

## **YORK COUNTY PRO BONO OPTIONS, January 21, 2010**

### **A. York County Bar Association's Pro Bono Program**

The York County Bar Association (YCBA) Pro Bono Program is run in partnership with the York Office of MidPenn Legal Services. People seeking pro bono assistance should contact MidPenn either directly or by referral from an attorney. MidPenn will then screen the client for financial eligibility to determine if they qualify for pro bono help. Once a person's eligibility is confirmed, MidPenn will refer them to an attorney from the YCBA.

Referrals are made based on a list of attorneys who are willing to take specific types of cases. For example, there are about 12 local attorneys who have signed up to be available to take pro bono bankruptcy cases. If MidPenn has a client who qualifies for a pro bono bankruptcy case, they will email the attorneys on the bankruptcy list to see who is available to take the case. The YCBA generates the lists for MidPenn by sending out letters to remind members of the YCBA to sign up for pro bono work and soliciting new members of the Bar to volunteer.

MidPenn tracks which attorneys take cases and attempts to spread out the work evenly on each list. MidPenn also records the result of each referral, such as whether or not the client ever contacted the attorney and the outcome of cases.

Participation in the pro bono program can be done by either signing up to take specific types of cases, participating in a panel if attorneys have a specialized area of practice or by paying the \$250 annual Opt Out fee. The money raised through the Opt Out fee is sent directly to Mid Penn Legal Services for the operation of their York office in covering staff salaries and operating expenses. The YCBA recognizes participants by presenting them with pro bono awards at the end of the year.

All members are encouraged to sign up either to take a case or to pay the Opt Out fee. Members are also encouraged to sign up for the 100% Plan whereby they agree to take a case if one is assigned to them. If no case is assigned to them by December 1<sup>st</sup> of any calendar year, they will be invoiced in the amount of \$250.00 by the York County Bar Foundation in lieu of being assigned a case.

#### Other YCBA Pro Bono Projects:

Clinics are conducted under the Pro Bono Committee's supervision to help people handling their own Custody and Divorce matters. These Pro Se clinics are held every other month and allow financially eligible people to receive instructions from local volunteer attorneys about custody and divorce issues.

The Committee also sponsors educational seminars through the Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center (PIRC) to educate and encourage more attorneys to get involved in Pro Bono Immigration issues.

The York County Pro Bono Committee has appropriately coordinated its activity through Mid Penn Legal Services and PIRC to make sure that as many of the legal needs of York County's poor can be met as are possible.

For more information, please contact:

York County Bar Association

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info@yorkbar.com  
<http://www.yorkbar.com>

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256 E. Market St.  
York, PA 17403-2058  
Phone (717) 848-3605  
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<http://www.midpenn.org>

## **B. Other Local Pro Bono Options**

### **1. Middle District Bankruptcy Bar Association (Southern 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 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:

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Chair - Southern Tier MDBBA Pro Bono Program  
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York, PA 17401  
Phone: (717) 718-7110  
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## **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

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