2008 financial crisis, and COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide ongoing services through six law projects.

Support Us

