

## **CENTRE COUNTY PRO BONO OPTIONS, January 14, 2010**

### **A. MidPenn Legal Services Regional Pro Bono Program**

The pro bono program in Centre County is run by MidPenn Legal Services. It is actually a regional program that includes, Bedford, Blair, Clearfield, Centre, Huntingdon, Mifflin and Juniata counties. The Program is coordinated by a MidPenn Employee Jessie Kern. MidPenn recruits private attorney volunteers from the county by sending out a mailing to all members of the county bar association. Attorneys are asked to indicate the types of cases they would prefer to handle and the number of pro bono cases they would be willing to take in a given year. MidPenn then refers appropriate cases to those volunteers. These are only civil cases.

For more information, please contact:

Jessie Kern  
2054 East College Avenue  
State College, PA 16801  
Phone: (814) 238-4958 Ext. 1122  
Fax: (814) 238-9504  
jekern@midpenn.org  
<http://www.midpennlegal.org>

### **B. Other Local Pro Bono Options**

#### **1. Penn State University, Dickinson School of Law**

##### **a. Pro Bono Program**

The Miller Center for Public Interest Advocacy serves to foster students' understanding of and commitment to their obligation to serve the underrepresented. The Miller Center pairs law students who have expressed a desire to provide pro bono research with lawyers providing pro bono representation, Legal Service attorneys, public defenders, private attorneys appointed by the court to represent indigent defendants, public interest organizations, and pro bono programs that have requested assistance on a case or a particular issue. *Law students cannot provide legal advice directly to clients, but do assist attorneys representing the poor.*

For more information, please contact:

Kate Cramer Lawrence  
Director of Public Interest Programming and  
Attorney, Children's Advocacy Clinic  
The Penn State University Dickinson School of Law  
Public Interest Office 717.240.5210  
Clinic Office 717.243.2968  
[http://law.psu.edu/the\\_penn\\_state\\_law\\_experience/public\\_service](http://law.psu.edu/the_penn_state_law_experience/public_service)

### **b. Family Law Clinic**

The Family Law Clinic is a free service providing legal help for people in Cumberland County who are having problems related to family matters. Qualified law students, under the supervision of law professors and supervising attorneys who are members of the Pennsylvania Bar, provide legal services in areas such as:

- Divorce;
- Custody;
- Child support;
- Spousal support;
- Protection from abuse;
- Other domestic matters.

The Family Law Clinic is located in the Dale F. Shughart Community Law Center at 45 North Pitt Street. Please call the Clinic at (717) 243-2968 for more information or to find out if you qualify for assistance.

### **c. Elder Law and Consumer Protection Clinic**

Older adults often face a unique set of legal concerns ranging from health and long-term care needs to issues of abuse and neglect. Students at Penn State Law have the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in issues of law and aging by working in the Elder Law and Consumer Protection Clinic. The clinic is staffed and operated by Penn State Law students who are certified to practice in Pennsylvania courts. The Clinic provides "first chair" opportunities to interview and counsel clients, prepare correspondence and legal documents, and negotiate or prepare for appearances in front of courts or administrative agencies.

For more information, please contact:

Trisha Cowart, Esq.

Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor, Acting Co-Director

E-mail: [tec130@psu.edu](mailto:tec130@psu.edu)

Telephone: (717) 240-5152

### **d. Disability Law Clinic**

The Disability Law Clinic, established in 1985, offers free legal services to Cumberland and Perry County residents with disability-related problems. Qualified law students provide legal services in areas such as:

- Supplemental Security Income claims (SSI);
- Handicap discrimination;
- Americans with Disabilities Act claims;
- Special education problems;
- Social Security Disability claims;

- Other disability matters.

In most semesters, the Clinic is staffed by four second- and third-year students. Students appear before Social Security Disability Hearing Officers and Administrative Law Judges, as well as judges of the Court of Common Pleas. They also handle appeals to the federal courts. Students are supervised by Professor Robert Rains and supervising attorneys Anne MacDonald-Fox and Megan Riesmeyer, who are members of the Bar of Pennsylvania. Students are certified under the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Student Practice Rule.

The Disability Law Clinic is located in the Dale F. Shughart Community Law Center at 45 North Pitt Street. Contact the Clinic at (717) 243-3696 for more information.

#### **e. Children's Advocacy Clinic**

The Children's Advocacy Clinic (CAC) is a new and innovative multidisciplinary clinical setting in which law students and graduate social work students represent children in the legal system. The clinic provides students with the opportunity to gain valuable hands-on training serving children and advocating for policy issues related to children in the welfare system. Under the supervision of Clinical Professor Lucy Johnston-Walsh, law students represent children who are abused and/or neglected as well as those involved in other civil court actions such as adoption, domestic violence, and custody matters.

For more information, please contact:  
Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Clinical Professor  
E-mail: [lj12@psu.edu](mailto:lj12@psu.edu)  
Telephone: (717) 243-2968

#### **2. Middle District Bankruptcy Bar Association (Northern Tier)**

The Middle District Bankruptcy Bar Association (MDBBA) has established a pro bono program that provides attorneys to represent indigent parties in civil litigation after the Court has preliminarily evaluated the case and made a determination to seek counsel for the unrepresented indigent party. The MDBBA's pro bono chair is responsible for acting upon the Court's requests for volunteer attorneys.

Assignments generally are not made to a given attorney more frequently than twice a year, assuming that the volume of cases and the number of panel attorneys permit this approach. Upon occasion, the Court may also refer requests for pro bono counsel to Betty Abraham, Pro Bono Coordinator for North Penn Legal Services, Inc., for a possible referral to the MDBBA's pro bono panel. Or, in the alternative, to Mollie Oleyar, Administrator of the MDBBA, for referral to a member of the MDBBA panel for a low-cost private attorney.

For more information, please contact:

Vincent Rubino, Esquire  
Chair, Northern Tier MDBBA Pro Bono Program  
Newman, Williams, Michkin, Corveleyn, Wolfe & Fareri  
712 Monroe Street  
Stroudsburg, PA 18360  
Phone: (570)421-9090  
vrubino@newmanwilliams.com

### **3. Middle District Federal Bar Association**

The Middle District Chapter of the Federal Bar Association has established a pro bono program that provides attorneys to represent indigent parties in civil litigation after the Court has preliminarily evaluated the case and made a determination to seek counsel for the unrepresented indigent party. The Chapter's pro bono chair is responsible for acting upon the Court's requests for volunteer attorneys.

Assignments generally are not made to a given attorney more frequently than once every five years, assuming that the volume of cases and the number of panel attorneys permit this approach. Another important feature of the program is the availability of a panel of mentors to assist volunteer attorneys in the mentors' specialized areas of practice.

For more information, please contact:

Stephen M. Greecher, Jr., Esquire  
FBA Pro Bono Program Chair  
Tucker, Arensberg, & Swartz  
111 North Front Street  
P.O. Box 889  
Harrisburg, PA 17108-0889  
Phone: (717) 234-4121 (Direct dial)  
Fax: (717) 232-6802  
[sgreecher@tuckerlaw.com](mailto:sgreecher@tuckerlaw.com)  
<http://www.pamd.uscourts.gov/default.htm>