

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch



Public Service and Trust Commission

Pro Bono Committee

Honorable William H. Bright, Jr., Chair

*Annual Report
October 2014*

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Introduction

“The promise of a fair and free society, of equal access to courts and of justice for all cannot be met when most of the citizens in many of our courts are deprived of access to the advice, counsel and guidance that a lawyer can provide. Working together, we must find a way to match supply with demand for competent, affordable and essential legal services.”

-Attorney Kimberly A. Knox and Attorney William H. Clendenen Jr., Hartford Courant OP-ED, July 26, 2013

During its fourth year, the Pro Bono Committee, led by the Honorable William H. Bright, Jr, continues to focus its work towards the goal of creating and increasing the number of diverse, sustainable and replicable pro bono programs in Connecticut. Through continued collaborations with the legal aid and business communities, the private bar and the bench, the Pro Bono Committee strives to increase awareness amongst the bar through education and training, and by developing signature pro bono programs that meet not only the needs of busy Connecticut attorneys, but the needs of the citizens of Connecticut who cannot afford to retain counsel. The Pro Bono Committee also continues to work closely with the Judicial Branch’s Access to Justice Commission chaired by Judge Elliot N. Solomon and Judge Maria A. Kahn.

The work of the Committee during the past year broadened its scope and culminated with a second Pro Bono Summit on May 14, 2014. The goal of the Summit was to take the next step towards realizing the vision of the Committee and that of Chief Justice Chase Rogers, Connecticut’s most staunch pro bono advocate and supporter, by bringing the message of pro bono to the next generation of legal and business leaders in Connecticut and create a pro bono climate that no longer views pro bono service as the exception, but instead embraces the service as a necessary and beneficial part of the future of the legal profession.

As chair of the Pro Bono Committee, Judge Bright is a fierce proponent of keeping the message of pro bono at the center of the conversation about Connecticut’s changing legal landscape. In 2011, the first Summit focused on the managing partners and general counsel of our largest law firms and corporations. Now, 3 years later, the focus has shifted to our rising stars – the legal and business scholars and leaders whose vision will carry the pro bono message into the future for years to come. And so, the conversation about pro bono continues to evolve, but the underlying message remains the same – our system of government does not work if the citizens of Connecticut do not have equal access to justice under the law. Chief Justice Rogers perhaps said it best at the May Summit, “.....many people who represent themselves do so because they have no choice.

The results can be devastating in that access to justice may be compromised. So, we must start out with this foundation: providing access to our courts to the poor, the near-poor and the middle class is a basic obligation of government”.

Committee Membership

Some members of the Pro Bono Committee also serve as members of the Access to Justice Commission and the Committee reports annually to the Access to Justice Commission on the status and progress of their recommendations. The Pro Bono Committee also reports annually to the Chief Justice.

Committee Members (as of July 1, 2014)	
Hon. William H. Bright, Jr., Chair Attorney Lester J. Arnold Attorney Jamey Bell Attorney Alfred Casella Attorney Jan Chiaretto Attorney William H. Clendenen, Jr. Attorney Sharon Dornfeld Attorney Mark Dubois Attorney Steve Eppler-Epstein Professor Timothy Everett Attorney Edward Heath	Attorney Norman Janes Attorney Timothy Johnston Hon. Timothy R.E. Keeney Attorney Dwight Merriam Attorney Catherine Mohan Attorney Susan Nofi Attorney Mark Nordstrom Attorney Jill Plancher Attorney Sylvia Rutkowska Attorney Jonathan Shapiro Attorney Sarah Sia

Pro Bono Workgroups & Charges

The Pro Bono Committee formed (5) five Working groups under its charge:

Rules Workgroup Charge: this workgroup studied and recommended ways to increase awareness of recent rule changes through marketing and communication with the bar and will further recommend additional rule changes (Rules of Professional Conduct and Practice Book) to further the global cause of pro bono service. It also considered additional rules proposals that would further increase pro bono opportunities.

