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Transgender Rights Group Helps More than 200 New Yorkers Change Their Names

The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF)'s Name Change Project Helps Transgender New Yorkers Navigate the Court System as they Seek to Change their Names

NEW YORK - As transgender people continue to gain basic legal protections across the country, the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund announces more than 200 transgender New Yorkers have sought assistance through its Name Change Project since it was founded in the summer of 2007.

The Name Change Project matches a client with a lawyer who helps them to navigate the often complicated process transgender New Yorkers face when they seek to legally change their names. The lawyers work pro bono, and financial assistance is available to people who cannot afford to pay the costs related to a name change.

"Transgender Legal Defense's Name Change Project was indispensable in the process of getting my name legally changed," Name Change Project client Rhys said. "I would have had no clue how to get started on a legal name change by myself. Even the first step (just getting an official request for my birth certificate notarized) seemed daunting. I didn't have the money to take on the lengthy project by myself. The Name Change Project took care of everything for me, every step of the way. They did all the leg work."

Some of the world's most prestigious law firms, including Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton LLP and Davis Polk & Wardwell, are among the more than a dozen New York law firms that participate in the Name Change Project.

"A person's name is one of the most fundamental parts of their identity," TLDEF staff attorney Dru Levasseur said. "By ensuring that transgender people have adequate legal representation when seeking name changes, TLDEF's Name Change Project ensures they can successfully negotiate the legal process and move forward with their lives."

Log on to www.transgenderlegal.org for more information about the Name Change Project.

Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression, and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, community organizing and public policy efforts.