

## ABOUT PHILADELPHIA LAWWORKS

Philadelphia LawWorks is a community economic development program that serves Philadelphia communities. By helping non-profits, small businesses, and homeowners, LawWorks provides Philadelphia residents with the tools they need to revitalize their communities. When these clients receive free legal assistance, more of their time and resources can be used to improve Philadelphia neighborhoods.

Philadelphia LawWorks is a project of Philadelphia VIP (Volunteers for the Indigent Program). Philadelphia VIP is a nonprofit organization founded in 1981 to provide low-income individuals equal access to the civil legal system by referring them to lawyers willing to take their cases on a pro bono basis. Philadelphia LawWorks was created in 2002, when the Philadelphia Bar Association, Philadelphia VIP, Community Legal Services, Regional Housing Legal Services and other local public interest programs collaborated to better address the transactional legal needs of the Philadelphia community and provide business lawyers with an opportunity to serve that community.

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a project of Philadelphia VIP

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promoting community  
economic development

## WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

### ***Referrals for Free Legal Services***

Philadelphia LawWorks refers eligible community organizations and small businesses to lawyers who have agreed to provide pro bono services. Organizations and small businesses can apply through our website or by contacting us for an application.

Philadelphia LawWorks also works with low-income Philadelphians who have a legal right to a home, but not legal title (for example, the person who sold them the home never recorded a deed or the title is in a deceased relative's name). People who need this type of assistance should contact Community Legal Services (215-981-3700), Philadelphia Legal Assistance (215-981-3800), or SeniorLAW Center (215-988-1244, ages 60+). These organizations refer clients to Philadelphia LawWorks.

### ***Community Education***

Philadelphia LawWorks holds seminars, taught by volunteer attorneys, on topics relevant to community organizations, small businesses, and homeowners. We also provide legal guides on these topics. Please call or check our website for more details.

## WHY DO I NEED AN ATTORNEY?

### ***Community Groups and Small Businesses***

- Incorporating as a legal entity
- Attaining tax-exempt/501(c)(3) status (for community groups) and complying with ongoing legal requirements
- Complying with federal, state, and local taxes
- Obtaining the necessary city and state licenses and permits
- Drafting employee handbooks
- Landlord/tenant issues and reviewing commercial leases
- Purchasing/selling real estate
- Zoning issues
- Protecting trademarks and copyrights
- Preparing/reviewing contracts

### ***Homeowners***

Why do I need legal title to my house?

If you live in a house that you don't have legal title to, you will have difficulty:

- getting homeowner's insurance;
- negotiating back real estate taxes and utilities with the city;
- getting utility discounts;
- qualifying for City of Philadelphia Repair and Weatherization grants;
- giving the property away or leaving it to someone in a will;
- obtaining a mortgage; or
- selling the property.

## HOW CAN I HELP?

### ***Attorneys***

**Take a Case**—Attorneys interested in volunteering can contact us for a list of available matters.

**Attend a CLE**—Philadelphia LawWorks provides free training for volunteer attorneys who commit to taking a pro bono case.

**Teach a Seminar**—Attorneys can volunteer to teach a variety of legal topics to groups of small business owners, community organizations or homeowners.

**Be a Mentor**—Experienced business, tax, probate, and real estate attorneys are needed to be mentors to other volunteers.

### ***Law Students***

**Volunteer in our Office**—Law students interview clients, research legal issues, and monitor referred cases.

**Attend a Clinic**—Philadelphia LawWorks holds clinics where law students interview potential clients.

**Research & Write a Legal Guide**—Law students can volunteer to create one of the legal guides that help our clients.