Committee Members	
Attorney Mark Dubois – Chair Honorable William Bright Attorney William Clendenen	Attorney Sharon Dornfeld Attorney Steven Eppler-Epstein Attorney Alfred Casella

Rules Workgroup explored the following areas:

➤ *Retired Attorneys*

Practice Book § 2-55 was amended on June 14, 2013, and took effect on January 1, 2014, to include the following language, under newly created subsection (e): “An attorney who has retired pursuant to this section may engage in uncompensated services to clients under the supervision of an organized legal aid society, a state or local bar association project, or a court-affiliated pro bono program.”

➤ *Authorized House Counsel*

Practice Book § 2-15A (c) was amended on June 15, 2012, and took effect on January 1, 2013, to include the following language, under newly created subdivision (5): “Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this section, an authorized house counsel may participate in the provision of any and all legal services pro bono publico in Connecticut offered under the supervision of an organized legal aid society or state/local bar association project, or of a member of the Connecticut bar who is also working on the pro bono representation.”

➤ *Law School Professors*

On January 1, 2015 an amendment to Practice Book § 2-13 becomes effective which will ease admission by waiver of faculty members at accredited law schools in Connecticut. The amendment allows full-time faculty members or clinical fellows to be admitted to the Connecticut bar without taking the state bar examination if they are admitted to the bar in either a reciprocal or a nonreciprocal jurisdiction.

➤ *Proposed Rule Amendment Regarding Retired In-house Lawyers*

§ 2-15A Attorneys of Other Jurisdictions--Authorized House Counsel

The Committee is considering proposing a rule that would allow retired in-house counsel to provide pro bono services in the same way retired members of the Connecticut bar may. The language being considered is:

(new)

An attorney whose registration is withdrawn or terminated in accordance with subsection (e)(1) (A), (B) or (C) may continue to provide pro bono legal services under this subsection if the attorney files with the bar examining committee a certificate in similar form and content to that required by subsection (d)(1)(C). In such circumstance, the “organization” as defined in subsection (b)(2) shall be an organized legal aid society or state/local bar association project, or of a member of the Connecticut bar who is also working on the pro bono representation.

➤ *Proposed Rule Amendment regarding Pro Bono Work by
Lawyers Using “Chat” or Similar Technology*

**Rule 6.5 Nonprofit and Court-Annexed Limited Legal Services
Programs**

OFFICIAL COMMENTARY

The Committee continues to look for new and innovative ways for attorneys to provide pro bono services, including via on-line. To make clear that these services are consistent with the rules of professional conduct, the Committee may propose that additional language be added to the commentary to Rule 6.5.

Legal services organizations, courts and various nonprofit organizations have established programs through which lawyers provide short-term limited legal services--such as advice or the completion of legal forms--that will assist persons to address their legal problems without further representation by a lawyer. In these programs, such as legal-advice hotlines, advice-only clinics, “chat rooms” or similar computer-assisted communications or self-represented party counseling programs, a client-lawyer relationship is established, but there is no expectation that the lawyer's representation of the client will continue beyond the limited consultation. Such programs are normally operated under circumstances in which it is not feasible for a lawyer to systematically screen for conflicts of interest as is generally required before undertaking a representation. See, e.g., [Rules 1.7](#), [1.9](#) and [1.10](#).

➤ *CY Pres Rule*

On January 1, 2015 a new provision to Section 9-9 of the Practice Book become effective which deals with the disposition of residual class action funds.

The Connecticut Bar Association believes that this rule will assist the CBA and the Judicial Branch’s efforts towards promoting access to justice by providing a source of funds that may be used to pay for free or low cost legal assistance to persons of limited means.

