

2005 Modest Means Panel Attorney Survey Answers

1. What is the best part about participating in this program?

Summary: Helping those who otherwise can't afford help

- A. I have received some **interesting cases**, and the people **appreciate** your efforts.
- B. It gives the private practice lawyer the opportunity to work for people who would **not be able to afford** private legal service. It gives the lawyer a positive feeling about himself or herself as a lawyer. I also do a lot of pro bono through several churches, etc., but modest means is so important for so many people who work hard and make "some" money, but not enough to pay for a private attorney and don't qualify for free legal services.
- C. Helping people that **can't otherwise afford** lawyers
- D. N/A
- E. Providing legal services to people who would **otherwise be unable to afford** services.
- F. 1. Opportunity to **help people** 2. Client has a **vested interest**
- G. It is rewarding to be able to help **people who need help** and cannot otherwise afford it.
- H. Being able to help those less fortunate gain **access to the legal services** they require.

2. What is the worst part?

Summary: Lack of appreciation, follow-through and/or payment

- A. I received some **dubious referrals** – collection matters and people who could afford to pay.
- B. I think "some" modest means **clients don't appreciate** the time and effort of the private lawyers and what he or she is doing for them is a service and that time the lawyer spends is in many ways a professional courtesy, if you will. It is not something the lawyer has to do. It is because we want "to give back" to help. Yes, the pay, but much less than the standard fees.
- C. Clients either can't or **don't want to pay** even \$50 an hour
- D. N/A
- E. Clients are typically **unlikely to follow legal advice** provided to them; Clients do not respond to requests in a timely manner; Clients are less likely to follow through with scheduled appointments.
- F. Some **clients could afford** my reasonable fees, but receive reduced fee due to referral. Some clients believe they are getting less service
- G. Like many pro bono clients, the work is expected, **not appreciated**. Worse yet, I consistently **have trouble collecting fees**, even at the reduced rate. A higher retainer would defeat the purpose of the program.
- H. It was difficult **contacting the clients**. As number changed, was disconnected, etc.

3. How can we make it easier for other attorneys to participate?

- A. **More upfront review** and discretion. I was receiving too many referrals.
- B. Have a **reception** for “modest means” in Lawyers Lounge and let Judge Lewis talk about its importance as he did for straight “Pro Bono”. Modest Means needs a push from the bench!
- C. N/A
- D. N/A
- E. 1. **Advertise** the availability of the program to the general public. 2. Coordinate more effectively with Mid-Penn to receive more eligible referrals. I receive many calls from people rejected by Mid-Penn for subject matter ineligibility that were not referred to the Modest Means panel. 3. Encourage attorneys to refer people to Modest Means Panel. I refer every potential client who cannot afford my hourly rate to Modest Means for potential eligibility.
- F. N/A
- G. N/A
- H. Perhaps have a list of cases (general by type of case, rather than name.) on **website** and allow attorneys to volunteer the services instead of waiting to be asked.

4. Other comments

- A. N/A
- B. I think the **Public Defender’s** Office should send people to you who don’t qualify but they believe need competent private counsel who do criminal law, but can’t afford a good criminal defense lawyer.
- C. N/A
- D. There was one individual who I believe had been referred to me through this service but I never got to finish my conversation with her. As soon as I determined that she had insurance and explained to her the ramifications of that fact she hung up on me.
- E. N/A
- F. Sometimes it is important to **review assets** and available income sources. Also sometimes the **issue is not worth the expense**. I have no interest in spending my time and the clients’ limited income on a losing effort.
- G. N/A
- H. N/A