



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

- Any -

- Any -

Case #	Legal Category	Arts Category	Description
24-1149 Pro Bono		Non-Profit	Nonprofit: Formation/Maintenance: Visual Art 24-1149 Client is a nonprofit association of individuals and entities involved with museum and cultural institution exhibitions. They are in the process of becoming a 501c3, and need assistance in reviewing and possibly revising drafted Bylaws.
24-1144 Pro Bono		Literature	Regulatory Compliance 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.
24-1129 Pro Bono		Theater	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.
24-1113 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Start-up: Visual Arts 24-1113 Client is a graphic artist, and has a business selling various physical prints of his designs. He would like advice about entity formation and copyright protection for his works.
24-1094 Pro Bono		Radio/Voice	Contract Drafting: Content License 24-1094 Client intends to produce inspirational audio works for use in bereavement and ministry. Client needs assistance drafting content licenses for underlying works, and voice actor agreements.
24-1091 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Contract Review: Visual Arts 24-1091 Client is a Culture and Arts center for Native American cultural arts. A nearby Forest Preserve has offered to display client owned Bison, and client would like an attorney to review an agreement capturing this relationship.
24-1086 Pro Bono		Acting/Modeling, Film/TV, Performance Art	Contract Review 24-1086 Client is a model and actress and needs assistance reviewing an agreement for a completed gig, as well as an exclusive agency agreement for work going forward.

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24-1081 Pro Bono		Theater	<p>Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Literature</p> <p>24-1081 Playwright Client staged readings of a play about the struggles of a Venezuelan migrant. An individual at a staged reading created a video recording of the play and provided it to the subject migrant. Client needs assistance to obtain a release from the subject of the play, and restrain the use of this video recording in exploitation of Client's intellectual property.</p>
24-1078 Pro Bono		Music	<p>Contract Drafting: Music License</p> <p>24-1078 Client represents the estate of a well known deceased gospel artist. Client needs assistance to draft a composition synchronization license on behalf of the estate, to an Australian film producer.</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>
24-1069 Pro Bono		Theater	<p>Dispute: Defamation</p> <p>24-1069 Client is the former artistic director and ensemble member at a local 501c3 theater company. Client claims that the board chair publicly alleged theft and impropriety, resulting in client's resignation and damaged reputation. Client would like to evaluate a claim for defamation against the board chair.</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>
24-1059 Paying		Product Design	<p>Litigation: Real Estate: Zoning</p> <p>24-1059 Artist's home of 27 years in Bucktown is set back 60 feet from the street. Several developers have attempted to build on a vacant lot next door, with little to no setback from the street. Client has been successful at several levels to prevent this intrusive development, but recently the zoning board approved a proposed development which is inconsistent with precedent, and widely considered to be a bad ruling. Client needs a litigator to file an appeal in Cook County Circuit Court of this Zoning Board of Appeals Appeal decision (Administrative review). Attorney would work in tandem with current Zoning lawyer, Amy Kurson. The 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>

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24-1040 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Dispute: Entity Dissolution 24-1040 Client is co-owner of an art gallery and parent LLC. The other co-owner is demanding a dissolution and buyout. Client needs assistance to evaluate rights and obligations with regard to the other party and entity articles.
24-1000 Pro Bono		Literature	Visa/Immigration: Literature 24-1000 Writer, music journalist, and stand-up comedian needs counsel to assist her in obtaining a EB-1 Visa.
24-0980 Pro Bono		Non-Profit	Contract Drafting: Fiscal Sponsorship: Museum 24-0980 Nonprofit consortium of cultural heritage museums, centers and historical societies in the Chicago area is planning to serve as a fiscal sponsor for one of their member organizations. They need counsel to draft a fiscal sponsorship agreement.
24-0976 Pro Bono		Visual Art	Dispute: Real Estate: Visual Art 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.
24-0968 Pro Bono		Film/TV	Copyright and Contract review 24-0968 Client needs attorney review and possible amendment to a contract with the writer of a script to be used in client's movie.
24-0966 Pro Bono		Theater	Evaluation: Wrongful Termination: Film 24-0966 Former arts nonprofit employee was recently terminated by her employer. The termination came after she submitted a letter to the board complaining of a toxic work environment, and she needs counsel to evaluate a claim for wrongful termination.
24-0955 Pro Bono		Film/TV	Evaluation: Chain of Title: Film 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.
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.

