



## Volunteer Spotlight: Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts - Nebraska

by Laurie Heer Dale and Carol Cleaver, Volunteer Lawyers Project



Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts-Nebraska (VLA-NE) is a program that connects artists and the creative community with lawyers dedicated to providing pro bono legal services. VLA-NE is just one of the support services Amplify Arts provides to fulfill its mission to support local artists and build capacity for the arts and cultures sector. The program pairs qualifying applicants with a volunteer lawyer to assist with resolution of a legal issue and provides access to legal resources, publications, and public programs that address arts-related legal issues.

Andrew “Andy” Saladino is the Executive Director of Amplify Arts, a nonprofit organization that supports artists with resources needed to thrive in their careers. The organization formed under the name Omaha Creative Institute in 2008. It changed its name to Amplify Arts in November 2018.

In his position, Andy recognized the various legal issues faced by artists, many lacking the financial resources to hire a lawyer. He started researching national pro bono programs for the arts and discovered programs in metropolitan cities like Denver, Kansas City, Minneapolis and New York. Andy was determined to bring a similar program to Nebraska. He mentioned his idea to a friend, who connected Andy with Omaha attorney Jason R. Thomas. Jason’s practice focuses on art and entertainment law, contract review, drafting, negotiations, small business and start-up law, and nonprofit organizations. Together, they developed VLA-NE, formally organized in May 2018.

### The Program

VLA-NE provides free services to qualifying artists who reside in Nebraska. The program is limited to assisting individuals, not organizations. Among its goals, VLA-NE seeks to educate artists about the support and knowledge a lawyer can provide for legal issues. Educational outreach includes services to help emerging artists and college students starting a career.

Services focus on three main areas: Connecting volunteer lawyers with individuals having an arts-related legal issue, workshops and programs on different arts-related legal issues, and free legal resources. Currently, services are available in Omaha. The program seeks to expand services to Lincoln within the next 1-2 years and eventually to all Nebraska residents.

Assistance is available only for matters that relate to the arts or an active arts practice.

Common legal issues include preparation and review of contracts, copyright issues, including fair use concerns, real estate disputes over studio space, etc. Representation is available in several practice areas, including bankruptcy, collections, contract, copyright, corporate, entertainment, First Amendment, insurance, labor and employment.

### Eligibility for Services

Services are available to Nebraska residents only. The applicant’s income must be no greater than 250% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines, with income adjustments for dependents. VLA-NE wants to ensure services are streamlined to people who need the services, and it evaluates need on a case-by-case basis. Income eligibility requirements assure lawyers and law firms that the program has established procedures to provide pro bono legal services only to those who lack the financial means to pay for legal counsel.

### Volunteers in the Network

The program is new and still recruiting volunteers. Presently, there are eight volunteers in the pro bono network. Since the program’s launch, volunteers have assisted with five cases. The range of program services provide lawyers interested in engaging in pro bono services for the arts several opportunities to do pro bono work.

### Interested in Volunteering

To learn more about volunteering for VLA-NE, contact Andy Saladino at [andy@amplifyarts.org](mailto:andy@amplifyarts.org) or (402) 982-4397.



# VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT

## VLP Welcomes New Staff

**Melissa Robinson**, Legal Administrative Specialist

The NSBA is pleased to announce the hiring of Melissa Robinson as the VLP Legal Administrative Specialist. Melissa joined VLP in February 2019. A Nebraska native, Melissa has always resided in Lincoln. She received a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Kaplan University and has worked as an administrative assistant at the Nebraska State Patrol where she utilized her process improvement skills to create efficiencies in application processes. Melissa is passionate about making access to the legal system a reality for all Nebraskans, regardless of income or other factors.



In her role as legal administrative specialist, Melissa is responsible for performing a broad range of project management and administrative duties in support of the VLP programs. Specifically, she assists with administering Nebraska Free Legal Answers, VLP Self-Help Centers, the VLP website and volunteer database and scheduling, tracking and recognizing volunteers. Melissa also responds to requests for general information from attorneys, the public and individuals seeking legal assistance.

Outside of work, Melissa enjoys spending time with her husband and two sons.

Attorneys interested in volunteering for VLP programs may contact Melissa at [volunteerlawyersproject@nevlp.org](mailto:volunteerlawyersproject@nevlp.org) or (402) 475-7091.

## VLP Collaborates with Legal Aid of Nebraska to Provide Legal Services to Disaster Victims

Nebraska families and communities have suffered mass destruction and devastation by the recent flooding. Thousands of Nebraskans have been affected. Many have lost their homes, property and livelihood. Access to legal services and resources is critical to recovery. Victims need your help now.

