

**FREQUENTLY ASKED PRO BONO QUESTIONS**  
**(Taken From Past DCBA Newsletters)**

**Am I covered? (July '03)**

Yes. MidPenn Legal Services provides primary malpractice insurance coverage for all pro bono attorneys. This provides coverage for any case referred through MidPenn Legal Services.

**Should I Use a Retainer Agreement? (Aug. '03)**

Yes. We recommend that you use a Retainer Agreement for your pro bono clients. We encourage you to review the agreement with your client so the client understands what specific services you have agreed to provide and what the client needs to do as part of the agreement. Please contact Sandy Ballard if you want a sample agreement.

**What if my pro bono client buys a new BMW? (Sept. '03)**

Call Sandy! MidPenn Legal Services does the initial screening to determine clients' income eligibility. However, if you suspect that your pro bono client may be over the income limits (e.g., gross income of \$11,000/year for a single person), please contact Sandy.

**What do I do when my pro bono case is over? (Oct. '03)**

First, inform the client by phone and letter. Explain that if another issue arises, the client can contact MidPenn Legal Services (232-0581). Second, send a copy of the letter and your Case Closure Form to the pro bono program. Finally, if you entered an appearance in court, notify the court of your withdrawal.

**How much time will a pro bono case take? (Nov. '03)**

On average, a DCBA pro bono matter usually takes approximately five hours. This average was calculated based on the hours reported by participating attorneys on their Closed Case Forms.

**Can I choose when to take a pro bono case? (Dec. '03)**

Yes! We send scheduling letters on a rotating basis according to the alphabetical DCBA membership list. However, if you have a special time of year (e.g., not during tax season) or certain date that you prefer, we are happy to schedule you in advance for that date. Our scheduling letter also encourages you to contact us if you would prefer to interview the clients at your office or on another date.

**Who do I call if I have questions about my pro bono case? (Jan. '04)**

DCBA pro bono attorneys are not alone! We will do all we can to facilitate the efficient use of your time on these pro bono matters. Therefore, MidPenn staff is available to assist you. You may contact a staff attorney by calling 232-0581. Just explain that you are calling regarding a pro bono matter that you would like to discuss. In addition, Sandy Ballard (232-7536) has other resources that may be able to help you. Just give us a call!

**Do we have a Pro Bono Handbook? (Note: Not used yet)**

Yes. Last fall, program intern Jamie Rahn assisted us in creating the DCBA Pro Bono Attorney Handbook. The handbook begins with a strong letter of support from the judges of the Dauphin County Common Pleas Court. The handbook is filled with useful explanations, sample forms and lists of support services. To obtain a copy, please contact Sandy Ballard at 232-7536 or by e-mail at [sandy@dcba-pa.org](mailto:sandy@dcba-pa.org). The handbook is also available on-line at [www.pabar.org/dauphinprobonohome.shtml](http://www.pabar.org/dauphinprobonohome.shtml). Click on "Pro Bono Attorney Handbook."

**I did not sign up for pro bono, so why did I get a letter? (May '04)**

Every member of the Dauphin County Bar Association is expected to participate in our pro bono program by either accepting two referrals or contributing \$300. DCBA members approved a resolution creating this system at a Law Day Dinner Meeting on May 1, 1991. The original resolution provided for either one-half day of service (no more than three cases) or a \$400 contribution.

Due to strong membership support, the DCBA was able to substantially reduce the backlog of legal services' cases. Thus, two years later in 1993, the "expectation" was changed, and members now are asked to accept only two cases or contribute \$300. This expectation of participation continues to this day.

Thus, on a rotation basis, each member is asked to take a turn for pro bono appointments. This method is used to ensure that every member is provided an equal opportunity to do pro bono work.