9-9(g) (new). Disposition of Residual Funds

(1) “Residual Funds” are funds that remain after the payment of approved class member claims, expenses, litigation costs, attorney’s fees, and other court-approved disbursements made to implement the relief granted. Nothing in this rule is intended to limit the parties to a class action from recommending, or the trial court from approving, a settlement that does not create Residual Funds.

(2) Any order, judgment or approved settlement in a class action that establishes a process for identifying and compensating members of the class shall designate the recipient(s) of any such Residual Funds that may remain after the claims payment process has been completed. In the absence of such designation, the Residual Funds shall be disbursed to the organization administering the program for the use of interest on lawyers’ client funds pursuant to § 51-81c of the General Statutes for the purpose of supporting its activities including, but not limited to, the funding of those organizations that provide legal services for the poor in Connecticut.

Recognition Workgroup Charge: this workgroup studied and recommended effective, concrete ways that the Branch and the Bar can formally recognize the contributions of pro bono attorneys.

Committee Members	
Attorney Jan Chiaretto	Attorney Sylvia Rutkowska
Attorney Timothy Johnston	Attorney Sharon Dornfeld
Attorney Norman Janes – Chair	Attorney Alfred Casella

Recognition Workgroup explored the following areas:

- Developing a mechanism to make it easier to perform pro bono service in the courts. The workgroup focused on ways to alert court staff and judges in family matters that an attorney was handling a case pro bono on a particular day in order to accommodate that attorney on a priority basis.
- The Workgroup also looked at acknowledgment by the court of pro bono service. Support for providing such acknowledgement must come from the top of Branch administration down. One suggestion discussed was acknowledgement by the administrative judge or trial judge in a judicial district where the practitioner handles pro bono matters. The acknowledgment does not have to be formal.

Notes or letters of thanks are appreciated or and an informal gathering where light refreshments and certificates of appreciation were given to attorneys who had performed pro bono work during a judge's term.

The idea of a seminar/view from the bench and/or brown bag lunch for pro bono attorneys in the local judicial district was also explored by the Workgroup. It was agreed that acknowledgement in the local judicial district is especially meaningful to small firms and solo practitioners and engenders good will. The idea of a dinner or reception with the Chief Justice was raised and members felt that this may be especially meaningful for larger firms.

- The Workgroup also implemented a proposal to provide pro bono volunteers some preference in Probate Court paid assignments. The Workgroup consulted with Chief Probate Court administrator Paul Knierim who supported the Workgroup's proposal.
- As a result of the recommendations of the Workgroup, the Committee worked with the Connecticut Law Tribune and the Administrative Judges from each judicial district to recognize and honor one attorney from each district for their pro bono service. The Law Tribune ran a story on each attorney and their pro bono contributions. The attorneys were also honored at the Law Tribune's annual awards ceremony and received their award from Judge Bright.

Law School Workgroup Charge: this workgroup studied recent changes in law school curricula in Connecticut and in other states, and recommended ways to increase and foster pro bono involvement by law students.

Committee Members	
Attorney Susan Nofi-Bendici – Chair Honorable Timothy Keeney Attorney Dwight Merriam Attorney William Clendenen	Attorney Mark Dubois Attorney Jill Plancher Attorney Timothy Everett

Law Schools Workgroup explored the following areas:

- The Workgroup reviewed the pro bono policies and requirements at Connecticut and Massachusetts law schools. Workgroup member Professor Timothy Everett, the pro bono coordinator at UConn Law School, informed the Workgroup that there currently is not a mandatory pro bono program there.

The Workgroup explored finding ways for law students to get law school credit for working with lawyer-mentors and the need to determine what impediments, if any, currently exist.

- To further this end, the Workgroup reached out to the Connecticut Bar Association who has formed a Task Force on the Future of Legal Education and Standards of Admission, chaired by Judge Kenneth Schluger so as to avoid duplication of efforts. Members of the Workgroup participated on the Task Force and the drafting of its comprehensive report. The Committee expects that that report will provide a basis for further discussion by the Workgroup.
- The Workgroup also considered ways that non-lawyers - including supervised law students - may provide pro bono service, as well as the idea of pairing law students with a member of the Bar engaged in pro bono work. Such pairings could increase the number of opportunities for student pro bono work, especially because Legal Aid may not be able to supervise more student volunteers than it already is doing, and at times in the past it has had to turn away volunteers.

