

Awards

FIRM NAMED 2021 INNOVATION IN PHILANTHROPY AWARD WINNER FOR PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP

May 06, 2021

Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner has been named a 2021 Innovation in Philanthropy Award winner by the *St. Louis Business Journal*. The publication's annual Innovation Awards honor local partnerships that go beyond standard philanthropic practices in new and creative ways.

BCLP was specifically recognized for its unique partnership with Concordance Academy of Leadership, which provides reentry services to individuals released from incarceration. Part of a well-established, firmwide *pro bono* program, BCLP's Concordance partnership hires law school graduates for two-year assignments in which they spend half their time with the Concordance fellowship program and half on other work for the firm. Two fellows are assigned to the program at a time, a junior and a senior member.

BCLP fellows have helped clear more than 500 warrants, attended more than 500 court appearances and commuted more than \$12,000 in fines for Concordance program participants since the partnership began in 2016.

"Many people who come out of prison face arrest for outstanding warrants, traffic violations or child support cases that occurred before they went in," said Partner Bob Newmark, who served as St. Louis office managing partner when the Concordance collaboration began and helped grow the partnership. "They were never resolved once they were incarcerated, so we try to get them a clean slate."

Alongside working to resolve legal issues that might hamper a client's ability to succeed after release, fellows begin coaching Concordance clients six months before their release on basics like how to arrive early and dress for court and the best way to address the judge.

Concordance points to statistics that show the partnership has helped reduce re-incarceration rates in St. Louis by 44% over the past five years, a number no other organization in the country can match, said Danny Ludeman, president and CEO of Concordance Academy of Leadership. The program is poised to expand to 11 more states by 2025.

“I cannot come close to expressing the impact the fellows’ program is having on our participants,” Ludeman told the publication. BCLP “has eliminated every one of the warrants our 850 clients had, each of which could have cost them three days in jail. The firm has been a wonderful asset. This partnership has been a blessing beyond belief.”

This award was featured in a special section of the *Business Journal* publish on May 7.

MEET THE TEAM



Robert L. Newmark

St. Louis / New York

robert.newmark@bclplaw.com

[+1 314 259 2568](tel:+13142592568)

This material is not comprehensive, is for informational purposes only, and is not legal advice. Your use or receipt of this material does not create an attorney-client relationship between us. If you require legal advice, you should consult an attorney regarding your particular circumstances. The choice of a lawyer is an important decision and should not be based solely upon advertisements. This material may be “Attorney Advertising” under the ethics and professional rules of certain jurisdictions. For advertising purposes, St. Louis, Missouri, is designated BCLP’s principal office and Kathrine Dixon (kathrine.dixon@bclplaw.com) as the responsible attorney.