



THE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLINIC AT ALBANY LAW SCHOOL

OUR STORY, OUR SERVICE

Law students help build businesses and spur economic development in New York's Capital Region through the Community Economic Development Clinic—part of The Justice Center at Albany Law School.

The clinic was founded in 2016. Additionally, it is a legal resource for individuals and grassroots groups of long-time residents in low-income neighborhoods and other historically marginalized groups, including new immigrants.

These groups often don't have access to pro bono legal services, but still need representation in forming not-for-profits, small businesses, or assistance advocating for economic development in particular neighborhoods.

Students, under the supervision of a professor or practicing attorney, learn key corporate law and deal closing skills, including client counseling and interviewing, negotiation, drafting, advocacy, and public speaking. Students learn the importance of pro bono and professional responsibility by servicing vulnerable populations such as domestic violence victims, and the formerly incarcerated.

The Community Economic Development Clinic was made possible by a generous donation by Edward P. Swyer and the Swyer Family Foundation.

CLIENT SUCCESS

▶ **Second Chance Opportunities, Inc., opened its new Recovery Community and Outreach Center in October 2019.**

Students and staff attorney David Craft supported Second Chance on the way to the opening with contract help, obtaining the property from the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, and were around the table—at



WHAT WE DO

- ▶ Hold 4-6 legal advice clinics each academic year
- ▶ Serve over 75 clients annually
- ▶ Increase the impact of our work through the support of dozens of law student volunteers from the Business Law Society and around 12 volunteer attorneys participating annually

WE OFFER ASSISTANCE AND LEGAL SERVICES FOR

- ▶ Business entity formation
- ▶ Worker cooperatives
- ▶ Affordable housing preservation and development
- ▶ Community benefits agreements
- ▶ Neighborhood-based economic development strategies
- ▶ Legal research and advocacy on economic development in low-income neighborhoods
- ▶ Access to justice issues more broadly
- ▶ Representation on transactional matters
- ▶ Entity formation
- ▶ Governance
- ▶ Contracts
- ▶ Leasing
- ▶ Loan/related financial closings



ALBANY LAW SCHOOL
THE JUSTICE CENTER

Albany Law School—when Second Chance closed on the property in November 2018.

► **For an Albany couple who opened a restaurant in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic, the clinic has been the difference between operating a mom-and-pop and a professional operation.**

Law students helped Kelechi Nwagboso and her husband, Obinna, form an LLC for their business: Keobi, an African cuisine restaurant. The students were successful in securing food and liquor licenses, and in leasing a location. One year later, Keobi celebrated its first year anniversary.



Albany Law School student **Jinah Kim** '23 created a safe environment at her restaurant, Sunhee's Farm and Kitchen, a Korean eatery that focuses on locally sourced meals as well as support services for immigrants and refugees.

In 2017, she reached out to the clinic to establish a nonprofit arm of Sunhee's. The designation allowed Kim to expand her services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been a crucial piece in keeping the business going because it allows them to apply for loans and grants, and accept donations. They currently offer free English lessons—virtually for now—a pantry package program, and collaborative community events.

► **Her time as a client of the clinic sparked her interest to enroll in law school.**

“[Clinic professors and students] were all a part of the community. They actually came to our business and supported us. They were customers,” Kim said of The Justice Center's students and staff. “I loved being able to see that dual nature of [them as] professionals but also as part of the community. I appreciated the earnest manner that everyone engaged with us in. The students were also phenomenal—I can't wait to be one of them [working in the clinic].”



Under the guidance of the Community Economic Development Clinic within The Justice Center at Albany Law School, the owner of Magai Arboriculture closed on a sole-proprietorship-to-employee-ownership conversion of the

company—now called the More Trees Arborist Collective LLC—to his four colleagues.

“Law students were heavily involved in client communications, drafting agreements, and research surrounding applicable laws,” Senior Staff Attorney Todd Arena said. “Any new business is an experiment and there are risks right at the beginning, but a conversion has the potential to maintain ongoing success and not risking as much.”

After CEDC students negotiated an option agreement, Lindsey Johnson '21, Louis Bianchi-Breakell '22, and Ann Phillips '22 represented the Arbor Hill Development Corp at the closing of a purchase of 16 properties from the Albany County Land Bank that the Corp plans to redevelop. Former CEDC student Catherine Kemp '19 represented the Land Bank.

► **Student Success**

Clinic Alumni Anthony Cove '18, Maxwell Radley '18, and Andrew Rivera '18 teamed up to compete for the 2018 National Transactional LawMeets championship. They ended up finishing 14th overall.

It was Albany Law School's first appearance at the Transactional LawMeets, which is billed as “the premier interscholastic competition for law students interested in transactional practice.”



When a request by a local housing rights group to hold some of Albany's worst landlords accountable for non-repair issues came to the clinic, the answer seemed obvious to student **Jordan Fruchter** '20.

A computer program called the H.A.R.M. calculator (Habitability, Abatement of Rent, Mathematical), which he designed to automatically compute reasonable damages based on monthly rent; how long the issue has gone on; and the percentage of rent abated for the particular issue in prior housing-related court cases.

Fruchter recently came in second place in the 7th Annual Stanley M. Grossman Innovators Invitational at Brooklyn Law School—a competition for legal technology startups—and won \$4,000 in funding for his H.A.R.M. calculator. He also presented the tool at Georgetown Law School's Iron Tech Lawyer 2020 Invitational to an international audience.

SUPPORT THE CLINIC

- The Justice Center at Albany Law School is funded, in part, through public grants and private donors. For more information, please contact The Justice Center at 518-445-2328 or give online at albanylaw.edu.

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