

2010

PRO BONO PROGRAM - LEBANON COUNTY

Our pro bono program is a voluntary program and is administered through a joint effort between the Bar and Legal Services. Every year, a member of our local bar association prepares and sends a schedule to each participating pro bono attorney, designating the days each attorney is scheduled to meet with clients throughout the year. The Bar recruits new participants. In Lebanon County, we have approximately 60 attorneys who participate in our pro bono program.

Attorneys are scheduled to meet with clients in our office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Each participating attorney is scheduled two or three times per year, depending on the rotation each year. Three to five clients are scheduled each of those mornings. Our office screens each client and schedules the appointments. We provide the attorney with a file for each client which includes a copy of our intake form, a case closing form, and an in forma pauperis petition. We follow up on these cases by sending status forms to the attorneys and inquiry forms to the clients.

The types of cases referred to pro bono attorneys include: custody/visitation, divorce, debt advice/bankruptcy, mortgage foreclosure, execution sales, landlord/tenant, unemployment compensation, SSI, PFA defendants. In addition to providing direct representation to clients, there is a local private attorney who conducts custody clinics at our office.

Client referrals - When a client contacts our office for services, we screen them for eligibility and take the necessary information regarding their type of case. The client is then placed on the pro bono waiting list. The waiting period is approximately four weeks. We then send the client a letter telling them to contact our office to schedule an appointment. When the client calls to schedule the appointment, the client is given the next available pro bono appointment.

Conflict referrals - Conflict cases are handled in the same manner as above, except for PFA Defendants. PFA Defendants are referred to a private attorney who has agreed to accept such cases through our pro bono program.

Out of county referrals - When we receive a client referral from out of our area, the client is placed on the pro bono waiting list in the same manner as a regular client referral.