Disaster survivors who do not qualify for Legal Aid of Nebraska's services are being referred to VLP to have their cases placed with attorneys who have agreed to provide free legal assistance. Assistance may include telephone and in-person consultations, limited scope and extended representation. Survivors are also being referred to Nebraska Free Legal Answers.

Volunteer attorneys will receive online training and written resources on the issues they are likely to encounter and are covered by the VLP malpractice insurance policy. Please consider volunteering to take a case or respond to questions posted on Nebraska Free Legal Answers today.

## Pro Bono Cases

Case lists are available on the VLP website at [www.nevlp.org/pro-bono-cases](http://www.nevlp.org/pro-bono-cases). Cases are listed by county and practice area and updated regularly. A new Disaster Relief category has been added to aid in identifying victims who need your help. Simply click the case number to email your interest to VLP and to receive information to check for conflicts.

## Nebraska Free Legal Answers

Nebraska Free Legal Answers is a virtual limited advice clinic that allows volunteers to do pro bono online—anytime and anywhere there is Internet access. Attorneys select the questions to answer. Qualified Nebraska residents can post up to three different civil legal questions each year.

This program provides a convenient and rewarding way to do pro bono and greatly benefits all users, especially victims of the recent flooding. Additional legal categories have been added to identify users needing assistance with flood related issues; and, the income and asset ceilings have been increased to accommodate flood victims who, as a result of the mass devastation, are likely experiencing a temporary or permanent loss of financial means to pay for legal services.

Visit [www.NE.freelegalanswers.org](http://www.NE.freelegalanswers.org) to register and start doing online pro bono now.

## Self-Help Centers

A Self-Help Center is a free, walk-in legal information and resource center for low-income persons representing themselves in Nebraska courts. Volunteers answer general questions about the civil court process and court procedures, provide information and instructions for completing self-help court forms, and provide information about legal services for low-income persons. Self-Help Centers are in courthouses in Buffalo, Douglas, Hall, Kimball, Madison and Scotts Bluff counties. Visit the VLP website at [www.nevlp.org/self-help-center](http://www.nevlp.org/self-help-center) for more information and to register to volunteer.

## Upcoming Fundraising Event Annual Golf Fundraiser, Friday, June 14, Gothenburg

Every June, the Nebraska Lawyers Foundation hosts a golf tournament to raise money for VLP. It starts with lunch, driving range and four-person scramble followed by a reception and dinner. The next event is Friday, June 14, 2019, at Wild Horse Golf Club in Gothenburg. Visit the VLP website at [www.nevlp.org](http://www.nevlp.org) to register or contact Sam Clinch at (402) 475-7091 or [sclinch@nebar.com](mailto:sclinch@nebar.com) to register or for more information.

Lawyers may conveniently donate to VLP anytime by visiting the website at [www.nevlp.org](http://www.nevlp.org).



# VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT

## Pro Bono Pledge 2019

Join the Call to Action for all members of the Nebraska State Bar to renew a commitment to access to justice through pro bono service. The American Bar Association urges all lawyers to provide a minimum of 50 hours of pro bono service annually. The NSBA proudly recognizes the following lawyers and law firms that have signed the pledge for 2019. Visit the VLP website at [www.nevlp.org/pro-bono-pledge](http://www.nevlp.org/pro-bono-pledge) to show your commitment to pro bono in 2019.

## Lawyers

Quinn R. Eaton, Omaha  
Patrick M. Heng, North Platte  
Christopher M. Johnson, York  
Kevin P. Stanoshek, Texas

## Law Firms

Husch Blackwell LLP



## Pro Bono Legal Service Nebraska Free Legal Answers [www.NE.FreeLegalAnswers.org](http://www.NE.FreeLegalAnswers.org)

Convenient, rewarding, and impactful pro bono  
All lawyers—All practices\*

Answer questions posted by low-income residents

- No travel or training to do pro bono
- Pick questions you want to answer
- Volunteer names are not disclosed
- Malpractice insurance coverage
- Make justice happen—*today*

**Register today at [www.NE.FreeLegalAnswers.org](http://www.NE.FreeLegalAnswers.org)**

\*Active members of the Nebraska Bar; civil law questions only



**NEBRASKA**  
State Bar Association



NE Free Legal Answers is a website operated by the ABA and the NSBA Volunteer Lawyers Project  
635 South 14th St. #200, Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 475-7091



# VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT

## Pro Bono Partners

The success of the Volunteer Lawyers Project depends on its network of volunteers across the state. VLP extends its appreciation to the following pro bono partners who have provided pro bono services in VLP programs in 2019.

