

## **COLUMBIA/MONTOUR COUNTY PRO BONO OPTIONS, Jan. 8, 2010**

### **A. Columbia and Montour County Pro Bono Program**

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

Financial Eligibility for the Pro Bono Program is based primarily on the household's income and resources, as well as the type of case involved. The Program does not use a sliding income scale. If the applicant is eligible, (consultation) services are free. If the applicant is "over-income," then no services can be provided.

Applicant must contact North Penn Legal Services (570-784-8760) prior to submitting an application to the Court Administrator's Office, excluding Dependency cases (Children & Youth). If the applicant is not eligible for North Penn Legal Services, the reason must be given on the application form.

To apply for services, the applicant must appear in the Court Administrator's Office, located on the second floor, rear, Columbia County Courthouse, and complete the necessary application. No consideration for the program will be given over the telephone. Employees in the Court Administrator's Office are not attorneys and cannot provide legal advice.

If you are eligible for the program, you will receive notice (Court Order) in the mail. It is your responsibility to contact the appointed attorney to make an appointment.

#### **CASES INCLUDED IN THE PRO BONO PROGRAM**

- Custody – consultation only
- Divorce – consultation only
- Dependency (Children & Youth Services) parent(s) - full representation  
A Guardian Ad Litem (attorney) will be provided for the child(ren)
- Protection from Abuse – consultation only –after Special Master's Hearing (appeal only)
- Landlord/Tenant – consultation only - Legal Services must have a conflict

#### **CASES NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRO BONO PROGRAM**

- Support – contact the Domestic Relations Section 570-387-8870
- Civil cases involving monetary/property damage
- Criminal – contact Public Defender's Office
- Civil and Criminal cases in Magisterial District Court

#### **Courthouse Information:**

Columbia County Court of Common Pleas  
26th Judicial District  
35 West Main Street  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815

Phone: (570) 389-5667  
Fax: (570) 389-5621

North Penn Legal Services (Bloomsburg Office)

Garry E. Wamser  
168 E. Fifth Street  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815-2206  
Phone: (570) 784-8760  
Fax: (570) 784-4840  
gwamser@northpennlegal.org  
www.northpennlegal.org

**B. Other Local Pro Bono Options**

**1. 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

**2. 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)

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<http://www.pamd.uscourts.gov/default.htm>