

MONTOUR COUNTY PRO BONO OPTIONS, Jan. 7, 2010

A. North Penn Legal Services (Bloomsburg Office)

North Penn Legal Services (NPLS) is a non-profit corporation funded in large part by the Legal Services Corporation and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to provide free legal help to low income persons. NPLS is staffed by 30 attorneys and 18 paralegals working out of 12 offices. Advocates provide representation on a broad range of civil matters including custody, housing, SSI, bankruptcy, consumer and protection from abuse. In addition to direct representation, clients are also helped through telephone advice, pro bono and Judicare attorneys, pro se packets and self-help clinics.

People seeking legal services should call 1-877-9-LEGAL-0 (1-877-953-4250), between 9:30 -11:30 AM and 1:30- 3:30 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Please have your paperwork ready when you call NPLS.

During the call, a North Penn Legal Services employee will ask the client for:

- A brief description of the problem, to determine whether the problem is something NPLS is able to help with.
- His or her name and the names of others involved in the legal matter to see if NPLS can provide assistance without any conflict of interest.
- His or her household finances to check for income eligibility.
- The basic facts of the problem and what help the client is asking for.

The request will be reviewed promptly by a staff advocate and North Penn Legal Services will:

- Give advice or brief services by telephone
- Schedule an appointment with a staff attorney or paralegal
- Refer the client to a volunteer attorney
- Refer the client to alternative services, if NPLS cannot assist them

For more information, please contact:

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)

Fax: (717) 232-6802

sgreecher@tuckerlaw.com

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