In-House Workgroup Charge: this workgroup studied the unique relationship between in-house attorneys and pro bono service including effective outreach and communication, rules, and the impact of retirement on in-house attorneys in Connecticut and their ability to (continue to) perform pro bono services in the absence of in-house status.

Committee Members	
Attorney Mark Nordstrom – Chair Attorney Edward Heath Attorney Lester Arnold	Attorney Jill Plancher Attorney Steven Eppler-Epstein Attorney Jonathan Shapiro

- The Workgroup discussed LawyerCorps Connecticut, which was first conceptualized by Chief Justice Rogers. Under this initiative, a fund is being established from corporate contributions, which will be administered by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Funds initially will be used to hire three Fellows, each for a two year term. The Fellows will support the efforts of Connecticut's three Legal Aid programs- Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, and New Haven Legal Assistance Association- in order to reach more people in need of legal representation. The program's budget for 2 years is approximately \$600,000.

- The Workgroup also explored the idea of publishing an article which would focus on ways in-house counsel can provide valuable legal services to their communities. The article should call attention to pro bono partnership efforts and discuss Connecticut's rule change regarding pro bono service by authorized house counsel. *Today's General Counsel Magazine*, *Connecticut Corporate Counsel Magazine* and the *Law Tribune* were discussed as possible publication sources.

Follow-Up Summit Workgroup Charge: this workgroup examined the existing body of work on pro bono outreach, post-summit 2011, and studied ways to reinforce the goals and philosophies of the first Pro Bono Summit and make recommendations to further build upon the broad foundation established by that event.

Committee Members	
Attorney Jonathan Shapiro – Chair Honorable William Bright Attorney Timothy Johnston Honorable Timothy Keeney	Attorney Sylvia Rutkowska Attorney Steven Eppler-Epstein Attorney Catherine Mohan

The Workgroup coordinated and planned the May 2014 Pro Bono Summit and formulated every component of the event from the content of the message, composition of the panels and the desire to have this second summit, be somewhat more interactive than the 2011 event. The Workgroup agreed that a more interactive format for the Summit was a good idea and the back and forth exchange of ideas was a great way to actively engage the attendees. A more in depth discussion of the Summit follows.

Pro Bono Summit – The Next Generation

On May 14, 2014, the Pro Bono Committee sponsored its second pro bono summit, this time, calling upon the next generation of “rising stars” in our business and legal communities to participate in the event.

The first Summit, in 2011, saw the launch of the online website, <http://probono.ctlawhelp.org/>, a one-stop resource for attorneys who want to provide pro bono by providing information about specific opportunities, including training information and contact information. That information is kept current and the site, which was established through a partnership between the Judicial Branch, Statewide Legal Services, the Connecticut Bar Association, the Connecticut Bar Foundation, and Legal Services Corps, has been visited thousands of times.

This year's Summit was a progression of the pro bono website launch, inasmuch as the invited attendees, identified as "rising stars" by the managing partners and general counsel within their respective organizations were able to brainstorm with other attorneys who are already doing pro bono, leaders in the legal services community, judges and court clerks during afternoon break-out sessions to find ways to get involved. Topics included:

- Responding to the Growing Need for Free or Low-Cost Services
- Developing Pro Bono Programs at Law Firms and Corporate Law Departments
- Success stories from firms/corporations who have launched pro bono programs
- Barriers to pro bono
- How the Courts and the Legal Services community Can Assist and Encourage Pro Bono Lawyers

There were two panel discussions during the morning session; a judge panel moderated by Judge Bright and an attorney panel moderated by Attorney Jonathan Shapiro. The panelists, included:

