



Connecting Lawyers and Communities

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Detroit Works Project Helps Nonprofit Fulfill Mission Community Legal Resources Works to Ensure Civic Participation

DETROIT – January 20, 2011 – In an innovative collaboration, Community Legal Resources (CLR) will assist the City of Detroit in drawing crowds and increasing participation in the Detroit Works Project (DWP). A nonprofit with offices in Detroit and Lansing, CLR will use its relationships with Detroit-based nonprofits, community development corporations and neighborhood associations to help involve a cross-section of Detroit residents in the planning process.

CLR was chosen to play a key role in ensuring participation by the nonprofit sector and its clients. This is because of CLR's mission, ability to collaborate with other organizations, and its relationships with nonprofits across Detroit and Michigan.

Additionally, CLR led a project called the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign (DVPC) that provided technical resources and planning to community groups battling vacant property. This project placed CLR in a unique position to bring together policy makers and decision makers with community organizations and members to enact positive change.

CLR serves low-income communities by providing legal and technical assistance to community organizations. Through this mission and services, CLR is committed to empowering citizens to plan their future.

As part of its contract, CLR will inform its nonprofit network about upcoming DWP meetings, the planning process and topic discussions. In turn, these nonprofits will share the information directly with its own members and clients.

Select key nonprofits will also act as community outreach partners to CLR and help share information about specific meetings to targeted groups that CLR cannot reach directly. These partners will be reimbursed for staff time and expenses up to a certain amount.

"We see this work as vital to the community we serve and in fulfilling our mission," said chief operating officer Heidi Alcock Mucherie. "This is the number one priority for many of our community organization clients, and it directly impacts the services and quality of life for residents and communities across Detroit."

Connecting residents, nonprofits, and businesses to the decision making process is the main focus of CLR's work with the DWP. However, CLR will also provide support at all the DWP and Mayor's Advisory Task Force meetings.

The DWP meetings will begin January 27th. The full meeting schedule is available at www.detroitworksproject.com.

CLR will host an informative event for its clients on March 31st to discuss its role with the DWP in more detail. More information on this will be available soon.

"This meeting will be very important," said Sarida Scott, chief program officer, "because while our contract may be with the City of Detroit, our client is – as always- nonprofits and the communities they serve. We see our role as not only ensuring civic participation, but bringing the community reaction back to the City."

For more information about the Detroit Works Project, please visit www.detroitworksproject.com. For more information on becoming a community outreach partner for CLR, please visit www.clronline.org or contact Baraka Johnson, community organizer, at bjohnson@clronline.org.

The mission of Community Legal Resources is to support and empower nonprofit community organizations in Michigan that serve low-income individuals and communities, with an emphasis on community economic development, by providing pro bono legal services and technical assistance. Founded in 1998, CLR has provided over \$9 million in free legal assistance to over 900 nonprofits in Michigan and vacant property related assistance to over 200 community organizations in Detroit. Find CLR at www.clronline.org and www.detroitvacantproperty.org and on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Peplemovers.

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