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THE LCA LEGACY

In 1972, a group of young lawyers formed what they called the “Creative City Committee” to determine ways to work more closely with the life of the city. They targeted the artistic community, and created a pro bono art and law organization, Lawyers for the Creative Arts. Its mission: to provide legal assistance to artists and arts organizations financially unable to retain legal counsel.

Under the leadership of its first President, James N. Alexander, and first full-time Executive Director, Thomas R. Leavens, LCA soon boasted a \$38,000 budget. Fifty-three volunteer attorneys processed 100 matters. We are proud that 39 years later, many of our founders are still active with LCA.

LCA TODAY

Since that start, LCA has become the “go to” resource for legal advice crucial to the creative arts. To serve the arts community, we have grown our volunteer base over the years, enlisting thousands of attorneys, and we have networked to place matters in other states and, in fact, in other countries. In the past twelve months, LCA has provided critical legal service, in one form or another, to over 2000 individuals and organizations in all areas of the arts. Our phones and e-mail continue to buzz with artists who are in dire need of legal help, but have nowhere else to obtain it. LCA fills that gap and provides a valuable resource to those in the arts and entertainment communities regardless of ability to pay legal fees.

Education is another key element of LCA. LCA conducts workshops on not-for-profit incorporation and tax exemption, seminars on the law of music, publishing, film, copyright and more, and mentors young attorneys. We give presentations to dozens of schools, colleges, law groups and arts groups each year.

We constantly hear praise from our client artists, entertainers and writers for volunteer attorneys who have helped them. Those attorneys make it possible for the artists to concentrate on delving deep into their hearts to produce the most provocative, most beautiful, most audacious art they can find within themselves, because someone else has taken care of their legal concerns. With your help, we will continue to provide these unique services.

WHAT LCA DOES

Legal advice is one of the necessities of any business, particularly the arts business. However, most artists simply cannot afford market rate legal service and hate to think about business and legal matters--they just want to create their art. That's where LCA comes in. We provide the services of the best legal professionals to clients who once faced closed doors.

LCA serves individuals and organizations in all areas of art and entertainment including the literary, visual, and performing arts, and we provide access to expert advice on the myriad legal problems they face. From string quartets to rock bands; from screenwriters to graphic designers; from seamstresses to sound engineers; from sketch artists to producers; from stage actors to street vendors; from bronze casters to photojournalists; from figure models to fashion designers; from theaters to circuses; from literary publishers to media houses; from museums to digital archivists; LCA helps them all to navigate the complex legal system.

We have helped clients start businesses, draft contracts, and protect innovative designs and creations of every nature in every conceivable discipline of the arts. Through the Patricia Felch Arts Mediation Service, we have helped artists to resolve disputes quickly, privately, and outside the costly realm of courtroom litigation. When necessary, we have also helped clients to pursue lawsuits.

Most of our clients are seeking to become financially successful. However, we also specialize in advising new and existing not-for-profit organizations, providing counsel from inception to dissolution. We have helped thousands of organizations, including many of the most prominent and successful arts organizations in the area.

LCA operates with a small full-time staff, but we are backed up by several hundred active volunteer attorneys, from the best firms in the area. Our volunteer lawyers are the true heroes who level the playing field when clients are at a disadvantage. Our volunteer lawyers are willing to step up and contribute their time and valuable expertise to our many thankful clients. They *get it*—that art, in all its forms, is an important and worthwhile piece of American culture, and that art and those who create it should have legal protection.

The long list of volunteer attorneys, together with LCA's dedicated staff, Board of Directors and Honors Council, are the soul of LCA. With their support, artists are free to do what it is they do – bring color, texture and wondrous sights and sounds to all of our lives.

William E. Rattner
Executive Director



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Client Policies and Referral Procedures

To Obtain Legal Services

First you must complete and return an application telling us about yourself and the services you wish to obtain. Financial information is required in order to determine eligibility for pro bono, or free, legal assistance. Both our volunteer attorneys and our grantors require that we provide pro bono services only to those clients who qualify financially. We will consider special financial circumstances.

If you qualify for pro bono assistance, any attorney who volunteers to help you will not charge you legal fees. You will, however, be responsible for any out-of-pocket expenses such as registration fees and all court costs and filing fees. If you do not qualify for pro bono legal service, we can still help you find an attorney who specializes in the type of legal service which you seek. We are in contact with many attorneys who are willing to reduce their rates in order to assist those in the arts.

There is a processing fee for all applicants, which is \$50 for individuals and \$100 for businesses and groups of two or more individuals payable by cash, check, Visa or Mastercard.

What Happens Next

Once we review your application, if we require additional information, we will call you to arrange an appointment to assess your legal needs. In many cases we will have enough information from your application to start the referral process without the need for an appointment.

LCA is essentially an informational resource and a referral service to those in the arts, and we do not represent you as your legal counsel. We will, however, gather facts and review your legal matter/s to help you find legal representation through our referral program. Occasionally, we can handle legal matters in-house with our own staff attorneys. If so, we will discuss and confirm this with you.

Once our initial intake is complete, and your file is ready for referral, LCA staff will add your matter to our case list, which we ordinarily distribute to our volunteer network at the beginning of each month. Volunteers then select matters based upon their interest, experience and time availability.

