

Claudia E. Wilner
2016 Rising Star Winner

Claudia E. Wilner is a Senior Attorney at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice (NCLEJ) in New York. Prior to joining NCLEJ, she launched New Economy Project's groundbreaking law project, which worked with thousands of low-income New Yorkers and community groups to fight discriminatory economic practices and press for sound community development.

Claudia was nominated, along with co-recipient Carolyn Coffey, for her work on [*Sykes, et al. v. Mel Harris, et al.*](#), a class action lawsuit which alleged that a group of affiliated debt-buying companies, their law firm, and a process serving company violated the FDCPA, RICO and state laws by improperly obtaining default judgments against consumers in New York. Because of the hard work and innovative strategies used by Claudia and the other attorneys involved, the settlement in the case will benefit more than 350,000 consumers and bring about systemic changes in debt collection practices. Claudia was described by her colleagues as the catalyst for the Sykes case, the first to recognize some of the fraudulent patterns of the defendants.

Claudia is a graduate of New York University School of Law, *magna cum laude* and has a B.A. from the University of Chicago.