



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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Legal Category Arts Category

- Any - - Any -

Case #	Legal Category	Arts Category	Description
24-0431 Pro Bono	Business Startup/Corporate, Visa and Immigration	Film/TV, Visual Art	Visa/Immigration: Visual Arts 24-0431 Photographer and illustrator is finishing up her BFA program at a local arts school and needs counsel to assist her in obtaining a O1B Visa.
24-0466 Pro Bono	Visa and Immigration	Performance Art, Visual Art	Visa/Immigration: Visual Arts 24-0466 International visual artist recently completed a graduate program in Art, Culture, and Technology and is currently working for a Chicago arts organization on an OPT. The OPT runs through August 2024 and the artist needs counsel help determine the most appropriate visa going forward (O1/H1B) and, if appropriate, assist with the application.
24-0448 Pro Bono	Trademark Protection, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Arts Education, Design/Graphic Design, Music, Performance Art, Visual Art	Trademark Registration: Music/Performing Arts 24-0448 Start-up event production company needs counsel to assist with trademark registration for a word mark.
24-0476 Pro Bono	Trademark Protection	Music	Trademark Registration: Music 24-0476 Musician and performer needs counsel to assist with trademark registration for their stage name.
24-0291 Pro Bono	Trademark Protection	Design/Graphic Design, Other, Visual Art	Trademark Registration: Fashion 24-0291 Fashion designer who was awarded a patent for one of her clothing items needs help with trademark registration.
24-0441 Pro Bono	Business Startup/Corporate, Contracts	Film/TV	Start-up: Visual Arts 24-0441 Graphic designer and illustrator has been operating full-time as a sole proprietor and needs counsel to provide general start-up advice and help with LLC formation.
24-0193 Paying	Landlord-Tenant, Not for Profit Advice	Other, Visual Art	Start-up: Nonprofit Art Space Rental: Multidisciplinary Art 24-0193 Owner of newly renovated arts building is planning to rent space to two arts nonprofits with which he and his spouse have a previous affiliation. He needs counsel to help structure the business and contractual relationships to avoid conflicts of interest.
24-0492 Pro Bono	Business Startup/Corporate, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Film/TV	Start-up: Film 24-0492 Filmmaker is producing a short film for their Master's thesis and are interested in forming a production company for the film. They need counsel to provide general start-up advice, help with choice of entity, and assist with entity formation.

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24-0538 Pro Bono	Not for Profit Advice	Film/TV, Radio/Voice	Public Corporation: Radio & Television 24-0438 Organization that supports public radio and television stations throughout Illinois needs counsel to advise on governance and fundraising best practices. They are organized as a public corporation and need assistance devising best practices for amending bylaws and evaluating their ability to accept donations and foundation grants.
24-0241 Pro Bono	Contracts, Not for Profit Advice	Music, Performance Art	Nonprofit: Reinstate Tax-Exempt Status: Music 24-0241 Local symphony orchestra is in the process of reinstating their tax-exempt status after an incident involving the financial malfeasance of the former executive director. The organization needs counsel to assist with the reinstatement of their tax-exempt status and evaluate their options going forward.
24-0197 Pro Bono	Business Startup/Corporate, Other, Not for Profit Advice	Non-Profit, Other, Visual Art	Nonprofit: Reincorporation and Tax-exemption: Visual Arts 24-0197 Longstanding social organization of weavers was formally incorporated in 1949 and received their tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(7) organization shortly thereafter. At some point in their history, their corporate status and related tax-exemption were lost. The organization is interested in regaining their corporate structure and tax exempt status and need counsel to advise as to the best course of action moving forward.
23-1175 Pro Bono	Not for Profit Advice	Theater	Nonprofit: Foundation Classification: Theater 23-1175 Nonprofit theatre company currently operating as a private foundation is seeking to switch to a public charity classification. They need counsel to assist with this transition.
24-0465 Pro Bono	Business Startup/Corporate, Trademark Protection	Film/TV, Music	Nonprofit: Covert LLC to NFP 24-0465 Podcast and media production company is currently operating as an LLC is interested in converting the entity into a nonprofit organization. They need counsel to advise on this transition and, if appropriate, assist with the reorganization.
23-1172 Pro Bono	Visa and Immigration	Visual Art	Immigration: Artist Visa: Visual Arts 23-1172 Visual artist focused on sculpture and jewelry design from China recently completed a graduate program and is currently working on an OPT. Artist needs counsel to advise on the process of obtaining an artist visa (O-1) or H1B visa.
24-0211 Pro Bono	Visa and Immigration	Visual Art	Immigration: Artist Visa: Visual Arts 24-0211 Contemporary artist currently completing a teaching fellowship at a local art school needs counsel to advise on the process of obtaining an artist visa (O-1).
24-0230 Pro Bono	Visa and Immigration	Film/TV, Theater	Immigration: Artist Visa: Theater 24-0230 Theater artist and performer needs counsel to advise on the process of obtaining an artist visa (O-1).

