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NEW YORK BAR FOUNDATION LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO ASSIST NEW YORKERS WITH LEGAL ISSUES RESULTING FROM COVID-19

As COVID-19 continues to impact the lives and livelihoods New York State residents, The New York Bar Foundation – the charitable arm of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) – has established a COVID-19 legal relief fund and launched a campaign to assist people throughout New York State with urgent legal needs arising from this crisis.

"Legal services providers across New York State will have tremendous needs to fill as the many medical, economic and other impacts of COVID-19 proliferate," said Foundation President Lesley Rosenthal. "The foundation is diligently identifying these legal needs and determining where best to dispatch the funds we raise to address them as quickly as possible."

"Both the New York State Bar Association and the Bar Foundation are doing the public good and assisting lawyers meet the challenges presented by this unprecedented public health crisis," said NYSBA President Hank Greenberg. "Together, we can help ensure that attorneys across the state have the resources and assistance they need, and that no one in our state is denied access to legal representation."

Rosenthal noted the wide range of potential areas of need:

- At a time when their services are in great demand, New York’s already overburdened legal services organizations are struggling to continue operations and avoid furloughing their employees.
- Consumer debt is mounting due to unmanageable medical bills, funeral expenses and other unexpected expenditures.
- Domestic violence victims and abused LGBTQ+ youth have no alternatives to sheltering in place with their abusers.
- Small businesses and law firms require help to access federal loans and other relief so that they and their employees can continue to have a livelihood.
The New York Bar Foundation is poised to help, just as it has when faced with other crises. Within weeks of the wave of migrant child separations in 2018 and Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the foundation raised tens of thousands of dollars to provide urgent legal assistance.

“People want to help in times of crisis,” Rosenthal added. “The New York Bar Foundation is an experienced steward of funds and we stand ready to direct resources to organizations that can have the largest impact.”

The New York State Bar Association has also launched a number of initiatives to address the impacts of the coronavirus public health crisis on lawyers and the legal community. The association created an emergency COVID-19 Task Force to Assist Solo Practitioners and Small Firms. In partnership with the state court system, NYSBA also established a COVID-19 Recovery Task Force to oversee the pro bono network of lawyers who will be assisting New Yorkers suffering from the pandemic in dealing with legal issues ranging from applying for unemployment benefits to eviction and housing discrimination. In addition, NYSBA has transformed its website and social media accounts into hubs of legal information regarding the COVID-19 crisis. Learn more at: https://nysba.org/coronavirus

Donors may support the campaign by visiting https://givetnybf.swell.gives/ or sending a check to The New York Bar Foundation, 1 Elk Street, Albany, NY 12207.

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**About The New York Bar Foundation**
The New York Bar Foundation is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization that is the charitable arm of the New York State Bar Association. It is governed by a board of directors that includes distinguished lawyers from across the New York state. Through its grant program, the foundation supports the law-related programs of local legal services agencies, nonprofits, bar associations and other organizations throughout New York State.

**About the New York State Bar Association**
The New York State Bar Association is the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation. Since 1876, the Association has helped shape the development of law, educated and informed the legal profession and the public, and championed the rights of New Yorkers through advocacy and guidance in our communities.