



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON
COLLEGE *of* LAW

Entrepreneurship Law Clinic



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**2024
IMPACT
REPORT**

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CHAMPIONING WHAT MATTERS



MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-DIRECTORS

The 2023-24 academic year unfolded against the backdrop of the overturning of affirmative action in college admissions, attacks on efforts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a climate of political and economic uncertainty. Despite these challenges, our clients and students worked tirelessly to make a significant impact through entrepreneurship and innovative nonprofit work, focusing largely on opportunities for underserved communities.

This past year, we have served a diverse range of organizations, including those seeking to: support technological advancements for healthcare in Latin America, address the impacts of the war on drugs, advocate for reparations legal work, provide cash assistance to those in need in a community-centric way, grow the geographic reach of their culinary products, encourage water safety education in the Black community, and many others!

These efforts are crucial for expanding economic opportunities in the DC, Maryland, and Virginia metropolitan region, and beyond.

Our students approached these projects with vigor and determination. In this report, you will find a snapshot of some of our accomplishments, including:

1. Providing nearly 1,500 hours of legal services to small businesses and startups;
2. Delivering more than 2,200 hours of legal services to nonprofits.

Thank you for your support. Please see the final page of this report for ways you can help us expand our services for clients and students.



Priya Baskaran

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LAW, CO-DIRECTOR



Chaz D. Brooks

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LAW, CO-DIRECTOR

MISSION

At the Entrepreneurship Law Clinic, we are dedicated to fostering **economic justice** and **empowerment** in the DC and Maryland communities.

Our mission is to **support** and **elevate** small businesses, nonprofits, and startups, particularly those led by **entrepreneurs** from underserved communities.

By providing *expert* legal guidance and advocacy, we strive to **dismantle systemic barriers, promote racial economic equity,** and **empower organizations** that champion these causes.

Together, we are building a more **inclusive** and **thriving** entrepreneurial ecosystem.

CLINIC BY THE NUMBERS

HOW DID THE CLINIC STUDENTS SPEND THEIR TIME?



*Entity Formation includes advising on government/tax filings, bylaws drafting, formation document drafting, and drafting or advising on policies.

10



Clients served in the 2024 Clinic program.

24



Student Attorneys

1,470



Hours spent on For-Profit Clients

2,264



Hours spent on Non-Profit Clients

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

NICOLE R. ARELLANO



Nicole is a 2024 graduate of WCL

I decided to join the ELC because the idea of learning about small business and nonprofit law interested me deeply. I wanted to learn about this type of law “hands on” with real clients and cases. I believed I would learn more by putting theory to practice as opposed to just learning theory in a class setting.

I’m most proud of the work we did with our second client: the couple who was starting a cannabis cultivation business (Team EI). I’m proud for several reasons, including the fact that my team and I accomplished a lot for this client in the semester (i.e., drafted an operating agreement for their LLC and wrote two comprehensive memos regarding the requirements for setting up a cannabis business in DC and the different options available to them to raise starting capital). I was able to become a mini expert in cannabis law at the local level, while also learning about the complex fundraising rules pertaining to the cannabis industry. Lastly, I was able to build a connection with the clients – I felt we helped them in a meaningful way and contributed to the advancement of their project.

Being able to work with Team EI allowed me to open my mind and be inspired by their story and their determination to change their lives and the lives of others for the better, while also assuming responsibility for their past mistakes (this was particularly the case for Lashonia). I love stories of people who despite the many adversities they’ve faced, they are grateful for the one life they have and want to make the most out of it not only for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of their communities. We need more people like the Thompson-Els.

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

TEAM EL



Team-El & Associates LLC (dba DC Native Botanicals) is a medical cannabis cultivation business located in Washington, DC,

Initially, I was hoping the clinic could help us get approved for a conditional license to open a cannabis cultivation center in DC. We learned that DC city council passed a law requiring that the Alcohol and Cannabis Association give 50% of the new cannabis licenses to Returning Citizens who have been directly impacted by the war on drugs. They offered a 75% discount on the licensing fee. My husband is an experienced grower and has been growing his own medication for about seven years. When we decided to pursue the social equity process and apply for a license we knew it would be challenging so we reached out to the AU Legal Clinic for support. Thank God we did because we would not have been successful without them. It was a daunting process to say the least.

With the Clinic's help we have obtained a conditional license to open a cannabis cultivation center in DC. With the help of the Clinic and their countless hours of research we have learned a plethora of information about the industry, laws and regulations as it relates to zoning, banking and operating a cannabis business.

We are grateful to the clinic for supporting our efforts and for always being so responsive and for meeting us where we are.

Support our work at the Entrepreneurship Law Clinic!

We appreciate any and all donations to the ELC. Your gifts will go towards:

1. Funding Fall and Spring orientation for students.
2. Student travel support for on-site client visits.
3. Travel support for students going to small business and investment conferences.
4. Popup small business clinic opportunities.
5. Policy research intern positions related to local small business and economic equity advocacy.



To direct a gift to the Entrepreneurship Law Clinic, please follow the link below:

<https://giving.american.edu>

Be sure to select “Washington College of Law (WCL) Law Clinic” in the field pictured below. Thank you!

A screenshot of a donation form interface. At the top, it says "To find other funds, begin typing the name in the field and select from the available options." Below this is a search field containing "Washington College" with a dropdown arrow. A dropdown menu is open, showing "Washington College of Law (WCL) Law Clinic" as the selected option. To the right of the search field are input fields for "\$ 100.00", "100 %", and a small square icon.

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to support economic opportunity and equity.

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HOW TO HELP