



The following is a current list LCA matters within the identified Categories.

To learn more about any of the matters on our Case List, please contact our Associate Director of Legal Services, Christopher Johnson, at (312) 837-3521 or cjohnson@law-arts.org.

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Thank you very much for your interest in helping LCA clients!

Legal Category

Arts Category

Case #	Legal Category	Arts Category	Description
25-0035 Paying			Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Visual Arts 25-0035 Client is a photographer, filmmaker and performer. Several works over the course of many years were created with a former spouse, with no agreements controlling their use or exploitation. Client would like advice to evaluate the ability to move forward using the works.
25-0025 Paying			Estate Planning: Music 25-0025 Client is a local musician and DJ, and would like assistance with a Will and estate planning.
25-0008 Pro Bono			Dispute: Trademark Infringement 25-0008 Client is a musician, chef and media producer, and has registered trademarks in variations of "Rock and Roll Kitchen" under classes for media production and a physical bar and restaurant. Client identified an infringing business in New Orleans, Louisiana, and contacted them with no adequate response. Client would like assistance to evaluate a cause of action and draft a cease and desist letter.
25-0007 Pro Bono			Disputes: Defamation 25-0007 Client is a local theater actor with several lead role credits. In a recent role, client developed a personal relationship with the co-star, and then the relationship ended poorly. The co-star and another actor have spread rumors among the theater community and one company in particular, alleging inappropriate behavior and improper stage protocols. These rumors have directly lead to lost work and relationships. Client would like assistance to evaluate a cause of action and draft a demand letter.
24-1255 Pro Bono			Nonprofit: Formation/Maintenance: Music 24-1255 Client is a 501c6 organization of orchestra leaders. Client would like advice on the process to convert from a 501c6 to a 501c3 in order to accept certain contributions.
24-1249 Pro Bono			Copyright Protection 24-1249 Client's best friend recently passed away, who had a collection of composed and recorded music, and no heirs other than his mother. Client has a good relationship with his friend's mother, and would like to evaluate a structure and business arrangement to allow him to register copyright in the musical works on behalf of the estate, and publish or the release works.
24-1206 Pro Bono			Nonprofit: Agreement Drafting 24-1206 Client is a NFP dance company, and would like assistance to draft agreements for their Executive Director and Artistic Director roles.

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24-1196 Pro Bono			<p>Dispute: Music Royalties</p> <p>24-1196 Client is a well known Gospel singer and songwriter. In early 2024, a contemporary artist released a cover of a well known song written by client in the 1970s, but named the song with a slightly different name, and did not credit client as the writer. After being notified, the Artist acknowledged the mistake, but Artist's label has not taken all steps necessary to correct royalty distributions.</p>
24-1193 Pro Bono		Literature	<p>Evaluation: Copyright Protection</p> <p>24-1193 Client is a Literary & Arts Magazine LLC, interested in obtaining NFP status. Client has been commissioned to create works for a financial for profit organization, and needs assistance to review and evaluate the rights implications from this arrangement and to review any paperwork.</p>
24-1190 Pro Bono		Music	<p>Evaluation: Copyright Infringement: Music</p> <p>24-1190 Client is a producer who has posted some works on Youtube, and believes one of his beats was used by a major label producer and artist. Client would like to evaluate a claim for infringement.</p>
24-1168 Pro Bono			<p>Dispute: Trademark Infringement</p> <p>24-1168 Client NFP publishes the New Art Examiner. Client needs assistance to enforce a trademark use agreement against a foreign publisher using their marks, as well as help to recover domain control from a former board member.</p>
24-1145 Paying			<p>Copyright Protection and Evaluation: Book Publishing</p> <p>24-1145 Client has written an unpublished science fiction manuscript. For a period of time, Client was working with another writer, and agreed to be co-authors. Client has now had a falling out with the co-writer and would like to proceed with the manuscript without the involvement or contributions of the former co-writer.</p>
24-1144 Pro Bono		Literature	<p>Regulatory Compliance</p> <p>24-1144 Client is a NFP Literary and Philosophy magazine based in Chicago. In order to obtain grant funding, client has been advised to seek legal assistance to implement procedures and documentation for OFAC compliance and avoiding engagement with foreign terrorist organizations.</p>
24-1140 Pro Bono		Music	<p>Evaluation: Music Agreement Enforcement</p> <p>24-1140 Client owns a record label and signed an artist to an exclusive recording contract in 2016. Artist stopped working on any recordings for client, and client would like assistance to determine if the exclusive recording contract can still be enforced.</p>
24-1131 Pro Bono			<p>Nonprofit: Formation/Maintenance: Visual Art</p> <p>24-1131 Client is a local theater company which has filed for NFP status with the Illinois Secretary of State, and would like assistance in filing for 501c3 status with the IRS.</p>

