

Legal Aid Chicago Names Matthew Hartzler as 'Volunteer of the Year' for His Work at the Katten de Diego Legal Clinic

March 14, 2025

Chicago Intellectual Property Associate Matthew Hartzler was honored as a "Volunteer of the Year" by Legal Aid Chicago for his work with Katten's Legal Clinic at Chicago Public Schools' Jose de Diego Community Academy. Matt's commitment to client service extends to his pro bono practice, and while this practice centers on immigration issues, Matt has also volunteered at the Katten de Diego clinic nearly every month since he joined the firm in early 2021, working with clients on nearly every aspect of civil law ranging from housing and eviction to debt and family law.

"Staffing Katten's clinic with Legal Aid Chicago has taught me the power of listening — many coming to our clinic have never been able to tell their story to a legal professional before," Matt said. "I am proud that the voices entering our door will be heard."

"Matthew is able to connect with clients in a way that allows him to gather the relevant and necessary information, all while making his clients feel heard and supported," Legal Aid Chicago stated in a congratulatory LinkedIn post, also commending Matt's patience, compassion and dedication. "He has guided countless clients through complex legal issues with kindness and respect — every client has a story to tell and Matthew cares to listen."

Although individuals in criminal proceedings are afforded the right to an attorney, the same is not true for those with civil law disputes, such as landlord-tenant problems, or who are seeking an order of protection. Katten's walk-in clinic aims to bridge the growing civil justice gap by allowing members of the community who cannot afford legal services to obtain legal guidance from an attorney.

Under the leadership of Katten Pro Bono Director Jonathan Baum and with participation from other Katten and Legal Aid Chicago attorneys, paralegals and staff, the Katten de Diego Legal Clinic is one of the nation's first legal aid clinics in an urban public school, an initiative that was recognized in 2016 with an American Bar Association (ABA) Pro Bono Publico Award, and serves clients facing a wide variety of legal issues.

CONTACTS

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