

LEGAL SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC COMMITTEE PLAN FOR 2006-2007 YEAR

The goals for 2006-2007 are based upon the mission of the Legal Services to the Public Committee, that mission being to promote civil legal representation and assistance for the neediest among us in the Commonwealth. With the support of the PBA Pro Bono Office, the Committee focuses on issues of concern to the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network (PLAN) and to private practice pro bono attorneys.

There are currently four standing subcommittees of the Committee: Development, Law Schools, Pro Bono Conference and Local Support. Over the years, there have also been task forces that have grown out of this Committee to address particular problems and issues. During the past few years, a task force has been working on a state-wide school loan forgiveness and repayment assistance program. The task force recently submitted to the PBA a resolution calling for the establishment of a statewide loan repayment assistance program. This resolution was approved by the PBA Board of Governors and by the PBA House of Delegates in June of this year. (A copy is available on the PBA website at <http://www.pabar.org/probono/pbtrlf.shtml>.) Currently, efforts are underway to form a new committee to work on implementation of such a statewide program.

The goals of the Committee, along with action steps and target dates, are as follows:

I. Review Committee and Subcommittee structure

Action steps for September 7 conference call – Discuss this and, if agreed to, ask for volunteers to a subcommittee who will meet and come up with proposed structural changes to be presented at the meeting of the Committee on the Committee/Section Day on November 16.

II. Promote Pro bono activities in the state and support pro bono attorneys

Activities may include

- Encouraging local bar associations to hold recognition events and inviting President Horoho to participate.
- Encouraging and supporting local pro bono training
- Efforts to involve judges in the promotion and recognition of pro bono volunteers
- Keeping current the list and description of pro bono programs across the state which is on the PBA website at <http://www.pabar.org/countyprobono.shtml>.

Action steps for September 7 conference call – Ask members to look at the list of current pro bono programs and to formulate ideas about how to better promote pro bono activities and support pro bono attorneys in 06/07

III. Plan and implement pro bono conference to be held at PBA state wide meeting

Action step for September conference call – Discuss membership of Pro bono conference subcommittee and the status of planning for Conference in June of 2007. A description of past conferences is at <http://www.pabar.org/probono/pbac.shtml>.

IV. Support Legal Services programs in PA

A. Participate in Task Force on Loan Forgiveness and Repayment Assistance and support findings and recommendations of Task Force

(As the resolution of Task Force has just been approved by the PBA, the Task Force is being sun-setted and an implementation committee is being formed to implement the recommendations contained in the resolution. Therefore, there is no action step to be taken on this item at this time.)

B. Support effort to maintain and increase government and private funding for legal services

(Note that the recent effort of this Committee to maintain state funding for legal services was just successful with passage of a five year extension to the sun setting provision contained in the Access to Justice Act in July of this year. – No particular action step on this item is therefore currently being proposed)

V. Propose, advocate and support legislation benefiting those served by legal services and pro bono programs

In order to achieve this goal, it is proposed that the Committee would need: 1. some mechanism for looking for and reviewing proposed legislation which might impact, positively or negatively, on low income people and victims of domestic violence in PA and 2., a process that would enable the Committee, in concert with other PBA committees of sections where possible, to take a position for or against legislation.

Action step for September 7 conference call – Discuss this and, if agreed upon, ask for volunteers for a subcommittee to consider and propose to the Committee those mechanisms and/or processes that would best accomplish these goals.

VI. Increase the number and involvement of private practice and other attorneys engaged in pro bono work on the Committee

Action step for September 7 conference call – Discuss strategies for accomplishing this on the call.