Our volunteer attorneys are busy professionals who donate their time to LCA clients. We cannot assign or require any attorney to represent you. We work with dedicated volunteer attorneys and will do our best to refer you to an attorney for help. It often takes at least one month to find an attorney, sometimes longer, to exchange paperwork and obtain pro bono approval from law firms. Some matters, such as disputes or litigation, which are open-ended as to time, are harder to place than other matters.

When an attorney agrees to handle your matter, we will notify you and provide the attorney's name and contact information. It is your obligation to contact the attorney. You will establish a professional attorney-client relationship, and LCA will not be a part of the relationship. We will, however, follow up with you to determine if your legal work has been completed and to obtain feedback about working with LCA and our volunteers. Of course, if any problems arise, we are pleased to consult with you to see if we can help.

The attorney who accepts your matter agrees to handle only the particular matter that you discuss with us. He or she does not become your “general counsel” to handle other matters. The attorney is not obligated to perform further services, nor are you obligated to work with any particular attorney. If a new matter arises, you may discuss further work with your attorney or return to LCA and open a new file.

Communicating with LCA Staff

In the event that new information arises that changes your situation in any way, please inform LCA staff promptly. Please also inform us of any change of address, email, or phone. Whenever possible, please provide the client identification number that we assign to you when you send any information by email. Note that if we request additional information, your file will be placed on reserve until such time as the information is received.

Emergencies

We are not able to provide emergency legal service, because we are not a law firm and do not have staff available to meet pressing demands. We will do our best to refer urgent matters to practicing attorneys but cannot guarantee representation.

Other Services

LCA provides many educational workshops throughout the year. We also offer an Arts Mediation Service to help artists resolve legal disputes outside of the difficult and costly litigation environment. Please call us with any questions or refer to our website for information on upcoming seminars and workshops at www.law-arts.org.

City

State

Zip

County

4. **Daytime Phone:**
5. **Cell or Alternate Phone:**
6. **Email That You Regularly Check:**
7. **Your website/s:**

8. **If you are a group, for example a band or production business, please indicate the name and address for each group member. If you have already established a corporation, LLC, or partnership, list each principal owner.**

9. **Briefly describe your art-related business activities:**

10. Requested Legal Assistance (please limit to one or two needs for pro bono help):

- Incorporation or consultation on choosing a business structure
- Copyright, patent, or trademark protection
- Contract review, draft or negotiation
- Legal Dispute/Litigation
- Other

In the space below, please briefly explain the reason why you are requesting legal assistance:

11. If you seek free legal assistance, please indicate the current annual total gross income for everyone living in your household. If you are a group or business (for profit or not-for-profit), indicate the household income for each group member and provide the gross revenue for your business. (If you are not seeking free legal service, skip this question).

Is your income limited to state or federal benefits, such as Social Security, SSI, disability, or any similar benefit program?

Yes

No

If so, what is your monthly benefit payment? _____

Describe any special circumstances such as substantial child-care, medical expenses, alimony or child support, debts, or financial obligations that you want us to consider:

12. Have you already consulted an attorney in this matter?

___ Yes

___ No

13. In the space below, provide the name of the attorney and let us know why you are not pursuing this matter with the attorney.

14. How did you hear about LCA?

15. Client Declaration:

To the best of my knowledge, all information provided in this application is accurate and true. I have read, and I understand LCA's Client Referral Policies and Procedures and agree with the terms therein.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

If returning this form by email, your typed signature will indicate your agreement. If you choose to print the form to return to LCA by mail or fax, please sign.

If you seek assistance for members of a group, each group member should print his/her name and sign in agreement in the space below:

Lawyers for the Creative Arts

Nonprofit and Tax Exemption Workshops

Thank you for your inquiry regarding forming an Illinois Not-For-Profit Corporation and obtaining federal and state tax exemptions.

To help a client incorporate, do all the required post-incorporation filings, and apply for a tax exemption, takes many hours for an attorney who knows how to do it. We have found that there are relatively few attorneys who are really familiar with applying for a tax exemption and fewer still who will do it for no fee or a reduced fee. Our survey of the legal marketplace discloses that law firms that do the work to set up a new nonprofit, handle all the filings, and obtain a tax exemption, charge between \$5000 and \$8000 or more depending upon the difficulty involved.

In response, Lawyers for the Creative Arts has established a series of workshops in which we first explain what Not-For-Profit corporations are, certain considerations the organizers must address, the efforts required to form and maintain a nonprofit, and several customary operating issues. We then walk the attendees through the forms to establish one, the by-laws, initial directors' meeting and filings with the Illinois Attorney General and other matters.

We next discuss tax exemptions, what they are, how to operate with an exemption, activities to be avoided, annual filings required, and typical operating issues. We then go through the application form, line by line, explaining and advising how to prepare the form. We know of no other organization that does this.

We have found that our workshop attendees are able to go through the entire process themselves, without further legal help. We are available after the workshops to answer questions by phone or email. Every week we hear from people who have received their tax exemption after attending the workshop, and with no other assistance.

We hold each workshop from 5:30 p.m. to about 9:00 p.m., at our office, located at 213 W. Institute Place, Suite 403, Chicago. The fee for one person is \$100 or \$125 for two people from the same organization. We encourage more than one person attending. A full package of materials is provided.

Please call 312-649-4111 to reserve a place, and get directions.

William Rattner
Executive Director

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