

Recruiting and Developing the Elusive Family Law Volunteer

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Brief Description: This session is a continuation of the dialogue initiated by the Center for Pro Bono's 2002 report, "The Impact of Family Law Cases on Pro Bono Programs" and begun at the 2003 Equal Justice Conference. Panelists will start this interactive session by discussing innovations aimed at recruiting and retaining family law volunteers. The session will conclude with an interactive exercise to identify successful strategies to recruit and retain family law volunteers.

Topical Outline:

- I. Background: "The Impact of Family Law Cases on Pro Bono Programs"
 - a. Issues impacting attorneys' willingness to handle pro bono cases
 - i. Complexity of cases
 - ii. "Burnout" factor
 - iii. Family law not a part of attorney's private practice
 - iv. Inefficiencies in court procedures
 - v. Attorneys lack sufficient resources for family law cases
 - b. Issues impacting programs' ability to handle family law cases
 - i. Volume of family law cases
 - ii. Staff burnout
 - iii. Tensions between staffed legal services unit and pro bono staff
 - iv. Effect of domestic violence funding on program priorities

- v. Limited attorney pool in rural areas
 - vi. Lack of organized system to deal with pro se litigants
 - vii. Client circumstances
 - c. Recommendations
 - d. Examine and restructure program priorities
 - e. Plan with other providers
 - f. Educate the public
 - g. Educate attorneys
 - h. Provide support for volunteers
 - i. Provide mentoring
 - j. Involve retired attorneys
 - k. Involve the courts and judiciary
 - l. Pro se assistance
 - m. Telephone counsel
 - n. Kiosks
 - o. Unbundling
 - p. Reduced fee cases
 - q. Conflict waivers
 - r. Involve paralegals
 - s. Tap into bar associations' family law sections
- II. Senior Partners for Justice: program description
 - a. Involve retired attorneys as volunteers
 - b. Partner with established pro bono program
- III. Delaware Volunteer Legal Services
 - a. Primarily family law cases
 - b. Partnership with law school
 - c. Other strategies
- IV. Atlanta Volunteer Lawyer Foundation
 - a. Domestic Violence Program
 - b. Guardian ad Litem Program
 - c. Domestic Relations panel
- V. Your challenges?
- VI. Brainstorm solutions.