

For many of the over two million clients who crowd legal aid offices each year, having a lawyer is their lifeline to safety and subsistence. But this lifeline is being stretched to the breaking point by a combination of record-breaking demand and sharply reduced resources for legal services.

The Legal Services Corporation is the single largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans, providing federal grants to 134 non-profit legal aid organizations in every state. These programs address civil matters that go to the heart of their clients'

safety and security -- helping women and children escape abusive relationships, families avert foreclosures, the elderly respond to consumer scams, and veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

To help address these challenges, LSC formed a Pro Bono Task Force comprised of 60 distinguished leaders from the legal profession and charged with considering how to efficiently and effectively engage pro bono lawyers to assist. Below is a summary of the Task Force's recommendations. To read the full report, go to <http://lsc.gov>.

Requests of LSC and Its Grantees

1. LSC and its grantees must work collaboratively with national stakeholders to serve as a source of information, coordination, and technical assistance for the creation of strong pro bono programs at its grantees. To do so, LSC should:
 - Create a comprehensive toolkit for building strong pro bono programs. This toolkit should include guidance on how to evaluate those programs.
 - Ensure that LSC grantees have access to and use technology which enables them to recruit and manage volunteers on a shared, online platform. This platform should allow volunteers to sign up for cases, access training and resources, share documents and information about ongoing matters, and provide services from a distance.
 - Consider ways in which grantees might use pro bono lawyers to reduce demand for legal services.
- Create a professional association of pro bono coordinators at LSC-funded organizations.
- Recommend that Congress create a new Pro Bono Innovation/Incubation Fund modeled on the successful Technology Initiative Grant (TIG) program.
2. LSC should consider revising its Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) regulation to facilitate and encourage pro bono.
3. LSC should develop a public relations campaign about the importance of legal services and the contributions that pro bono lawyers can make.
4. LSC should develop a fellowship program for new graduates and emeritus lawyers designed to build up support for civil legal services and pro bono within firms, law schools, and the profession as a whole.

Requests of Bar Leaders, the Judiciary, and Others

1. To the extent permitted, recruit pro bono lawyers. Support and applaud their pro bono efforts.
 - Speak and write about the crisis in legal services and the critical need for pro bono assistance.
 - Where possible, advocate for adequate funding for civil legal services at the state and federal levels.
2. Examine ways in which state practice and ethics rules can be revised to encourage pro bono, including by:
 - Offering CLE credit for pro bono;
 - Permitting judges to ethically recruit and recognize pro bono attorneys;
 - Allowing lawyers to take on limited-representation matters or unbundle services;
 - Relaxing conflicts-of-interest rules for brief service models, such as hotlines and clinics;
 - Allowing lawyers to take on pro bono matters in jurisdictions other than those in which they are licensed to practice; and
 - Considering other creative and ambitious solutions, such as Chief Justice Lippman's recent announcement that New York will require pro bono service by all recent law graduates seeking admission in the state.

Request of Policymakers, Funders, and the Legal Profession

State and federal policymakers, funders, and the legal profession as a whole should recognize that using pro bono lawyers to address the crisis in legal services can be accomplished only with proper infrastructure and support

for pro bono programs -- which comes at a cost. LSC and its grantees should receive adequate funding to develop this infrastructure. This funding should not come at the expense of supporting existing and critically-needed legal services.