

A Winning Combination: Corporate Law Departments, Law Firms, and Legal Service Providers Working Together

Community Legal Resources presentation

- I. Background
 - a. Needs within Detroit context
 - b. History with ABC, working through local legal services provider
 - c. Accomplishments since 1998
 - i. Law firm and legal dept. involvement
 - ii. Leverage for community development
 - d. New directions
 - i. Using lawyers in policy efforts
 - ii. Team approach to tackling systemic issues

- II. Successful partnerships
 - a. General Motors and the Detroit Bar's Legal Services Clinic
 - i. Matching in-house real estate counsel with corporate clients
 - ii. Annual commitments to clinic participation
 - b. Johnson Controls, Visteon Comerica Bank and other corporate involvement
 - i. Matching small attorney team to nonprofit clients in specific neighborhood
 - ii. Public relations, sponsorships and ability to encourage support by law firms representing auto suppliers and banks
 - c. "Community Land Trust Project" legal team
 - i. Ten law firms and legal departments sharing responsibility for set "products"
 - ii. Value of committees by practice area—leveraging legal fire power on behalf of nonprofit sector

- III. Challenges
 - a. Developing meaningful partnerships
 - i. Must be a reason to work together, not an end in itself: e.g. harnessing a specific range of skills
 - ii. Helpful to create specific deliverables to maximize participation and minimize passing the buck
 - b. Oversight and tending to the team
 - i. Must dedicate staff resources to managing the team/partnership
 - ii. Helpful to exploit value of relationship-building within the team: media coverage, joint appearances, client relations from the firm's perspective

More info at <http://www.clronline.org>