

9. L'ORIZZONTE OdV

The Organization: L'Orizzonte OdV

L'Orizzonte OdV is a dedicated volunteer mental health association based in the Valle Seriana region of Bergamo. Composed of family members, volunteers, and individuals navigating mental health challenges, the organization works to improve quality of life through peer support and listening. A critical part of their mission involves managing independent living programs, where residents are housed in apartments to foster autonomy while receiving psychosocial support.

The Challenge: Protecting Housing Resources for the Vulnerable

In 2022, the association faced a complex legal and social dilemma. An apartment managed on loan from the Zia Nati Foundation-intended to house residents from the local Psychosocial Center-was being occupied by an individual whose support project had officially ended. Despite the completion of the program and significant arrears, the resident refused to vacate the property. This occupation without title created a total deadlock: the association could not move a new, eligible person into the support program, effectively stalling their mission and creating a liability for the property owner.

PBI and Cernelutti Law Firm's Pro Bono Support

PBI stepped in to bridge the gap between this grassroots volunteer group and the high-level judicial expertise needed to resolve a real estate dispute. PBI facilitated a match with an attorney from Cernelutti Law Firm (Avv Belcredi), which dedicated 50 hours of intensive judicial assistance to the case:

- **Strategic Litigation:** Filed an urgent appeal under Article 700 of the Code of Civil Procedure, a specialized legal tool used to obtain rapid judicial protection when a delay could cause irreparable harm.
- **Judicial Representation:** Represented the association before the Court of Bergamo to prove that the support project had legally expired and that the continued occupation was hindering the organization's social utility.
- **Property Restoration:** Argued for the immediate restitution of the property to the Zia Nati Foundation to ensure the housing resource could be returned to its intended public use.

The Impact: Restoring the Cycle of Support

This courtroom triumph not only reclaimed a vital housing asset but also reinforced L'Orizzonte OdV's capacity to deliver uninterrupted psychosocial care, transforming a paralyzing standoff into a model of swift justice for small nonprofits caught in real estate tangles. The 50 hours of Cernelutti's pro bono firepower - leveraging Article 700's urgency - proved that even volunteer-led groups can wield top-tier legal strategy to protect their core mission, preventing one stalled apartment from derailing an entire cycle of autonomy-building support for mental health residents.

PBI's intervention here shines as a lifeline for grassroots heroes: by demystifying civil procedure tools and matching them with elite counsel, the platform ensures that organizations like L'Orizzonte don't just survive disputes but emerge stronger, ready to house the next vulnerable individual and perpetuate a ripple of community healing.

Through PBI's coordination and the decisive action of legal associates, they secured a victory in the Bergamo Court. The judge ordered the immediate release of the property and the return of the keys, free of all persons and objects. This intervention was vital-not just for the recovery of a physical building, but for the integrity of the support system itself. By resolving the dispute, PBI helped L'Orizzonte OdV reopen its doors to a new resident in need, ensuring that precious housing resources continue to serve the community's most vulnerable members.