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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.
24-0877 Pro Bono		Music	Content Clearance: Music 24-0877 College acapella group focused on fusion Bollywood songs regularly records their arrangements/mashups for distribution with a DIY distributor. They have recently received a number of copyright strikes on these recordings and need counsel to help resolve the strikes and advise on the required clearance process.
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.

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24-0825 Pro Bono		Music	<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		Film/TV	<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>
24-0675 Pro Bono		Visual Art	<p>Contract Drafting: Commission/Sale Contracts: Visual Art</p> <p>24-0675 Visual artist who creates eclectic surreal art needs counsel to draft several standard contracts for their practice - a contract for the sale of art, a commissioned work agreement, and a contract for the sale of an NFT.</p>
24-0656 Pro Bono		Visual Art	<p>Business Licensing Violation Defense: Visual Arts/Music</p> <p>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.</p>
24-0652 Pro Bono		Film/TV	<p>Contract Drafting/Negotiation: Film</p> <p>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.</p>

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24-0637 Pro Bono		Visual Art	<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		Film/TV	<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>
24-0475 Pro Bono		Literature	<p>Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Literature</p> <p>24-0475 Scientist and author was developing a book project with another scientist. They presented on the topic at a conference together, and had a contract with a publisher to produce the book. The other scientist pulled out of the book project with the author after four months of work, but the author recently discovered that the other scientist is publishing a book on the same topic, and featuring many of the same chapter titles, as the initial book project. Author suspects that the upcoming book includes content that she authored. She needs counsel to help evaluate her rights and options to protect, or be properly compensated for, her work.</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>

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24-0178 Pro Bono		Visual Art	<p>Dispute: Collection: Visual Arts</p> <p>24-0178 Client was hired to serve as a guest curator for an exhibition at a municipal cultural center. There was no formal contract. Prior to the opening of the exhibition, the artist fired client. Client submitted an invoice for the completed work, but neither the cultural center nor the artist have paid. Representatives of the cultural center have expressed willingness to resolve the issue and arrange for payment, but have so far failed to provide concrete terms or a timeline. Client needs counsel to draft a demand letter and help her obtain the amounts owed.</p>
23-1097 Pro Bono		Visual Art	<p>Evaluation: Employment: Visual Art</p> <p>23-1097 Visual artist recently resigned from her day job due to circumstances she believes comprise sexual harassment. Prior to resignation, she reported to HR, which told her that their policy would require her to continue working with the alleged harasser while an investigation occurred. The alleged harasser would be informed of the complaint, but his supervisors would not be notified until the investigation was completed. Artist felt that this process did not provide her with sufficient protection and resigned. No investigation occurred. Artist needs counsel to help evaluate a claim for sexual harassment or constructive discharge. Artist also needs counsel to help evaluate her claim to unemployment benefits.</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>
24-0313 Pro Bono		Performance Art	<p>Dispute: Workplace Harassment</p> <p>23-0313 Actor recently filed a complaint with the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations after resigning from his day job due to a number of disrespectful and hostile workplace incidents. Actor needs counsel to represent him in the ongoing proceedings.</p>

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24-0257 Pro Bono		Theater	<p>Evaluation: Collection: Theater</p> <p>24-0257 Nonprofit theater company recently purchased a building. The previous owner owed taxes on the space and sent a check to cover this amount to previous pro bono counsel for the nonprofit. Counsel sent the check to the nonprofit via a shipping service. The check seems to have been delivered to the wrong address and someone cashed the check. Theater company needs counsel to help evaluate their options and, if possible, recover the funds.</p>