

Pro Bono Committee
Follow-Up Summit Workgroup
October 30, 2014
10:00a.m.
225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT
Room 206

1. Chairman Attorney Jonathan Shapiro called the meeting to order at 10:02a.m. with the following Workgroup members in attendance: Attorney Jonathan Shapiro (Chair), Attorney Jamey Bell, Attorney Lester Arnold, Attorney Steve Eppler-Epstein and Attorney Timothy Johnston.
2. Attorney Shapiro led the group in a discussion regarding the results from the Pro Bono Summit break-out sessions. The Workgroup reviewed the compiled responses from each group and identified potential pro bono projects or areas of interest that might warrant further exploration.

In identifying potentially viable initiatives, the group discussed the issue of how to best maximize pro bono resources by focusing on projects that would provide a small amount of help to a larger pool of recipients. Even though a program might not deliver as many services, more people would be helped and it would require fewer resources to run and sustain.

The group also talked about the time and resource investment of creating new pro bono programs versus expanding and building upon existing, established programs. If we have a proven pro bono model in Connecticut, it might not be a prudent investment of time and resources to develop a new model or program. In addition, there was some concern that the Pro Bono Committee as a whole, be mindful about potentially duplicating the efforts of the CBA Pro Bono Committee and by focusing on the development of large-scale initiatives with larger firms, the Judicial Branch Pro Bono Committee should be able to avoid any duplicative efforts.

3. The Workgroup identified the following areas as potentially viable pro bono projects:
 - A representative from McCarter & English and General Electric expressed interest at the Summit in partnering with in-house attorneys on a pro bono initiative.
 - The Probate Courts seem to have a need for pro bono attorneys and the suggestion was made at the Summit that Legal Aid could provide training to any interested attorneys.

- Organize a one-day legal clinic at the XL Center in Hartford similar to the “Mission of Mercy” dental clinic sponsored by the State Dental Association. The dental clinic provides basic dental care and procedures to low-income people and is very well attended.
 - Pro bono attorneys to assist in family court with post-judgment contempt matters. This issue was identified at the Summit by Judge Bozzuto, the Chief Administrative Judge for Family matters. There was some concern, however, that attorneys are already provided by the court for these post-judgment contempt matters where the party is facing incarceration. The group discussed whether this was a good investment of pro bono resources given that this population of individuals already has access to counsel.
 - Develop a pro bono program to appoint attorneys for defendants in “Fernando A” hearings where a defendant is entitled to an evidentiary hearing before a criminal protective order is extended.
 - Develop a co-counseling opportunity for law firms to collaborate with Legal Aid in civil complex litigation matters.
 - Identify pro bono opportunities that might be appropriate for law students such as participation in the new live chat feature on CTLawHelp.org. A representative from Western New England Law School expressed interest in connecting students with pro bono opportunities particularly in light of the school’s 20-hour pro bono graduation requirement.
 - Conduct outreach to Connecticut’s firms and corporations to see if the organization has a formal pro bono policy. Use this as a starting point for the pro bono discussion. The workgroup discussed the possibility of posting general pro bono policies on CTLawHelp.org so that interested entities can utilize these policies as templates and customize them to their own organization and pro bono needs.
4. Attorney Shapiro asked the Workgroup to continue to look at the compiled break-out session document and email him any additional areas of interest or potential pro bono projects.
 5. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.