### Nebraska Free Legal Answers

Audrey A. Bellew,  
*North Platte*

Lindsay R. Belmont, *Omaha*

Larry W. Beucke, *Kearney*

Kristin M. Blankley, *Lincoln*

Angela L. Burmeister, *Omaha*

Joshua L. Christolear,  
*Syracuse*

Kelly R. Davis, *Omaha*

Carla J. DeVelder, *Omaha*

Quinn R. Eaton, *Omaha*

Timothy R. Engler, *Lincoln*

Kelsey L. Helget, *Hastings*

Christa B. Israel, *Lincoln*

Catherine M. Mahern,  
*Omaha*

Julia K. Palzer, *Omaha*

Zachary D. Petersen, *Omaha*

Sarah E. Preisinger, *Papillion*

Thomas D. Prickett,  
*Plattsmouth*

Kevin L. Ruser, *Lincoln*

Megan K. Spomer, *Omaha*

Rachael A. Smith, *Omaha*

Ryan P. Sullivan, *Lincoln*

Richard W. Tast Jr., *Lincoln*

James H. Truell, *Kearney*

Katherine E. Welsh, *Omaha*

Erin E. Wetzell, *Omaha*

### Pro Bono Cases

Jill M. Abrahamson, *Omaha*

Matthew D. Baack, *Hastings*

Frederick T. Bartell, *Norfolk*

Sara J. Bockstadt, *Hastings*

D. C. "Woody" Bradford,  
*Omaha\**

Mona "Molly" L. Burton,  
*Lincoln*

Brian J. Davis, *Cozad*

Jeffrey W. Davis, *Beatrice*

Jason S. Doebe, *Norfolk*

Timothy R. Engler, *Lincoln*

David H. Fisher, *Hastings*

Julie Fowler, *Omaha*

Ronald E. Frank, *Omaha*

Jodie Hafferbier McGill,  
*Omaha*

Emilee Higgins, *Columbus*

Kenneth F. Jacobs, *Omaha*

Luke J. Klinker, *Omaha*

Jane F. Langan Mach, *Lincoln*

Daniel C. Pape, *Omaha*

Peng Li, *Omaha*

Joseph Lopez-Wilson, *Omaha*

Amie C. Martinez, *Lincoln*

Gretchen L. McGill, *Omaha*

Deziree N. Medina, *Lincoln*

Jeffrey T. Palzer, *Omaha*

James E. Reisinger, *Omaha*

Katherine E. Sharp, *Columbus*

Thomas J. Shomaker, *Omaha*

Catherine N. Swiniarski,  
*Omaha*

David R. Webb, *Lincoln*

Elise M. White, *Lincoln*

Megan M. Zobel, *Lincoln*

*\*assisting disaster victims*

### Bar Associations/Organizations

Buffalo County Bar  
Association

Creighton University  
School of Law

Hall County Bar Association

Immigrant Legal Center

Legal Aid of Nebraska

Madison County Bar  
Association

Midlands Bar Association

Metropolitan Community  
College Student Paralegal  
Association

Milton Abrahams Legal  
Clinic

Omaha Bar Association

Scotts Bluff County Bar  
Association

University of Nebraska  
College of Law

Women's Center for  
Advancement

### Self-Help Centers

#### Buffalo

Melodie T. Bellamy,  
*Coordinator*

Michael W. Baldwin

Larry W. Beucke

Brandon J. Dugan

Marsha E. Fangmeyer

Mitchell C. Stehlik

#### Douglas

Christina Thornton,  
*Coordinator*

James F. Busse

Joseph Dreesen

Richard A. Drews

Michael J. Haller, Jr.

Karisa D. Johnson

Kendall K. Krajicek

Stephen J. Lefler

Craig F. Martin

Tyler A. Masterson

Michael P. Moran

Melany S. O'Brien

Ralph E. Peppard

Arturo Perez

Kathryn D. Putnam

Justin A. Quinn

Danielle L. Rowley

Alan C. Schroeder

Judith A. Schweikart

David Sommers

J.G. "Gerry" Sullivan

Kenneth M. Wentz III

#### Douglas/Creighton

Martha J. Lemar

Catherine "Kate" Mahern

Christopher A. Mihalo

Jennifer N. Rowling

#### Hall

Shawn J. Farritor,  
*Coordinator*

Kevin A. Brostrom

Brandon J. Dugan

Grady C. Erickson

Stacie A. Goding

Andrew D. Hanquist

Karisa D. Johnson

Susan M. Koenig

Charles R. Maser

Kane M. Ramsey

Audrey A. Rowley

Erin M. Urbom

Kevin P. Walsh

#### Kimball

Stacy C. Bach, *Coordinator*

#### Madison

Ryan J. Stover, *Coordinator*

Jason S. Doebe

Jack W. LaFleur

#### Scotts Bluff

Stacy C. Bach, *Coordinator*