

PRO BONO IN BADGERLAND: Collaboration, Communication & Support

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Brief Description:

This presentation will illustrate successful collaborations between Wisconsin's two law schools, its largest legal services provider, the State Bar and private law firms that expand services provided to the unrepresented in Wisconsin's two largest counties.

Topical Outline:

I. Overlapping Missions & Concerns Create Opportunity

- A. University of Wisconsin Law School - The Wisconsin Idea and the "law in action" approach finds its expression in the clinical curriculum
 - 1. 850 students
 - 2. Madison, WI
 - a) Political capitol
 - b) Pop. 200,000
 - c) 5% of families in poverty
 - d) 28.6% minorities
 - 3. Extensive clinics and clinical faculty
- B. Marquette Law School's Jesuit mission: encourage students to Be the Difference - become agents for positive change in society
 - 1. 698 students
 - 2. Milwaukee, WI
 - a) Economic capitol
 - b) Pop. 546,000
 - c) 22% of families in poverty
 - d) 71% "minorities"
 - 3. Expanding clinics and new Assistant Dean for Public Service
- C. Legal Action of Wisconsin: LSC Grantee serving 39 of Wisconsin's 72 counties
 - 1. Largest pro bono operation in state
 - 2. Combined staff and pro bono program--well integrated.
 - 3. Includes the states most urbanized areas and many rural counties
 - 4. Staff person in each office is responsible for recruiting lawyers and referring cases. Full-time firm-wide attorney coordinator & full-time paralegal in Milwaukee office.
- D. State Bar of Wisconsin - specific goals on access to justice and pro bono participation
 - 1. 14,000 active, resident members
 - 2. Over 50% report some free pro bono

3. Legal Assistance Committee role
4. Extensive benefits and resources
5. Communications & recruitment efforts
6. Our mission
 - a) The mission of the State Bar of Wisconsin is to improve the administration of justice and the delivery of legal services and to promote the professional interests of Wisconsin lawyers
 - (1) Increase member participation in State Bar sponsored pro bono programs by 20% per year.
 - (2) Implement recommendations in the Access to Justice Report to reduce the percentage of Wisconsin residents reporting an unmet civil legal need by at least 12% by 2015.

II. Challenges

- A. Students
 1. Commitment – time and school calendar
 2. Student practice rule
- B. Providers
 1. Resources for training & supervision
- C. Lawyers/firms/bar associations
 1. finding lawyers to take cases and supervise students

III. Opportunities

- A. Shaping the next generation– fostering the pro bono ethic
- B. Builds familiarity and commitment with new partners
- C. Educational experience through conducting intakes, interviewing to obtain sufficient information to evaluate need/nature of assistance required; making judgments about resources available to help.
- D. Relationships and networking opportunities for students that can provide the basis to expand or develop future programs.
- E. Increases access to justice!

IV. The Importance of an Integrated, Collaborative Effort

- A. Requirements: Personal Relationships – Time - Commitment
 1. Law schools bring
 - a) Expertise in education and practice
 - b) Eager, young minds
 - c) Funding & staff
 - d) Community connections
 2. Providers bring
 - a) Expertise in practice and training
 - b) Expertise in client service & outreach
 - c) Community connections
 - d) Some access to funding but also staff
 3. Bar associations bring
 - a) Connections to private practitioners
 - b) Connections to the courts
 - c) Resources

B. Traditional Efforts

1. Some collaboration
 - a) Clinical experiences
 - b) Unemployment
 - c) Family law
 - d) Restraining orders
 - e) General legal clinics
 - f) Internships

C. Less Traditional

1. Higher level of collaboration involved
2. Broader Partnerships
 - a) Pro Bono Initiative
 - b) CALR
 - c) Partnering with nonprofit law firms
 - d) M-LINC
 - e) Law firm sponsored clinic

V. How We Work Together

A. State Bar of Wisconsin

1. Legal Assistance Committee
2. Free professional liability insurance
3. Free LexisNexis time
4. Reimbursement fund for costs
5. Free CLE gift certificates
6. Volunteer recruitment & sharing
7. Grants
8. Pro bono awards
9. Conferences & training
10. Staff

B. Legal Action of Wisconsin

1. Recruitment, training, case referral and management, support and recognition.
2. Annual training for volunteer lawyers
 - a) Conducted in late fall every year
 - b) Grown from several days to a full week
 - c) Currently, 6½ days offering 10 topics, including Ethics
3. Partnerships & collaborations with both law schools
 - a) Marquette University
 - (1) Unemployment Compensation Appeals Clinic
 - (a) Clinical program at MULS, course taught by LAW senior staff attorney.
 - (b) Volunteer lawyers monitor client interviews by law students, and students advocate for employees at administrative hearings.
 - (c) VLP schedules clients after determining eligibility.

