



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
24-1235 Paying			Employment: Severance Agreement Review 24-1235 Client was terminated as an executive at a local theater company, and presented with a severance agreement. Client needs assistance to evaluate the terms of separation and the ability to negotiate an alternative.
24-1233 Pro Bono			Dispute: Copyright Infringement, Film 24-1233 Client is a television and film producer who produced 28 interviews of zoo and aquarium professionals over the course of many years. She initially gave permission to another individual to use the interviews, but later rescinded that permission and now the other individual refuses to remove videos from a website and Youtube. Client would like to either negotiate a license fee, or send a cease and desist letter and evaluate a cause of action.
24-1218 Pro Bono			Business Startup: Contract Drafting 24-1218 Client is a musician, and has invented an innovative new instrument and obtained a patent. Client needs assistance with an NDA, independent contractor and/or work for hire agreements as they assemble a team to begin manufacturing.
24-1211 Pro Bono			Entity Formation 24-1211 Clients are two filmmakers who would like to form an LLC to produce films and conduct a film festival. Client would also like to evaluate the ability to register a trademark in their film festival name.
24-1205 Pro Bono			Contract Drafting: Music 24-1205 Client is a freelance music producer and composer. He would like assistance to draft a template agreement to use with his clients.
24-1202 Pro Bono			Trademark Registration: Digital Media 24-1202 Client is a digital media company covering black culture and arts in Chicago. Client would like to evaluate the ability to trademark its name and/or logo.
24-1196 Pro Bono			Dispute: Music Royalties 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.

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24-1193 Pro Bono		Literature	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.
24-1145 Paying			Copyright Protection and Evaluation: Book Publishing 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.
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.
24-1140 Pro Bono		Music	Evaluation: Music Agreement Enforcement 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.
24-1131 Pro Bono			Nonprofit: Formation/Maintenance: Visual Art 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.
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.
24-1096 Pro Bono			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.

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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 Paying		Product Design	Litigation: Real Estate: Zoning 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.
24-1047 Pro Bono		Music	Contract Drafting: Music 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.
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.
24-0997 Pro Bono			Copyright and Trademark Protection 24-0997- Client, social justice nfp theatre, seeks assistance in obtaining copyright and trademark protection for company name and other IP protectible assets.

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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.
24-0955 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.
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.

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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>
24-0656 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>
24-0483 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>
24-0178 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>

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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>
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>