

ABA/ NLADA 2006 Equal Justice Conference

The Role of Pro Bono in Access to Justice

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Brief Description:

This workshop will explore the sensitive issue of expectations and realities of pro bono legal services from the perspectives of both legal services and private bar attorneys. Participants will wrestle with questions about the efficacy of pro bono and staff attorney models, and explore how to coordinate the work and relationships of the two groups. How can we best meet existing as well as emerging needs of clients?

Topical Outline:

- I. Comparison of Legal Service and Pro Bono delivery Systems
 - a. History
 - b. Resources
 1. Legal Services
 2. Private Bar
 - c. Economic Realities
 1. Costs
 2. Goals
- II. Models for Collaboration and Effective Service Delivery
 - a. Washington State – one model.
 1. In many ways, the pro bono system in Washington State “just grew,” Topsy-like, rather than being subject to any statewide planning system. The new Washington State Plan takes a close look at the best way to serve rural areas and to administer rural pro bono programs, and offers supporting statistical evidence for making some dramatic changes.

2. Expanding rural service through full integration of staff and pro bono programs presents many obstacles.
 - i. How can we adequately train and support rural volunteers?
 - ii. How can we address the cultural differences between staffed programs and volunteer programs?
 3. Current structure in Washington
 - i. Statewide LSC-funded staffed program
 - ii. Many small regionally-defined pro bono programs
 4. Proposed restructuring
 - i. More regions
 - ii. More staff attorney in rural areas
 - iii. Pro bono administration integrated with staff attorney services in rural areas
 - iv. No single model can work everywhere; each region must create its own plan.
- a. The Philadelphia Story
 - i. History
 - ii. Current efforts
- III. Obstacles to genuine collaborative integration
- a. Turf protection
 - b. Need for local control
 - c. Historical/cultural differences in priority setting
 - d. Are there conflicting ethical systems?

Notes:

Bibliography & Website Links:

1. Washington State draft Revised State Plan 2006:
<http://www.wsba.org/atj/committees/sprc.htm>
2. Jacobs, Jane. *Systems of Survival: A Dialogue on the Moral Foundations of Commerce and Politics*. Publisher: Vintage, 1994. ISBN: 0679748164
3. Browning, Sharon. "Awakening The Heart of Justice: The Next Pro Bono Challenge," *Management Information Exchange Journal*, Volume XIX, No. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 33-35. Also available at:
<http://www.phillyvip.org/Awakening%20the%20Heart%20of%20Justice.htm>