

**RETENTION TIPS**  
**Prepared by the ABA Center for Pro Bono**  
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**Have a Good Program in Place**

- √ See attached handout titled “10 Key Components of a Successful Pro Bono Program That Every Governing Body Member and Program Volunteer Should Know” for components of a successful pro bono program
- √ Comprehensive screening of clients is critical
  - √ Provide thorough statement of facts of case and assessment of its nature at time of referral - no surprises
- √ Program’s referral system should match the needs of the client with the expertise and interest of the volunteer attorney
- √ Ensure, to the best of your ability, that volunteer attorneys have a good experience with each pro bono case taken

**Offer Your Volunteers Case Support and Training**

- √ Volunteer needs and program resources will affect amount and type of support and training provided
- √ Support ideas – provide volunteers with
  - √ Form pleadings (through a website or in electronic format)
  - √ Legal Research
  - √ Co-Counseling
  - √ Substantive legal manuals
  - √ Program handbooks with policies and staff contact information
  - √ Filing fee and other court fee waivers (have forms included)
  - √ Reimbursement of incidental expenses and litigation costs
  - √ Filing of cases on request
  - √ Scheduling divorce prove-ups and other uncontested matters
  - √ Arranging for office space for client interviewing
  - √ Offering malpractice insurance
  - √ Mentors (staff or volunteers)

**Training Ideas**

- √ Develop regular schedule of training seminars in substantive poverty law areas
  - √ Develop client sensitivity training
  - √ Develop training in the special needs of targeted client groups, e.g., homeless, battered spouses, elderly, etc.
  - √ Develop teaching clinics
  - √ Provide mentors
  - √ Provide telephone advice and consultation
  - √ Obtain discount for bar-sponsored or CLE sponsored training (or offer free CLE in exchange for agreeing to take a specified number of pro bono cases)
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- √ Video tape training events for viewing by other volunteers
- √ Web-streamed training (make available on program's or state-wide legal services web site)

### **Sources of support/training include**

- √ Pro bono staff
- √ Legal services staff attorneys/paralegals
- √ Private practitioners with special expertise
- √ Judges
- √ Other participating attorneys
- √ National support centers
- √ Law schools – faculty, staff and students

### **Reduce Volunteer Burnout**

- √ Rotate all volunteers (provide opportunities for volunteers to handle a variety of legal matters)
- √ Utilize seasoned volunteer attorneys to provide mentoring for newer/less experienced attorneys
- √ Involve volunteers in a variety of activities to benefit the pro bono program (and ultimately the clients) – recruiting other volunteers, fundraising, training other volunteers and program staff

### **Recognition**

- √ Recognition or acknowledgement of the contribution made by program volunteers can provide much satisfaction to volunteers and can be a factor in their decision to remain actively involved in the program
- √ Recognition can also aid in the recruitment of new volunteers
- √ See attached handout for recognition ideas/techniques

For more information, visit [www.abaprobono.org](http://www.abaprobono.org).

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