- (2) Milwaukee County Courthouse Self-Help Center
 - (a) Law students work under supervision of volunteer lawyers.
 - (b) VLP has recruited and trained law students (along with lawyers, paralegals (and paralegal students) to assist pro se parties in family court and small claims court matters.

- (3) Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic (MVLC)
 - (a) VLP invites volunteer attorneys to annual training and shares training manuals
 - (b) VLP coordinates brown bag lunch series of training programs in various subject areas using staff and volunteer lawyers as trainers.

- (4) Coalition for Access to Legal Resources (CALR):
 - (a) initiative to get legal services providers and pro bono lawyers together to share information about needs arising in the clinic and larger community, and the services available to meet those needs. See website at the end.

- (5) Student interns, supervised fieldwork experiences and law clerks.

b) University of Wisconsin

- (1) Unemployment Compensation Clinic
 - (a) Not sponsored by the law school
 - (b) Organized by supervising attorneys and student leaders
 - (c) LAW involved in training; VLP supplies training manuals.

- (2) Restraining Order Clinic
 - (a) UW Clinical Program
 - (b) LAW becoming involved in training, coordinating with local DV agency to make referrals to private attorneys
 - (c) Private attorney partnerships essential

4. Alumni pairing program

- a) Both schools are recruiting law school alumni to team up with law students to handle civil cases referred by Legal Action and other legal services providers.
- b) Similar to Villanova University School of Law's "Lawyering Together" initiative

5. Recognition of private firms/attorneys as well as law student volunteers

C. Marquette Law School

1. Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic (MVLC)

2. Coalition for Access to Legal Resources
3. Self-Help Centers at Milwaukee County Courthouse
4. "Lawyering Together"
5. M-LINC
6. ADR College for Kids
7. Pro Bono Society & Pro Bono Placements

8. The Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic Model – One Example
 - a) MVLC Staffing Pattern:
 - (1) 6 Member Steering Committee appointed by Dean of the Law School
 - (2) 1 Part-time Program Assistant, Asst. Dean
 - (3) House of Peace: 60 volunteer attorneys 1x /month for 2 hours
 - (4) 30 volunteer attorneys
 - (5) 100 volunteer law students / 6 per shift
 - (6) Approximately 10 clients /shift
 - (7) Community Services van shuttles students
 - b) Legal information & referral only
 - c) MVLC Results & Statistics:
 - (1) Over 3000 persons served
 - (2) 96.8% Participant Satisfaction
 - (3) Over 600 hours of attorney pro bono
 - (4) Over 1000 hours of student pro bono
 - (5) Nearly 50 areas of legal need addressed

D. University of Wisconsin Law School

1. Family Court Assistance Project
 - a) Clinical Program for credit:
 - (1) Structured co-counseling relationship with local non-profit law firm
 - (2) Provides legal representation on sliding fee scale and educational experience for students
 - (3) Mentoring relationship and real case experience

2. Restraining Order Clinic
 - a) Presents opportunities to collaborate with local DV agency, private attorneys and LAW through training and client representation
 - b) Recruit attorney volunteers as private law firm project
 - c) Courthouse cooperation imperative
 - d) Training is a collaborative process with DV agency, LAW and U.W.

3. Pro Bono Initiative
 - a) Pairs law student volunteers with volunteer attorneys
 - b) Screening by agencies. Law School does match
 - c) Referrals from non-profit agencies
 - d) Recognition at Law School awards ceremony

VI. Lessons

- A. Communicate early and often
- B. Holistic approaches add strength/depth
- C. These efforts take much more time/planning but they're worth the effort

Notes:

Bibliography & Website Links:

1. www.wisbar.org/probono
2. www.legalhelpmilwaukee.org: Providers post a variety of current information regarding services available.
3. <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/scr/5500.pdf> Wisconsin's student practice rule
4. <http://www.law.wisc.edu/FJR/> University of Wisconsin Law School's Remington Center site with links to all the clinics
5. <http://law.marquette.edu/cgi-bin/site.pl> Marquette University Law School site with links to public service office and clinical programs
6. www.legalaction.org Legal Action of Wisconsin home page with links to VLP projects