

This initiative connects immigrant survivors of domestic violence who are or were married to their abusers with pro bono attorneys to obtain legal status in the United States. Self-petitions under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)â€”commonly called “VAWA Self-Petitions”â€”are available to immigrants who are or were married to abusers who are United States Citizens. Pro bono attorneys prepare VAWA self-petitions for LSNYC clients from start to finish. Although the number of hours varies by case, each should require no more than 40 hours of time. Time spent preparing the application can be spread out over several months. Note that many of these clients speak Spanish or another language, and may require an interpreter.

Scope of work for pro bono volunteers includes:

- a. Meet with the client and confer with LSNYC attorneys about the contours of the case.
- b. Work with client to identify and locate relevant supporting documents and other evidence of abuse.
- c. Prepare client affidavit and relevant USCIS forms. Note that client affidavit preparation can take several meetings, and be both emotional and draining because of the history of violence.
- d. Prepare additional any relevant subsidiary forms, like work authorization, or application for adjustment of status/lawful residency.
- e. Help client obtain and submit relevant biographical information.
- f. Respond to any requests for additional information from USCIS.
- g. Prepare client for interview with USCIS.
- h. Attend interview with client.

Law firms, corporations, law firm lawyers, and in-house counsel who are interested in partnering with LSNYC are encouraged to reach out to learn more. Please contact Adam J. Heintz, Director of Pro Bono Services, at 646-442-3582 or aheintz@legalservicesnyc.org.

[Volunteer Application](#)