



MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Buffalo, NY - The United Way of Buffalo & Erie County Fund For Alliances has loaned the International Institute of Buffalo, Inc., and the Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc. \$8,497 each for 36 months at 0% interest. This loan is to assist with cash flow issues resulting from the transfer of the legal services program from the International Institute to the Volunteer Lawyers Project.

“The immigration law services that the International Institute formerly provided are important services to the community and we did not want to see them lost” said Robert Elardo, the Managing Attorney at the Volunteer Lawyers Project. “Had the funding been lost, it would have been very difficult in today’s economy to build the funding back up. The Institute staff worked closely with us to help make the transition of funding and cases as smooth as possible. We are continuing to work closely with the Institute’s social work staff to provide coordinated and comprehensive help to the clients.”

The International Institute of Buffalo assists immigrants, refugees, and others who face linguistic and cultural barriers. Today, the Institute serves as a dynamic international center, providing critical services to refugees and immigrants and promoting global understanding and connections in Western New York.

Eva Hassett, Executive Director for the International Institute stated “Immigration legal services were a traditional part of the International Institute’s portfolio, and are in great demand in the community. When grant funding was reduced significantly, however, we needed to look at options. Our collaboration with Volunteer Lawyers Project – a longstanding provider of pro bono immigration law services – has allowed us to continue to refer clients to high quality, experienced attorneys and has given us a new, strong partner for the Institute’s work. “

For more information on the Fund For Alliances, contact United Way of Buffalo & Erie County at nfprc@uwbec.org or 887-2757.