



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
25-0586 Pro Bono			Content Clearance: Theater 25-0586 Client is a theater company with an upcoming production based on a popular film property. Client needs assistance to review and clear the material for a determination of fair use or licensing.
25-0583 Pro Bono			Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Music Theater 25-0583 Client has a group which performs a musical revue containing songs from a popular theatrical and movie production. After several performances, client received a demand for payment based on past performances, from a theatrical rights organization representing the production. Client needs assistance to respond to the letter and negotiate license terms.
25-0578 Pro Bono			Dispute: Breach of Contract: Visual Arts 25-0578 Client is a design and visual arts company with a commercial lease for studio space in a multi-use artist community building. The lease required ninety days notice for termination, but landlord management company terminated client's lease with two days notice, and then improperly revoked security access, depriving client of access to their leased property as well as equipment and personal property. Client needs immediate assistance to evaluate the ability to reinstate possession and if necessary bring action for breach of the lease.
25-0576 Paying		Photography	Dispute: Collection: Photography 25-0576 Client is a photographer who has performed work for an advertising agency over the course of several years for various campaigns. The agency refuses to pay multiple invoices, and repeatedly acknowledges the unpaid balance and promises to provide an update soon. Client needs assistance to write a demand letter, and file a legal action if necessary.
25-0572 Pro Bono			Contract Review: Partnership Agreement 25-0572 Client created a pop culture newspaper many years ago, and is now partnering with another individual to revive the business. Client needs assistance to review and evaluate documents which have been presented to capture this partnership arrangement.
25-0567 Paying		Theater	Estate Planning: Actor/ Director 25-0567 Client is a freelance actor and director, and would like assistance with estate planning and to draft a will. Client is slightly over the pro-bono threshold, and would like a reduced rate.

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25-0561 Pro Bono		Arts Education, Film/TV	Start-up: NFP Film 25-0561 Client is a NFP organization supporting women in film. Client has been a 501c3 in the past, but lost this status, and would like assistance to reinstate, as well as advice on corporate structure and governance issues.
25-0560 Pro Bono		Music	Trademark Registration: Digital Media 25-0560 Client developed software for use creating graphic visuals for music performances, and registered for a trademark which was rejected by non-final office action of the USPTO. Client believes the office action is flawed and factually mistaken, and would like assistance to file a response.
25-0559 Pro Bono		Film/TV	Contract Drafting: NFP Collaboration: Film 25-0559 Client is an entity created for a documentary film. The film has been in production for many years, and received several prestigious grants. The film is currently in post-production, and plans to collaborate with a nonprofit organization advocating for exonerees. Client would like assistance to draft a memorandum of understanding with the NFP, outlining obligations and expectations.
25-0558 Paying			Contract Drafting: Design Services 25-0558 Client is a graphic design and brand creative company, and would like assistance to draft an agreement with a client for reduced rate services in exchange for fundraising proceeds. Client is slightly above pro-bono threshold and would like a reduced rate engagement.
25-0556 Pro Bono		Film/TV	Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Film 25-0556 Client is a filmmaker who worked on a project with a friend for several years, but was unable to come to an agreement about ownership rights. Client has determined that the former partner plans to release the film project without necessary rights, and would like to evaluate legal action to protect client's contributions.
25-0554 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Dispute: Real Estate: Visual Art 25-0554 Client is an artist and teacher. Several years ago, client was evicted from a condominium that she owns, based on an unpaid balance from the condominium association. Client does not believe that the eviction process was performed correctly, and has not been able to obtain current information from the management company in order to reinstate rights to the property. Client needs assistance to evaluate the ability to regain possession.
25-0547 Pro Bono		Music	Immigration: Visa 25-0547 Client is a classical pianist, and Uzbek citizen staying on her OPT F-1 visa in the U.S., which expires on June 8th, 2025. She is looking for a lawyer to help her apply for an O-1 visa so she can continue living in the U.S.
25-0545 Pro Bono		Film/TV	Contract Drafting: Contest: Film/ TV 25-0545 Client is a NFP supporting workers in the television and film industries, and would like assistance to draft rules and terms and conditions for an upcoming acting contest they are conducting.