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24-1129 Pro Bono		Theater	<p>Dispute: Breach of Contract: Theater</p> <p>24-1129 Client is a musician who was hired to perform sound design for a suburban theater production of The Christmas Carol in 2023. Client's agreement had a specific right of first refusal to perform the same services in 2024. The Producing entity did not engage client for 2024, and when asked, claimed a termination of client's agreement for cause, without any explanation of the specific cause.</p>
24-1096 Pro Bono			<p>Dispute: improper charge for service</p> <p>24-1096 Client produces content on fashion, film and television. Client paid a content distributor for access to streaming platforms, which was not provided. Distributor admitted the charge was improper, but refuses to refund the full amount. LCA sent a demand email to distributor legal, with no response. Client would like to evaluate further action.</p>
24-1078 Pro Bono		Music	<p>Evaluation: Accounting: Music</p> <p>24-1078 Client represents the estate of a well known deceased gospel artist. Client needs assistance to determine what rights and royalties are controlled by the estate, and the extent to which compositions can be licensed to third parties.</p>
24-1071 Pro Bono		Visual Art	<p>Dispute: Nonprofit Governance</p> <p>24-1071 Client is a Nonprofit print studio. The founder and former board member obtained an SBA loan on behalf of the organization. Client needs assistance to compel cooperation with SBA to manage and pay the loan.</p>
24-1065 Pro Bono		Music	<p>Dispute: Collection: Music</p> <p>24-1065 Client is a NFP choral society which conducts choral performances. They have existing agreements with ASCAP and BMI, and were charged fees for periods during COVID when no performances were conducted. Client has attempted to negotiate reduced fees, with only minor success. Client would like assistance from an attorney to send a demand letter for elimination or reduction of these fees.</p>

Case #	Legal Category	Arts Category	Description
24-1059 Pro Bono		Product Design	<p>Litigation: Real Estate: Zoning</p> <p>24-1059 Artist's iconic property of 27 years, a Bucktown worker cottage with an historic front setback of 66', is threatened by a pending adjacent development of an intrusive single-family home spread across the breadth of 2 lots. The development sought significant front setback relief that would lay ruin to artist's property value, quality of life and long-established, community-facing gardens. These gardens and home are a routine part of neighborhood tours, which plays host to musicians and visual artists during the Bucktown Garden Walk, an annual event that raises short-funds for area public schools and civic engagement. Due process of a variation with a public hearing was denied the artist and the community when the 3rd developer was excused from the front yard average ordinance despite concerted community and adjacent opposition. The artist was successful in reaching a compromise with developer number 2 and has been defending against this insensitive development for 4 years against 3 developers when the zoning administrator bypassed due process in an egregious administrative overreach. The Zoning administrator abused his discretion despite prolific evidence supplied by the artist and her zoning attorney illustrating that none of the legal standards and approval criteria had been met. The zoning board of appeals upheld the zoning administrator's decision during a recent appeal of the zoning administrator's decision. Artist now needs to file in circuit court for an administrative review to reverse what is largely seen as a bad decision. The artist has a seasoned zoning attorney on board (Amy Kurson) who will work in tandem with needed litigator. This matter has received notable press in the past.</p>
24-1047 Pro Bono		Music	<p>Contract Drafting: Music</p> <p>24-1047 Musician client needs assistance to determine rightsholder, and if necessary draft a content license to record a song based on a poem by a deceased author/ poet. He has had positive discussions with the wife of the deceased poet.</p>
24-1000 Pro Bono		Literature	<p>Visa/Immigration: Literature</p> <p>24-1000 Writer, music journalist, and stand-up comedian needs counsel to assist her in obtaining a EB-1 Visa.</p>
24-0976 Pro Bono		Visual Art	<p>Dispute: Real Estate: Visual Art</p> <p>24-0976 Ceramic Artist formerly held permanent easement over the roof of a building adjacent to her property for use as emergency exit from her 3rd floor apartments. In an agreement with a developer signed in October 2023, Ceramic Artist relinquished the easement on the condition that the developer construct a code compliant steel fire escape and stairwell system that would be accessible for all units of her building. Developer submitted code compliant drawings for fire escape system several months ago, but the building's power utility moved Ceramic Artist's gas meters without her consent, rendering the original, agreed upon design impossible. Developer then submitted secondary plans for a spiral staircase, which Ceramic Artist opposes, citing safety concerns for daily use for anyone with mobility or balance issues. Ceramic Artist needs counsel to help evaluate their rights and, if appropriate, compel the Developer to construct a more appropriate fire escape.</p>
24-0955 Pro Bono		Film/TV	<p>Evaluation: Chain of Title: Film</p> <p>24-0955 Filmmaker has been producing a film for the past 13 years and is currently completing the finishing touches. He needs counsel to evaluate, and help perfect, chain of title.</p>