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24-0263 Pro Bono	Visa and Immigration	Film/TV	Immigration: Artist Visa: Film 24-263 Documentary filmmaker needs counsel to advise on the process of obtaining an artist visa (O-1).
24-0219 Pro Bono	Contracts, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Literature	Evaluation: Unauthorized Attribution: Literature 24-0219 Translator was engaged to translate a book written by a friend. There was no formal contract with the publisher or the author. The publisher paid Translator as agreed. However, towards the end of the project, she discovered significant typos that were not addressed by the publisher's editor as well as missing passages that had been included in her submitted translation. After a series of disagreements with the publisher about how to proceed with the editing/proofreading process, Translator walked away from the project and requested that the final translation not be attributed to her. The translated book was released this year and includes attributions to Translator, despite her requests. She needs counsel to evaluate her right to recourse and, if appropriate, issue a cease and desist letter.
24-0304 Pro Bono	Employment, Personal Injury/Damage to Property	Performance Art, Theater	Evaluation: Personal Injury Defense: Theater 24-0304 Small nonprofit theater company hires actors as independent contractors to perform in their productions. An actor was recently injured during a performance. There was no contract between the theater and the actor. The theater has been contacted by counsel for the actor regarding a potential Workers Compensation claim. The theater does not maintain Workers Compensation coverage because they do not have employees. They need counsel to help evaluate their exposure and assist with communications with the actor's attorney.
24-0415 Paying	Copyright Infringement, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Other	Evaluation: Fair Use Assessment: Film/TV 24-0415 Client maintains a YouTube channel that highlights clips and trivia questions involving black history and culture from a well known game show. They recently received a DMCA takedown notice from the rightsholder. They need counsel to provide a fair use assessment and advise on the best course of action.
23-1097 Pro Bono	Employment	Visual Art	Evaluation: Employment: Visual Art 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.

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23-1139 Pro Bono	Employment, Disputes	Theater	Evaluation: Employment Discrimination: Theater 23-1139 Former costume shop supervisor at a large university recently resigned due to conduct that they believe constitutes a hostile work environment based on their racial identity. They need counsel to help evaluate a claim for constructive discharge or other viable form of recourse.
23-0824 Pro Bono	Personal Injury/Damage to Property	Photography, Visual Art	Evaluation: Destruction of Property: Photography 23-0824 Fine art photographer retired from her arts practice in 2016, and shortly after rented a storage locker to store some of her framed art prints. In late 2022, an overhead pipe burst that flooded the photographer's storage unit and destroyed the artwork. Her insurance provider is refusing to cover the replacement costs of the photos. Photographer needs counsel to evaluate a claim for reimbursement and, if appropriate, help negotiate with the insurance provider.
24-0105 Pro Bono	Other, Rights of Privacy and Publicity	Film/TV	Evaluation: Defamation: Film/TV 24-0105 Filmmaker and content creator needs counsel to help evaluate a claim for defamation over statements published by former colleagues on a well-known user-generated content website.
24-0221 Pro Bono	Rights of Privacy and Publicity, Disputes	Film/TV	Evaluation: Defamation: Film/TV 24-0221 Content creator needs counsel to help evaluate a claim for defamation over statements published by a former colleague on a well-known user-generated content website.
24-0063 Pro Bono	Copyright Infringement, Employment	Film/TV	Evaluation: Copyright Ownership: Visual Arts 24-0063 Graphic designer worked on various projects for a single company as both a W-2 and 1099 worker. They have recently been let go and the company intends to move forward with work he created as part of the 1099 arrangement. He needs counsel to help evaluate and, if appropriate, enforce his rights in the work he created throughout his work for this company.
24-0377 Pro Bono	Copyright Infringement, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Design/Graphic Design, Other, Visual Art	Evaluation: Copyright Infringement: Visual Art 24-0377 Visual artist created an illustration featuring a "lele doll" and a local book store owner licensed it for use on a poster in the book store. Later, the book store owner began selling a physical doll based on the artist's illustration. Artist needs counsel to evaluate a claim for copyright infringement.
23-1127 Pro Bono	Business Startup/Corporate, Disputes	Music	Evaluation: Conversion Defense: Music 23-1127 Musician operates a recording studio as a sole proprietorship. During the start-up phase of the business, a family member purchased several pieces of equipment and contributed them to the recording studio. There is no formal agreement. Over the last few years, Musician has sold these pieces of equipment to make ends meet. Family member recently discovered the sale and is demanding return of the equipment or repayment. Musician needs counsel to help evaluate his exposure.

