

**ILLINOIS FORUM ON PRO BONO: FUTURE OF PRO BONO AND HOW YOU CAN HELP**

**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**I. What are the barriers to pro bono for individual attorneys?**

- Apprehension around the time requirement involved and/or the duration of representation;
- Adequately managing client expectations from the start about the terms of service and time availability;
- Clients not having the ability to meet with attorneys because of lack of transportation or resources;
- Fear or taking a case without adequate knowledge of legal issues involved;
- Not having clear law firm commitment or encouragement of pro bono services; and
- The need to maintain billable hours.

**II. What are some of the pro bono challenges your law firm faces (as opposed to individuals)? And specifically, what challenges has your organization faced in establishing and/or maintaining pro bono partnerships with other organizations?**

- The time commitment required to develop pro bono partnerships and provide pro bono legal services;
- Workplace prohibitions against using law firm time or resources to provide pro bono legal services;
- Expectations placed on new associates prevent them from seeking pro bono opportunities; and
- Law firm specialization prevents the development of expertise that's most needed by pro bono clients.

**III. What are some unique pro bono strategies that you have successfully used? What replicable models exist for successful and innovative pro bono programs/projects?**

- Commit to dedicating the time and accept a couple of cases to get more comfortable with the process;
- Treat pro bono clients the same as paying clients; and
- Replicate the model used by Land of Lincoln, who train and provide materials on how to assist with uncontested divorces.

**IV. How do you measure/evaluate the success of your pro bono program? How do these measurements help you improve your program?**

- Measure success by the number of pro bono cases have been completed; and
- If you can keep the case moving and stay informed of the client's location, you can have a successful outcome.

**V. There is a wide range of potential volunteers within the legal community, e.g. government attorneys, senior attorneys, law students and paralegals, who are not the traditional pro bono volunteer. How do we effectively engage these groups in pro bono legal services? What partnership opportunities exist?**

- The Third Judicial Circuit Committee could add a Young Lawyer Representative/Liaison to the committee;
- Facilitate opportunities for paralegals, and paralegal students to volunteer time to assist local attorneys in handling pro bono cases;
- Tap into the influence and knowledge base of more senior attorneys, because they have the ability to set the tone for pro bono;
- Develop an avenue for law students to do pro bono in order to gain practical experience, in a law school clinic-like environment;
- Reach out more to law school administration about local pro bono opportunities for law students and partner with clinics;
- Develop opportunities for pro bono volunteers to collaborate on the process work (e.g., reviewing financial documents and preparing forms);
- Promote and publicize the brown bag presentations; and
- Identify ways for the high schools to partner in providing pro bono services in the community.

**VI. What role could/do courts and judges have in supporting your program's efforts? Are there other individual or organizational advocates who are key to your success?**

- Judges could ask individual attorneys to volunteer personally;
- Judges can provide a clearer sense of the different unmet legal needs of the community; and
- Judges could identify ways to make the process easier for pro bono volunteers to appear in court.

**VII. What research is needed that could help to improve pro bono delivery in Illinois and how could that research be used to develop or improve pro bono programs?**

- Research done on the greatest areas of need by population and legal issues should be relayed to area attorneys and made more public;
- Research about the cases needing pro bono assistance, could allow easier cases to be

identified and distributed to pro bono attorneys;

- Research could be done that identifies common areas of need, in order to develop specific pro bono initiatives (e.g., pro bono assistance for elderly people in the area who are victims or potential victims of scams).

**VIII. How can we engage those attorneys who are not currently involved in pro bono?**

- Increase recognition of attorneys providing pro bono legal services by peers and firm supervisors;
- When recognizing pro bono volunteers, provide plaques and write up news articles to increase awareness and desire for recognition;
- Identify a new and creative way to incorporate those who have not traditionally been interested in providing pro bono legal services;
- Provide free CLE programs, and promote them widely;
- Provide more networking opportunities as part of pro bono programs;
- Develop more mentoring programs matching experienced and inexperienced pro bono volunteers;
- Establish a system at firms where getting paying clients is tied to doing pro bono work; and
- Encourage law schools and paralegal programs to add a set number of pro bono hours as a requirement of graduation, and develop ways to assist students in fulfilling the requirements.

**IX. How are we recognizing the pro bono being done in our community? Are there other ways of recognition that should be considered?**

- Increase the community recognition and engagement in Law Day and existing law clinics.