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24-0903 Pro Bono		Music	Nonprofit: Planned Giving: Music 24-0903 Non-profit recording studio is developing a new planned giving program and need counsel to develop standard language for prospective donors' estate planning documents and assistance preparing to accept non-cash gifts.
24-0884 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Dispute: Collection: Visual Arts 24-0884 Visual artist was the victim of a scam perpetrated by a commercial landlord. Previous LCA counsel was able to obtain a judgment in her favor for the full amount of damages. She now needs counsel to help enforce the judgment.
24-0841 Pro Bono		Theater	Real Estate: Zoning Variation: Theater 24-0841 Nonprofit theater company is building out a new space and is currently applying for a Public Place of Amusement License. They worked with the alderman to have the zoning changed to B-3-1, allowing them to open a theater with a PPA license. However, as there are residences located within 125ft of the space, the City of Chicago has requested that we apply for a zoning variation before they can move forward.
24-0833 Pro Bono		Theater	Dispute: Condominium Association: Theater 24-0833 Theater professional owns a condo that he uses as a rental property. He recently was forced to terminate the lease of the long-term tenant for a number of reasons. After receiving the eviction notice, the tenant and his daughter began acting erratically, in some cases harassing the other residents in the building. The Condominium Association hired an attorney and filed for a TRO against the tenant's daughter due to allegedly harassing behavior, and the theater professional was billed by the Condominium Association for these costs. He needs counsel to assess his liability for these legal fees. He is also interested in obtaining an evaluation as to his rights to sue his former tenants for significant damage to the unit.
24-0826 Pro Bono		Music	Estate Planning: Music 24-0826 Keyboardist and band leader needs counsel to help develop an estate plan for himself and his spouse.
24-0825 Pro Bono		Music	Real Estate: Commercial Lease: Music 24-0825 Start-up recording studio/production company recently entered into a commercial lease for a studio/production space. The lease included insurance requirements, and the start-up obtained coverage as advised by their broker. They submitted the insurance policy to the landlord, and took possession of the space. The landlord later contacted them to inform them that the insurance policy does not comply with the terms of the lease. The lease requires Workers' Compensation, Property Coverage, Commercial General Liability, Business Automobile Liability insurance, and 10 million dollars worth of Umbrella/Excess Liability, despite the fact that some of these policies are not related to the actual business done by the start-up. The start-up approached several different brokers to try to obtain the 10 million Umbrella/Excess coverage, and were informed that this coverage would be impossible to obtain for a business of their size. They informed the landlord, who has been unyielding and has begun to threaten eviction. Start-up needs counsel to help evaluate their rights and, if possible, negotiate with the landlord.