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24-0257 Pro Bono	Other, Not for Profit Advice	Theater	Evaluation: Collection: Theater 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.
23-1102 Pro Bono	Contracts, Disputes	Music, Performance Art	Evaluation: Artist-in-Residence Agreement: Music 23-1102 Opera performer was contracted as an artist-in-residence of an opera company to develop a series of creative projects. Agreement expired in June 2023, and the opera company indicated to the performer that they planned to renew the agreement. Performer continued to work on planning and preparation for the series, in communication with the opera company, for a period of several months before the opera company notified her that they would not be continuing the program. Performer needs counsel to help evaluate a claim for compensation or other appropriate recourse.
24-0312 Pro Bono	Trademark Protection, Estates	Literature, Visual Art	Estate Planning: Visual Art/Literature 24-0312 Artist and writer needs counsel to help develop an estate plan that addresses her artistic and literary legacy.
24-0311 Pro Bono	Employment, Trademark Protection	Dance, Performance Art	Employment Law: Dance 24-0311 Dance and fitness entrepreneur is in the process of expanding her business and needs counsel to provide general employment law advice and reassess the company's employee handbook and policies.
24-0313 Pro Bono	Employment, Disputes	Performance Art	Dispute: Workplace Harassment 23-0216 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.
24-0272 Pro Bono	Trademark Infringement	Visual Art	Dispute: Trademark Infringement Defense: Film 24-0272 Visual artist is being sued for trademark infringement in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois regarding online marketing and sales of T-shirts featuring a well-known trademark. It appears that both parties are interested in settlement. Artist needs counsel to evaluate his potential liability and help negotiate a settlement.
24-0284	Landlord-Tenant	Film/TV, Literature	Dispute: Housing: Film/TV 24-0284 Early last year, Actor ordered to pay outstanding condo assessment costs in a lawsuit filed by the homeowners association. She recently filed a complaint against the homeowners association pro se alleging harassment, breach of fiduciary duties, and other claims. She needs counsel to help evaluate her claim and, if appropriate, representation in the pending suit.

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23-1115 Pro Bono	Contracts, Disputes	Music	Dispute: Enforcement of Judgement: Music 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.
23-1084 Pro Bono	Disputes	Dance	Dispute: Defamation: Dance 23-1084 Founder and Artistic Director of a nonprofit dance company has become the subject of anonymous, disparaging, and untrue statements made via social media and email correspondence. They need counsel to review their planned public response to the statements, help evaluate a claim for defamation, and draft a cease-and-desist letter.
23-0629 Pro Bono	Personal Injury/Damage to Property	Music	Dispute: Damage to Property: Music 23-0629 Jazz musician's principal instrument was damaged by a patron of a venue at which they were performing. The patron verbally committed to paying for the damage, but has failed to respond to the musician's subsequent outreach. Musician needs counsel to help evaluate her options and assist with recovery of the repair costs.
24-0421 Paying	Copyright Infringement	Design/Graphic Design, Visual Art	Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Visual Arts 24-0421 Graphic design company used several illustrations of fish created by someone else on a series of outdoor signs ordered by non-profit organizations. They obtained the illustrations through a package of assets identified as free to use by a third party. In 2022, they were contacted by counsel for the rightsholder of the illustrations, notifying them of the infringement and requesting information on the profits earned from the use. They responded, and counsel for the rightsholder never got back to them with a demand. Recently, they received notice that a CCB claim had been filed. They are willing to settle with the rightsholder, and they need counsel to help facilitate and negotiate the settlement.
24-0333 Pro Bono	Copyright Infringement	Other	Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Photography 24-0333 Photographer took a photograph on site at a local cemetery. An individual that maintains a research website regarding the cemetery has posted and made the photograph available for download without the photographer's permission. Photographer needs counsel to help enforce a claim for copyright infringement. Previous LCA counsel attempted to resolve this matter with a cease-and-desist letter, but the alleged infringer has not responded to taken down the photograph.

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24-0348 Pro Bono	Copyright Infringement	Visual Art	<p>Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Photography</p> <p>24-0348 Commercial photographer was hired to photograph the interior of a hotel in Nashville. Photographer retained copyright ownership and the contract with the hiring party specified that the photographs were not to be shared with third parties without permission. Photographer recently discovered that the design firm that worked on the space (and was not a party to the contract) has shared Photographer's photographs on social media without permission. Photographer contacted the design firm and requested compensation for the unlicensed use of the photographs, but the design firm has not responded. Photographer needs counsel to evaluate a claim for copyright infringement and, if appropriate, help recover amounts owed.</p>
24-0349 Contingent Fee (PB Eligible)	Copyright Infringement	Visual Art	<p>Dispute: Copyright Infringement: Photography</p> <p>24-0348 Commercial photographer was hired to photograph the interior and exterior of a hotel in Chicago. Photographer retained copyright ownership and the contract with the hotel specified that the photographs were not to be shared with third parties without permission. Photographer later contracted with the lighting design firm that performed work on the space. Photographer recently discovered that an individual lighting designer that worked on the space (and was not a party to either contract) has started his own company and has shared eight of Photographer's photographs on the new company's website without permission. Photographer needs counsel to evaluate a claim for copyright infringement and, if appropriate, help recover amounts owed.</p>
24-0475 Pro Bono	Copyright Infringement, Disputes	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>

