



HOLWELL SHUSTER & GOLDBERG PARTNERS WITH VISA AND BDS TO HOST LEGAL CLINIC

07.15.2022

New York—HSG recently partnered with Visa to assist Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS) in its work to uphold the rights, freedom, and dignity of people. In connection with BDS’ Family Defense Practice—the goal of which is to keep families safely together or reunify families as soon as possible when separation occurs—HSG hosted a pro bono legal clinic to assist clients whose names may have been wrongly added to the New York State Central Registry (SCR).

On June 16, the 27 members of the HSG/Visa team assisted multiple clients in drafting affidavits and letters to the SCR to legally request both the amendment and sealing of their report, so they would not be unfairly prevented from securing certain types of employment.

The clinic was a direct result of legislation that went into effect in January 2022 that changes how New York’s SCR operates, raising the standard of evidence required for the system to list a person on the registry with an indicated case. The legislation—which resulted in the most significant change to child welfare legislation in years—was developed and pushed forward by a coalition of parent defenders, advocates, and community-based organizations to reduce the harm and scope of the SCR, which particularly impacts Black and Latinx families and communities.