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24-0819 Pro Bono		Film/TV	Evaluation: Copyright Reversion: Film/TV 24-0819 Playwright and screenwriter wrote a play that was adapted into a TV series that was broadcast in the 80s. She no longer has access to the original agreements and needs counsel to help evaluate the status of her rights in the play.
24-0789 Pro Bono		Literature	Dispute: Publishing Account Access: Literature 24-0789 Children's book author set up a self-publishing account with a large online book distributor more than 10 years ago. They are no longer able to access the account, as they no longer have access to the original phone number on file. They need counsel to communicate with the distributor and regain access to the account.
24-0656 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Business Licensing Violation Defense: Visual Arts/Music 24-0656 Start-up arts space and gallery hosted a launch party for a local magazine which was shut down by the police for violation of licensing ordinances involving PPA and liquor licenses. The owner of the gallery disputes some of the details of the allegations stated in the citations. A hearing has been set for August 2024 and they need counsel to defend the business.
24-0652 Pro Bono		Film/TV	Contract Drafting/Negotiation: Film 24-0652 Filmmaker is co-producing a film with a nonprofit production company. They are preparing to distribute the film and the co-producers are asking filmmaker to transfer all rights in the film to the nonprofit, even though the initial co-production agreement stated that the filmmaker would own all copyright interest in the film. Filmmaker needs counsel to help negotiate an appropriate ownership structure for the film to allow the filmmaker to retain creative control while allowing the film to be efficiently distributed.
24-0637 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Dispute: Visual Artists Rights Act: Mosaic 24-0637 Nonprofit visual arts school specializing in mosaic art rents operates a physical location with a back patio/parking lot. This area shares a fence with the restaurant next door. The school and restaurant are tenants of the same landlord, and the shared fence is a common feature owned and maintained by the landlord. The school installed three mosaic works on their side of the fence with the permission of the landlord. Recently, the restaurant decided to expand portions of their back patio area, and, without permission from the school or landlord, instructed contractors to cut portions of the fence as part of this expansion, including portions of the fence where the mosaics were hung. The contractors cut off sections of two of the three mosaics. The school needs counsel to help evaluate a claim under the Visual Artists Rights Act, or any other form of appropriate recourse, and, if appropriate, assist with recovery of damages.
24-0617 Pro Bono		Film/TV	Content Clearance: Attorney Opinion Letter: Film 24-0617 Producer of a documentary about a local martial artist needs an Attorney Opinion Letter to support their application for errors and omissions insurance.
23-1115 Pro Bono		Music	Dispute: Enforcement of Judgement: Music 23-1115 Musician hired a contractor to insulate her attic. She paid a deposit up front. Contractor never completed the work. Musician sued contractor in small claims court. An agreed order to dismiss, subject to an installment payment plan, was entered. Contractor has not paid Musician as agreed. Musician needs counsel to help enforce her right to payment.

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24-0483 Pro Bono		Theater	<p>Contract Drafting: Theater</p> <p>24-0483 Theater Director needs a production agreement drafted for a musical based on a popular novel. Client wrote the book for a similar musical theater project in Scotland based on the same novel, and retained rights in his work. Prior agreements for the first musical have expired, but must be evaluated and accounted for to avoid risk.</p>
24-0269 Pro Bono		Performance Art	<p>Dispute: Breach of Contract Defense: Performance Art</p> <p>24-0269 Artist used to volunteer for a nonprofit organization that celebrates Mongolian heritage. In 2022, she signed a contract with a performance venue on behalf of the nonprofit for a holiday celebration organized by the nonprofit and several other individuals. After disputes amongst the organizers, the event ended and the cash proceeds were split amongst the individual organizers. The nonprofit failed to pay the amount owed to the venue. The venue filed suit against the nonprofit and the Artist for breach of contract. The Artist was never served, all notices were sent to the registered address of the nonprofit. A default judgement was entered in February 2023. Artist was not notified of the situation until February 2024. They need counsel to help defend against this suit.</p>
24-0308 Pro Bono		Theater	<p>Content Clearance: Grand Rights: Theater</p> <p>24-0308 Playwright has created a jukebox musical featuring music written by a Cuban punk band. She had an agreement with their band manager covering a workshop performance, and she is now interested in entering into a full grand rights license. She needs counsel to draft a grand rights license to acquire the rights to produce the musical more broadly. The license would likely need to be in Spanish.</p>