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24-0494 Paying	Copyright Infringement, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Music	Dispute: Copyright Claims: Music 24-0494 Musician was a member of a band for several years. As electronic musicians, the two members wrote and recorded music separately, then released albums compiling work created by each individual member. Musician has recently attempted to distribute some of these recordings through a DIY distributor, and the former band member has submitted seemingly frivolous DMCA notices. Musician is working with the distributor to resolve the issue, but Musician needs counsel to evaluate the scope of their rights and make sure they are able to distribute their work.
23-1168 Pro Bono	Disputes	Visual Art	Dispute: Consignment of Art: Visual Arts 23-1168 Visual artist created several works of art that were consigned to a furniture/decor store without a formal contract. The physical location of the store has since closed, and the artist has been unable to get in touch with the owner. He needs counsel to help recover the artwork or obtain compensation for any pieces that are no longer available.
24-0178 Pro Bono	Contracts, Disputes	Visual Art	Dispute: Collection: Visual Arts 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.
24-0370 Pro Bono	Disputes	Other	Dispute: Collection: Photography 24-0370 Photographer was hired by a personal injury law firm to take professional headshots. Photographer provided a price sheet before the shoot, and issued an invoice accordingly. Photographer provided the photos to the law firm, but they are now refusing to pay the full amount of the invoice. Photographer needs counsel to help recover the amounts owed.
24-0275 Pro Bono	Copyright Infringement, Trademark Infringement, Trademark Protection, Disputes, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Music	Dispute: Collection: Music Royalties 24-0275 Musician was a part of a rock/metal band that was active in the 00s. The band broke up in 2011 and Musician has not received any royalties in the interim. The lead singer, who administers the rights to the music, refuses all contact from Musician. He needs counsel to help evaluate a claim and, if appropriate, help recover any royalties.

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24-0552 Pro Bono	Disputes, Not for Profit Advice	Other	Dispute: Breach of Contract: Visual Arts 24-0552 Nonprofit museum entered into an agreement with an artist to produce a large number of sculptures from a cast created by the artist as part of large-scale collaborative art project. The project is underway, but has not been as profitable as the artist hoped, and some business/creative differences has arisen. The artist now wants to pull the museum's permission to use the artist's cast, and the museum needs counsel to advise as to their rights and responsibilities under the arrangement.
24-0204 Pro Bono	Contracts	Fashion	Dispute: Breach of Contract: Fashion 24-0204 Fashion designer hired a creative agency to develop their branding material. Designer paid a deposit and the first installment of the fee, but the creative agency did not complete the work and has stopped responding to inquiries. Designer needs counsel to help recover the amounts paid.
24-0269 Pro Bono	Disputes	Performance Art	Dispute: Breach of Contract Defense: Performance Art 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.
24-0482 Pro Bono	Business Startup/Corporate, Disputes	Visual Art	Corporate: Removal of Member: Visual Art 24-0482 Two members of a visual arts studio operating as an LLC are interested in removing the third member from the company due to failure to comply with their responsibilities to the company. The LLC does not have an operating agreement, though there is a business plan document where the parties agreed that all decisions would be made by a majority vote. They need counsel to advise on their rights and responsibilities, and assist with the removal of the third member of the LLC.
24-0548 Pro Bono	Employment, Disputes	Visual Art	Contract Review: Employment Separation Agreement: Visual Arts 24-0548 Client was recently terminated from their role as Executive Director of an arts center and needs counsel to help review the separation agreement and nondisclosure agreement provided by the former employer.

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24-0177 Pro Bono	Contracts, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Film/TV	Contract Review: Deed of Gift: Video 24-0177 Archival nonprofit organization is planning to transfer significant amount of digitized video files to a university library. They need counsel to review the deed of gift provided by the library and, if appropriate, help negotiate terms.
24-0459 Pro Bono	Contracts	Music	Contract Drafting: Session Musician Agreement: Music 24-0459 Producer has put together a team of session musicians to perform on a client artist's album. They need counsel to draft a standard session musician agreement to memorialize terms.
24-0472 Pro Bono	Rights of Privacy and Publicity	Literature	Content Review: Literature 24-0472 Author, a music student at a local university, needs counsel to assist with pre-publication review of a book that details their experience of reporting and recovery from grooming and sexual assault by a professor.
24-0308 Pro Bono	Contracts, Copyright Protection/Licensing	Theater	Content Clearance: Grand Rights: Theater 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.