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25-0535 Paying		Theater	Content Review: Theater 25-0535 Client is a playwright whose work was selected to be performed at a theater festival. Given the nature of the play's content, client needs assistance to review and evaluate the script for defamation concerns, to review disclaimer language and evaluate the need for errors and omissions coverage.
25-0525 Pro Bono		Literature	Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Literature 25-0525 Client is an author, and suspects that manuscript work has been stolen by a former writing professor in an elaborate email and cloud drive hacking incident(s). Client believes that some works have been incorporated into already released literary and television works, and others have been circulated for future publication. Client needs assistance to evaluate a claim for copyright infringement.
25-0520 Pro Bono		Music	Start-up: Record Label: Music 25-0520 Client formed an LLC to create a record label, and would like assistance to draft an operating agreement between the co-owners, which include non-US based individuals.
25-0502 Pro Bono		Music	Trademark Infringement: Music 25-0502 Client is a member of a regional touring band, and owns the trademark in the band's name. Another band has infringed this trademark and refused to comply with a cease and desist letter. Client needs assistance to evaluate and file a lawsuit for trademark infringement.
25-0470 Paying		Film/TV	Dispute: Video Production Nonpayment 25-0470 Client is filmmaker and photographer who creates multimedia content for corporate clients. Client completed several videos under an agreement for services, and then was terminated in violation of the agreement. Client needs assistance to evaluate a claim for the remaining balance, and to send a demand letter for payment. Client is just over the pro-bono threshold and is seeking a reduced rate representation.
25-0042 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Disputes: Sculpture, Visual Arts 25-0042 Client is a NFP cultural center which hosted a group of artists for an exhibition in 2022. Client paid to purchase the works created for this exhibition. One of the artists claims that the engagement was only for a loan of the works, and is now demanding their return. Client needs assistance to evaluate and respond to the artist attorney's demand letter and negotiate a resolution.
25-0039 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Visual Arts 25-0039 Client is a local artist and painter who conducted a revenue sharing exhibition with a successful local gallery. The gallery refused to pay certain amounts in breach of the agreement. Client filed a small claims court action against gallery. Gallery is threatening client, and continues to display client's works as marketing for their business. Client needs assistance to evaluate and take legal action to enforce contract and infringement issues.

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25-0008 Pro Bono		Film/TV	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		Theater	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.
24-1239 Pro Bono		Literature	Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Literature 24-1239 Client is an author with several successful titles. Client recently discovered that many titles have been uploaded to digital book rental and archiving services, which are collecting fees and donations for access to Client books, with no consent or royalty streams. Large publishers have been successful in suing these companies for similar acts. Client would like to evaluate a cause of action to recover lost revenue from these sources.
24-1193 Pro Bono			Evaluation: Copyright Protection 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.
24-1190 Pro Bono		Music	Evaluation: Copyright Infringement: Music 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.
24-1168 Pro Bono			Dispute: Trademark Infringement 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.
24-1129 Pro Bono			Dispute: Breach of Contract: Theater 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.

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24-1096 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Dispute: improper charge for service 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.
24-1078 Pro Bono		Music	Evaluation: Accounting: Music 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.
24-1071 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Dispute: Nonprofit Governance 24-1071 Client is a Nonprofit print studio. The founder and former board member obtained and SBA loan on behalf of the organization. Client needs assistance to compel cooperation with SBA to manage and pay the loan.
24-1065 Pro Bono		Music	Dispute: Collection: Music 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.
24-1059 Pro Bono		Product Design	Litigation: Real Estate: Zoning 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.

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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>
24-1045 Pro Bono			<p>Start-up: Performing Arts</p> <p>24-1045 Client is an existing NFP Youth Theater Dance and Performance Academy, and would like to provide services to its students which are typically performed by a talent agency. In order to support this endeavor and establish credibility within commercial talent community, client will serve as a talent agency with paid commissions. Client would like assistance to determine if the NFP can register and operate as a talent agency, or if not, to form a separate business entity.</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			<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			<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>
24-0903 Pro Bono			<p>Nonprofit: Planned Giving: Music</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0884 Pro Bono			<p>Dispute: Collection: Visual Arts</p> <p>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.</p>

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24-0841 Pro Bono			<p>Real Estate: Zoning Variation: Theater</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0833 Pro Bono			<p>Dispute: Condominium Association: Theater</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0825 Pro Bono			<p>Real Estate: Commercial Lease: Music</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0819 Pro Bono			<p>Evaluation: Copyright Reversion: Film/TV</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0789 Pro Bono		Literature	<p>Dispute: Publishing Account Access: Literature</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0652 Pro Bono		Film/TV	<p>Contract Drafting/Negotiation: Film</p> <p>24-0652 Client is a filmmaker who co-produced a film with a nonprofit production company. Client terminated the co-production agreement, and the organization has threatened legal action. Client needs assistance to evaluate rights in the film and defend against legal action for breach of contract.</p>

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24-0637 Pro Bono			<p>Dispute: Visual Artists Rights Act: Mosaic</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0617 Pro Bono			<p>Content Clearance: Attorney Opinion Letter: Film</p> <p>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.</p>
23-1115 Pro Bono		Music	<p>Dispute: Enforcement of Judgement: Music</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0392 Pro Bono		Film/TV	<p>Start-up: Film</p> <p>24-0392 Filmmaker developing a documentary about diaspora and Black communities in Chicago needs counsel to provide general start-up advice, assist with LLC formation, and develop standard contracts.</p>
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			<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>

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24-0308 Pro Bono		Theater	Content Clearance: Grand Rights: Theater 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.