

King County Bar Association

Community Legal Services Programs

Income Eligibility:

The King County Bar Association's Community Legal Services Programs, funded in part by the King County Bar Foundation, serve low-income King County residents. Except for the Neighborhood Legal Clinics, which have no income guidelines, clients must be below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. In fiscal year ending May 31, 2007, the Community Legal Services Programs assisted 9,560 clients using the services of 1,603 volunteers who donated 23,689 hours for a value of \$6,611,360.

Volunteer Legal Services:

Contact Karen Clark, Staff Attorney, (206) 267-7024

The Volunteer Legal Services (VLS) Program is one KCBA's oldest pro bono programs, providing direct representation by volunteer attorneys to low income clients on a broad array of civil legal issues, including the areas of debtor-creditor and collections, bankruptcy, consumer issues, real estate foreclosures and predatory lending, landlord-tenant, public benefits, tort defense, student special education, and wills and estate planning. VLS generally provides representation to clients who are in a defensive posture, but occasionally assists clients with an affirmative action if such action is necessary to preserve a basic need, such as recovery of the client's only possessions or housing maintenance. VLS conducts intake from various sources in the community, including the Neighborhood Legal Clinics, Lawyer Referral Service, community service and legal services agencies, social workers and direct calls from applicants. VLS works extensively with King County law firms through their pro bono coordinators to increase capacity for direct representation of low-income clients.

Volunteer Attorneys for People with AIDS & AIDS Legal Access: (VAPWA)

Contact Connie Ritchie, Program Manager, at (206) 267-7025

Volunteer Attorneys for People with AIDS (VAPWA) provides direct volunteer representation for people living with HIV/AIDS on a variety of civil legal issues including bankruptcy, debt collection and consumer issues, employment discrimination, family law, health related legal issues, housing, income maintenance, civil rights and estate planning. In addition to this direct representation, VAPWA provides individuals with educational materials and workshops designed to empower them in the legal system, including the "AIDS, the Law and You" booklet. VAPWA attorneys have a particular commitment and sensitivity to individuals impacted by HIV in our local communities and have experience and expertise in areas of legal concern to such individuals.

AIDS Legal Access (ALA) connects clients who do not meet qualifying guidelines for volunteer assistance with reduced or regular fee attorneys who not only have expertise in the specific legal issues that impact individuals with HIV, but also a commitment to the issue.

Housing Justice Project:

Contact Merf Ehman at (206) 267-7019

The Housing Justice Project (HJP) is designed to meet the needs of King County residents facing the loss of housing due to an eviction. Structured to provide accessibility and responsiveness, the HJP recruits and trains volunteer attorneys to meet clients at the courthouse on the day of their eviction hearings. The volunteer attorneys provide a range of services to clients, including advice and consultation, legal rights education, negotiations with the opposing party, or full representation at the show-cause-eviction hearing. If a case continues beyond the show cause hearing, HJP volunteers have the option of keeping the case or sending the case to VLS for referral to a volunteer on the housing panel. HJP is a collaborative effort of KCBA, Northwest Justice Project (NJP), Legal Action Center and the Tenant's Union.

Legal Services for the Homeless:

Contact Ana Selvidge, Homeless Clinic Manager, at (206) 267-7042

Legal Services for the Homeless addresses the legal needs of the homeless population by matching local law firms and attorneys with designated shelters. Attorneys from the firms go to the shelters on a regular basis to give advice and provide either brief services or full representation on a wide range of civil legal issues, including family law, consumer and debt issues, housing, public benefits, employment and income maintenance. A panel of volunteer attorneys is also available to assist clients from not currently matched with a law firm.

Newcomers Project:

Contact Arielle Rosenberg, Program Manager, at (206) 267-7027]

Launched in 1998, this innovative project coordinates civil legal services to the underserved newcomer population in King County. The Newcomers Project works closely with the International District and the Spanish Bilingual and Immigration clinics to provide legal advice and consultation through volunteer attorneys. The Newcomers Project provides community education workshops and direct representation on a variety of civil legal issues other than immigration. The project also utilizes a panel of volunteer attorneys to assist individuals with wage claim issues.

Family Law Mentor Program and Family Law Panel:

Contact Kim Lloyd Todaro, Managing Attorney, at (206) 267-7020

The Family Law Mentor Program provides direct representation to low- income clients in contested dissolution or paternity cases where the children are at risk because of domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, or alcohol/drug abuse. Volunteer attorneys new to family law receive initial training and ongoing advice and support throughout their cases from an experienced mentor attorney. Clients must meet legal and financial guidelines. The program, is unable to accept emergency situations. However, a panel of experienced family law attorneys is available to do brief services and to take some contested cases that do not qualify for the Mentor Program. Screening may take one to two weeks, and eligible clients may encounter a waiting list of one to three months.

Self Help Plus

Contact Tanya Wanchena, Program Manager, Susan Chua, Staff Attorney at (206) 267-7039 or Howard Hayes, Paralegal, at (206) 267-7047

Self Help Plus provides assistance to low-income and modest means individuals with non-contested divorces, child support modifications, minor parenting plan modifications, and parenting plans for unmarried individuals when both parents have signed paternity affidavits. Clients receive in-depth instruction through classes as well as one-on-one assistance in the preparation of all the required pleadings. The Family Law Managing Attorney advises clients on issues that may arise during the course of their cases. The program is not free but has a sliding fee based on client income starting at \$35.00. SHP does not provide representation in court.

Domestic Violence Revision Squad

Contact Susan Chua, Staff Attorney at (206) 267-7039

Volunteer attorneys represent domestic violence victims who have been improperly denied Domestic Violence Protection Orders in motions for reconsideration or revision of the erroneous orders.

Kinship Care Solutions Project

Contact Judy Lin, Staff Attorney, at (206) 267-7039

Kinship Care Solutions Project provides low-income relatives and other caretakers obtain legal custody of children in their care with pro bono legal representation in third party custody proceedings. Volunteer attorneys receive comprehensive training conducted by experts in family law and dependency law. The instructors and staff attorney remain available as mentors for the attorneys who take cases. This project was created through the collaboration of KCBA, Seattle Area Pro Bono Coordinators, Columbia Legal Services, a Preston Gates & Ellis fellow, Judge DuBuque, public defenders, deputy prosecutors, the Family Law and Dependency CASA programs, and the Northwest Women's Law Center.

Neighborhood Legal Clinics:

Contact Rebecca Fogerty, Program Manager, at (206) 267-7029, or Riana Nolet, Program Assistant, at (206) 267-7030

The Neighborhood Legal Clinics provide a free half hour of advice and consultation to approximately 6,500 clients annually. Clients seek assistance on a wide range of legal issues including; family law, real estate, housing, personal injury, contracts, consumer and debt issues, employment discrimination, civil rights, estate planning and individual rights. Specialized clinics assist *pro se* individuals on particular issues such as debt, immigration, general family law, domestic violence, family law, and senior rights issues. The main goal in all the clinics is to help individuals understand their legal issues and provide referrals for further assistance when it is available. Attorneys do not represent clients in court.