PBA Pro Bono Program Guidelines

1. Members of the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) will sign up as a Pro Bono Volunteer ("Volunteer").

2. Pennsylvanians with legal issues will contact the PBA Pro Bono.

3. Volunteers will be matched, when possible, by geographic location and legal issue subject matter with people in need. However, certain matters may be shared more broadly with the volunteer listserv.

4. The PBA Pro Bono Office will share contact information with volunteers who agree to reach out to a particular person in need. Volunteers will be responsible for following up with screening the person needing legal assistance.

5. If the volunteer agrees to contact a person in need, the volunteer will let the PBA Pro Bono Office know the result of that contact, from screening and brief service to full representation.

6. If a formal representation ensures, a representation agreement (sample provided) is required to be completed.

7. If you will be seeing a client who would be required to pay filing fees or sheriff service cost but who cannot afford such, the PBA Pro Bono Office will help you find forms that may be completed and filed authorizing the litigant to proceed in forma pauperis without the need for payment of such fees and costs. The client is responsible for court costs that cannot be waived. Other costs, such as telephone and postage, should be borne by the attorney. However the attorney and client spread out these costs, the costs should be detailed in the representation agreement.

8. After interviewing the client, the volunteer will be responsible for deciding the extent to which the person in need’s problem may be resolved by advice, negotiation, litigation or other action. The volunteer is not obligated to pursue a case that the volunteer believes has insufficient merit; nor is the volunteer expected to represent the client in any matter other than the one which is initially accepted; nor is the volunteer obligated to pursue an appeal of an unsuccessful matter that was handled although the volunteer may, within the Rules of Professional Conduct, wish to assist the client in meeting applicable appeal deadlines.

9. If the volunteer receives a case in an area in which the volunteer is not able to provide competent representation, it will be the volunteer’s responsibility to contact the PBA Pro Bono Office to re-refer the matter.

10. Although it does not occur frequently, the volunteer may find that a case assigned is potentially fee-producing, either because a substantial monetary recovery appears likely or because a fee-shifting stature is implicated, or both. In that event, you may discuss a fee arrangement with the client after advising the PBA Pro Bono Office in writing on the Case Tracking Form.