



Northeastern University

School of Law

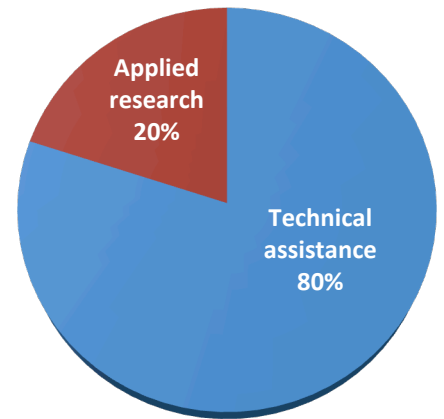
Business Legal Clinic University Center

The goal of the Northeastern University School of Law's Business Legal Clinic University Center is to advance entrepreneurship in the regional economic ecosystem that comprises the Boston metropolitan statistical area and nearby gateway cities. The Center also focuses on regional commercialization efforts, the development of a high-skilled regional workforce through the provision of legal services relating to the protection of intellectual property, and the development of skills by new entrepreneurs that will be translatable to other employment settings. Although the Center's area has many resources available to entrepreneurs, these resources are not always available to student entrepreneurs, disadvantaged entrepreneurs, or to nonprofit organizations. The Center strives to fill this gap by providing business legal services to clients needing assistance in understanding, satisfying, and sometimes challenging the regulatory regimes they confront and in identifying and protecting the

intellectual property assets that provide a competitive advantage.

Activities

The Center uses law students, supervised and supported by experienced law faculty, to provide legal services to entrepreneurs and nonprofits. Students work to overcome regulatory barriers by researching barriers to the start up of small businesses in new innovation



industries (such as green construction); by drafting of contracts and other documentations to work around and/or remove such barriers; and by identifying, developing protocols for working with, and removing regulatory barriers in new industries. In addition, the Center assists clients in drafting, reviewing, and negotiating documents

University

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Center Director

Rashmi Dyal-Chand

Center Location

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Center since 2011

Center Activities

- Business legal matters counseling
- Training and workshops
- Applied research

Clients

- Entrepreneurs
- Microenterprises
- Nonprofits

Assessment Techniques

- Feedback from staff
- Client interviews
- Feedback from workshops
- Client satisfaction surveys
- Longitudinal survey

Contact Information

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related to licenses, permits, zoning, and leases. A large part of the Center's work is the preparation of organizational documents and intellectual property rights to reduce risk and maximize asset value. The Center also assists clients in drafting, reviewing, and negotiating service agreements and contracts for services.

The Center holds training and

workshops for entrepreneurs to help them understand legal issues specific to them, including worker status (e.g., independent contractor vs. employee). The Center's applied

research focuses on developing more exact information about the barriers to entrepreneurial success and the criteria that most often lead to such success through a longitudinal survey of Center clients.

"The Center's student was very proactive and thorough. Their quality of work was very high."
--Center Client

Leveraging

The Center leverages both university faculty and students in pursuit of its goals. It would not be able to provide the level of service to clients without the student labor. In addition, the Center leverages other faculty in the College of Criminal Justice in support of its applied research work. Outside the University, the Center leverages its professional connections with nonprofit organizations that serve disadvantaged entrepreneurs.

Success

Supporting micro-entrepreneurs

Andy Brooks launched a composting business out of his backyard. Within a few short months his idea grew so popular that he had more than 100 customers throughout the greater Boston area. Client numbers exploded after Igor Kharitononkov made a video about the innovative company, and Brooks asked Kharitononkov to join him as a business partner. At that point, the pair realized it was time to treat Bootstrap Composting as a real company, which meant they needed written contracts with customers. They worried about losing the grassroots feel of Bootstrap by presenting customers with long pages of legal jargon. Brooks and

Kharitononkov learned of the clinic through a friend and signed up. A student assigned to them spent hours talking with them about the company and preparing their customer contract.

The experience was such a success that Bootstrap Composting returned to the clinic this spring for assistance with drafting a shareholders' agreement to provide for the company's future under various scenarios, such as the death of one of the partners. Relying on the clinic saved Bootstrap money.

Bootstrap Composting is now up to 450 clients and has diverted more than 200,000 pounds of food scraps headed for landfills into compost,

helping Bostonians grow their own food and supporting a more sustainable food system while keeping the planet green. And, when future legal needs arise, the company will return to the clinic. "For young companies and startups, these kinds of programs are so important," says Kharitononkov.

Bootstrap Composting demonstrates the University Center Business Legal Clinic's ability to provide high-quality legal services that are uniquely tailored to the needs and circumstances of small businesses, while also teaching these important legal skills to the next generation of lawyers.