

ABA / NLADA 2005 EQUAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE

Operating a Brief Services Unit: From Day-to-Day Operations to Creating a Pro Bono Partnership

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Brief Description:

This workshop will present an overview of operating a Brief Services Unit (BSU) to resolve a high volume of cases using limited staff and volunteer resources. The topics covered will include an innovative approach to the use of a BSU to identify legal trends which can be marketed to law firms on a pro bono basis for systemic reform. The workshop will also cover the use of BSU volunteer resources to develop complex cases for referrals to law firms.

Topical Outline:

- I. History and description of Brief Services Unit
 - A. Legal Counsel for the Elderly
 - B. Northwest Justice Project
- II. What types of functions does a BSU perform?
- III. Nuts and bolts of operating BSU – LCE and NJP models
 - A. staffing the BSU
 - B. how the BSU gets cases
 - C. use of volunteers and volunteer law students
 - D. kinds of cases BSU handles
- IV. Specific examples of BSU case-handling systems
 - A. debt collection
 - B. Social Security
 - C. prescription drug benefits
- V. Use of BSU to identify systemic issues
- VI. Interaction of BSU and pro bono projects