- Chief Appellate Court Alexandra D. DiPentima
- Chief Administrative Judge for the Family Division, Judge Elizabeth Bozzuto
- Probate Chief Judge Administrator Paul Knierim
- Eve Runyon, Director of Corporate Pro Bono at the Pro Bono Institute
- Atty. Edward J. Heath, Partner, Robinson & Cole and head of its Pro Bono Committee.
- Atty. John R. Farley, Co-Chair of Halloran and Sage's Business Litigation Group, Chair of the firm's Pro Bono Committee
- Atty. Charlisa "Sandy Broadus" of UTC General Counsel and the Director of the Advisory Board of Lawyer Corps Connecticut
- Atty. Jonathan Shapiro, past president of the CBA Young Lawyers Section

The afternoon break-out sessions provided an interactive component to the Summit and created the opportunity for each attendee to discuss and brainstorm about the future of pro bono in their own respective firms or corporations.

There were 10 break-out sessions and each was charged with the task of thinking about and discussing the concepts, ideas and programs they learned about during the judge and attorney panels. Further, each group was tasked with conceptually developing projects and initiatives that could be undertaken by their respective firms or corporations. For example, what types of initiatives could be undertaken, what is their firm/corporation not doing now that could be started and what types of projects is your organization interested in learning more about for implementation at their organization?

As a follow up to the Summit and specifically to the break-out sessions, the discussions from each group were transcribed and the results were sent to the participants for review. Judge Bright anticipates an intensive follow-up initiative by the Committee to each break-out session to explore the different pro bono ideas and concepts and to ensure that every possible tool and resource is available to make these pro bono visions a reality.

In addition, the Summit featured the debut of the pro bono video created through a collaboration of Connecticut's legal services organizations, the Judicial Branch and the private bar. The video spotlights not only the legal services crisis in Connecticut, but through the use of compelling client and attorney testimonials, assigns a face and a story to the pro bono plight in our state. The video is moderated by Judge Bright and features commentary from Justice Rogers and Governor Malloy as well as private attorneys and pro bono clients.

As part of the Pro Bono Committee's goal to ingrain pro bono service into the day-to-day culture of Connecticut's firms and corporations, all Summit attendees were provided with copies of the pro bono policies from Halloran and Sage and General Electric. The firm and the corporation generously agreed to provide their respective pro bono policies to the attendees as a means to encourage other firms and corporations to adopt similar policies that work well for them. One of the most common themes heard during the afternoon break-out sessions was the need to have "top-down" policies and support for pro bono within an organization in order to effectively demonstrate the commitment to long-term, sustainable pro bono.

Pro Bono in Other States

During its work over the past year, Judge Bright and the Pro Bono Committee have looked extensively at the growth of pro bono in other states and how the IOLTA collapse and the resulting legal aid crisis has had an impact on our justice system and our courts nationally. Specifically, the Committee examined pro bono initiatives and rules in New York and Washington State.

New York State

On September 14, 2012, the New York State Court of Appeals ordered that Part 520 of the Rules of the Court of Appeals for the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law (22 NYCRR Part 520) be amended, effective January 1, 2013, to add section 520.16, which requires applicants for admission to the New York State bar to perform 50 hours of pro bono services. The rule applies to applicants admitted on or after January 1, 2015, and excludes applicants for admission without examination.

Pro bono service is defined under the rule as “supervised pre-admission law-related work that:

- (1) assists in the provision of legal services without charge for
 - (i) persons of limited means;
 - (ii) not-for-profit organizations; or
 - (iii) individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or promote access to justice, including, but not limited to, the protection of civil rights, civil liberties or public rights;
- (2) assists in the provision of legal assistance in public service for a judicial, legislative, executive or other governmental entity; or
- (3) provides legal services pursuant to subdivisions two and three of section 484 of the Judiciary Law, or pursuant to equivalent legal authority in the jurisdiction where the services are performed.”

