

2005 JUSTICE CENTER PROGRAMS

Task Force on Professionalism

Established in 2005, the Task Force on Professionalism, which is chaired by James B. Kobak Jr., is studying the state of professionalism in the New York City legal community. Two surveys were conducted, one of NYCLA members about their views on professionalism and the other of law school deans and professors about the teaching of ethics and professional values. Other initiatives will include focus groups with members of the judiciary and lawyers in various practice settings, forums to discuss professionalism and, eventually, the production of a summary report. In May 2008, the Task Force introduced a blog to NYCLA's homepage as a means of fostering communication among legal practitioners.

Right to Counsel Resolution

In March 2005, the NYCLA Board adopted a resolution endorsed by the Justice Center advocating for a right to counsel for residential tenants in Housing Court who are financially incapable of retaining counsel. A right to counsel emerged as a central theme of the Housing Court Conference as nearly 90 percent of tenants are not represented by counsel while more than 90 percent of landlords are. The correlation between the lack of representation and eviction is clear as is the correlation between eviction and homelessness.