

THOMAS JEFFERSON
SCHOOL OF LAW

SAN DIEGO • CALIFORNIA

495
11TH AVENUE

**SMALL BUSINESS
LAW CENTER**



MISSION

The mission of the Small Business Law Center at Thomas Jefferson School of Law is to provide law students with practical skills opportunities that support community economic development in San Diego County.

OVERVIEW

The Small Business Law Center (SBLC) at Thomas Jefferson School of Law provides legal assistance to entrepreneurs, artists, small businesses, inventors, and non-profit organizations that do not have the financial means to hire a lawyer. Under the supervision of California licensed attorneys, law students assist clients with their legal needs. Components of the SBLC include the Art and Entertainment Law Project, the Community Economic Development Clinic, the Patent Clinic, and the Trademark Clinic. Thomas Jefferson School of Law is currently the only law school in California to have both a patent clinic and a trademark clinic that are certified by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

ART AND ENTERTAINMENT LAW PROJECT

The Art and Entertainment Law Project helps artists and arts organizations address their legal needs. Often overlooked is that artists and arts organizations are businesses like any other: they require income in excess of their expenses to continue providing products, services, and jobs to others. By providing support with contracts, copyright registration, permits, and business entity formation, the Art and Entertainment Law Project fosters a burgeoning creative economy while honing the skills of students who will soon serve that economy as attorneys.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLINIC

The Community Economic Development (CED) Clinic provides legal assistance to eligible nonprofit organizations and small businesses that stimulate economic growth in communities of need. The CED Clinic works with individuals and organizations throughout San Diego County to help strengthen individual and community infrastructure. In addition to individual representation, the CED Clinic conducts legal information seminars at local chambers of commerce, trade organizations and social services providers that promote community economic development. The CED Clinic has a wide range of clients but prioritizes assisting those who are unemployed, under-employed or are based in low-income communities.

PATENT CLINIC

The Patent Clinic is an official part of the Law School Clinic Certification Pilot Program administered by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The Patent Clinic is a component of the SBLC that specifically provides legal assistance to individuals and organizations seeking patent protection for inventions. Services provided include invention disclosure counseling, patentability searches and opinions, patent application preparation and prosecution, and patent sales and licensing.

TRADEMARK CLINIC

The Trademark Clinic is an official part of the Law School Clinic Certification Pilot Program administered by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The Trademark Clinic helps individuals, organizations, and businesses obtain federal registration of their trademarks and service marks. The Trademark Clinic provides legal assistance with trademark clearance searches, applications for federal registration, maintenance of existing registrations, and trademark licensing.

SERVICES

The SBLC provides free legal assistance in the following areas:

- Business Formation
- Business Law Advice
- Contract Review and Negotiation
- Commercial Leasing
- Copyright
- Corporate Governance Check-ups
- Employment Law Research
- Legal Research
- Non-Profit Tax Exemption
- Patent
- Permitting and Licensing
- Publicity Rights
- Trade Secrets
- Trademark

The SBLC also organizes community legal education workshops to introduce community members to their legal rights and responsibilities. Law students make community presentations to organizations such as chambers of commerce and other small business associations. The SBLC has presented to Enactus (San Diego City College), National City Chamber of Commerce, East Village Association, Extended Hand Worldwide Ministries, Canemex, the Hive, and the San Diego Foundation. To schedule a presentation for a chamber of commerce, community group or other association, please contact the SBLC.

ELIGIBILITY

The SBLC's target client base includes small businesses, entrepreneurs, artists, inventors, and nonprofits that do not have the resources to hire a private attorney. Each case is evaluated individually, but preference is given to:

- Individuals at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines;
- Businesses with gross income under \$100,000; or
- Non-profits with operating budgets of \$150,000 or less; and
- Entities or individuals who are located in areas with high poverty populations in San Diego County.

To determine a prospective client's financial eligibility, the individual or the entity must submit the following (as applicable):

- Most recently filed Form 1040, including all Schedules and W-2(s)/1099(s)
- Two most recent paystubs and two most recent personal bank account statements
- Two most recent business bank account statements
- Year-to-date and prior year business financials (profit & loss, balance sheet)
- Statement/Declaration of Income and Expense

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE



Ana Paula Bastian, Class of December 2012

I never realized before my participation with SBLC just how important it is to give back to those in the community and how great it feels to see them succeed and move forward with the help of the SBLC. Today I am very proud to say that I have made a difference in San Diego's community as a result of my participation at the SBLC.



Camara Mathis, Class of May 2013

The self-teaching and analytical aspect of the clinic provides a practical experience not available at most internships. In addition, interacting with clients has developed my communication and interaction skills.



Thomas Nichols, Class of May 2013

My experience with the SBLC has made me realize just how much the law is intertwined with all types of businesses. From a single person trying to provide a service to their neighborhood community to a startup company trying to position itself for a lucrative buyout, many of the concerns begin out as the same and the SBLC really strives to help both types of clients achieve their goals regardless of the individual business.



Francisco Vicente-Vidal, Class of May 2013

Besides the substantive legal work we do at the SBLC, students also work on business management tasks that are directly applicable to the real world, especially for someone who is thinking about going solo or working in a small law firm. I believe that my experience at the SBLC has prepared me to tackle the type of professional challenges that are critical for running a successful legal practice.

For more information about eligibility and application criteria for Thomas Jefferson School of Law students to participate, please visit www.tjssl.edu/clinics/sbhc.



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