

Contact:  
Quisquella Addison  
LiveHelp Program Coordinator  
LawHelp/NY  
212 382 6777; qaddison@nylawhelp.org

### **LawHelp/NY and Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT) Collaborate to Offer Live Chat Legal Help to New Yorkers Facing Family Law Issues**

**New York, NY** – Beginning Friday, October 5, Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT) will team up with LawHelp/NY to offer individual family law help through live chat on Fridays from 10-4pm. This project, called LiveHelp, is one of the first collaborations of its kind in the United States, offering free access to expert family law information via online live chat, and is made possible through the technical assistance of Pro Bono Net and the work of LIFT and LawHelp/NY staff.

LiveHelp can be accessed through both organizations' websites ([www.LawHelp.org/NY](http://www.LawHelp.org/NY) and [www.LIFTonline.org](http://www.LIFTonline.org)). Live chat operates like instant messaging, and offers users immediate and confidential family law help, including answers to questions about legal rights and responsibilities, tools for those going to court without a lawyer, and referrals to community-based resources for more in-depth services.

Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers turn to the Family Courts every year seeking resolution to urgent family matters, such as child custody, visitation, child support, and domestic violence. The majority of these individuals, more than 80%, will not have a lawyer because they are not entitled to one by statute and cannot afford to retain one. And with recent blows to an already razor thin Court budget, the New York State Family Court system is increasingly under-resourced and acutely overcrowded. In effect, Family Court litigants have few places to turn to for free family law information and help. Now, through this partnership among LIFT, LawHelp/NY and Pro Bono Net, Family Court users have a new option for support: LiveHelp.

For over 15 years, LIFT has been the only organization in New York dedicated to empowering families to access justice in the New York Family Courts. LIFT's award-winning programs combine expert legal information and compassionate guidance so that those without lawyers have the tools to successfully represent themselves in court and access community resources to support themselves and their children. LIFT's services are free and available in English and Spanish, and range from immediate, short-term interventions – including Telephone and Email Hotlines and New York City Family Court-based Education & Information Sites – to in-depth, ongoing support provided at its Family Legal Centers. LIFT also produces written Legal Resource Guides and legal education webinars on various Family Court topics.

LawHelp.org/NY provides free, user-friendly resources that supply critical legal information in sixteen areas of law (including family law, consumer protection, housing and immigration), and referral information to free legal assistance programs throughout the state. With a Spanish mirror site ([www.ayudalegalny.org](http://www.ayudalegalny.org)) and resources in 39 languages, it is the first line of defense for vulnerable New Yorkers facing civil legal problems.

Pro Bono Net ([www.probono.net](http://www.probono.net)) works to transform the way legal help reaches the poor through innovative technology and collaboration. It partners with legal aid organizations to promote collaboration and maximize their impact on justice issues, connects lawyers with resources to increase pro bono involvement, and provides critical legal assistance and information directly to the public.