Washington State

In the summer of 2012, the Washington State Supreme Court adopted Rule 28 of the Admission to Practice Rules (APR), which authorizes non-attorneys who meet certain educational requirements to advise and assist clients on specific areas of law.

To become licensed as a Limited License Legal Technician, an applicant must:

- pass an examination
- acquire 3,000 hours of substantive law-related work experience, under the supervision of a licensed attorney
- pay an annual license fee
- show proof of financial responsibility
- meet all other licensing requirements, which include having 45 credit hours of core curriculum instruction in paralegal studies, as well as instruction in the approved practice area

A Limited License Legal Technician may:

- obtain relevant facts, and explain their relevancy
- inform the client of applicable procedures
- provide the client with approved self-help materials
- review and explain documents or exhibits from the opposing side
- assist with forms and obtaining documents
- perform legal research and draft legal letters and documents, but only if reviewed and approved by an attorney.

Sustainable & Replicable Signature Projects: The Pro Bono Model

Since its inception, the goal of the Pro Bono Committee has been to reach out to the diverse and talented population of attorneys in Connecticut and encourage them to create sustainable pro bono programs that are also easily replicated in other states and by other organizations. The ideal program ensures that the participants are adequately trained as subject-matter experts in the substantive area of the law and as a result, the volunteers can nurture and grow the program so it becomes a model for all pro bono programs to follow. The Robinson & Cole Domestic Violence Restraining Order Program is one such example of this model.

Robinson & Cole Domestic Violence Restraining Order Program

The Domestic Violence Restraining Order Program (“Program”) has just started its seventh session. Since the program began in 2012, twelve attorneys from Robinson & Cole have devoted over 1,100 collective hours of pro bono time to the Program, serving approximately 85 clients, assisting with approximately 20 applications for *ex parte* orders, and representing clients in over 50 hearings. The Program is currently based in the Middletown and Hartford judicial districts.

The Program’s successes include securing restraining orders after hearings for clients with complicated service issues. It is unlikely that these deserving unrepresented parties would have been able to navigate these procedural issues without pro bono representation.

The Court’s staff, clerk’s office, library and family relations have been invaluable resources for the Program. Interval House in Hartford, serving the interests of domestic violence victims, has also been critical to the success of the Program.

Many of the signature pro bono programs that were born out of the 2011 Pro Bono Summit are still flourishing including the Cummings & Lockwood program which provides assistance in Probate Court with appointments for conservators, the Norwalk medical/legal pro bono initiative with Robinson & Cole and GE which partners with the Community Health Center in Norwalk to create a positive health impact on these clients and their cases through legal intervention, and the Edwards Wildman program where the firm provides pro bono representation to defendants in eviction cases. In order to assist the firm in its aspirations to represent defendants in eviction actions, the Legal Aid community established training in eviction law for the Intellectual Property attorneys and initially co-counseled the first few cases with the Edwards Wildman attorneys until they were comfortable enough to handle the cases on their own.

LawyerCorps *Connecticut*

LawyerCorps Connecticut was first conceptualized by Chief Justice Rogers in 2013. The project creates, in the first year, three two-year fellowships for new law school graduates who will work as staff attorneys with legal aid providers at the three legal aid partner agencies (Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, and New Haven Legal Assistance Association). Corporate sponsors, including United Technologies Corp. (UTC) and General Electric (GE), will fund the Fellows' salaries, health care and benefits.

LawyerCorps Connecticut brings together private organizations, Legal Aid service organizations, and the Connecticut Judicial Branch and its Access to Justice Commission, partnering to address a vital public need not currently being met through existing funding and pro bono hours directed to Legal Aid programs. Justice Rogers recognized the need to respond to the crisis in civil legal representation and address common concerns involving the lack of legal representation as an impediment to achieving justice in Connecticut courts.

The new lawyers will partner with and be supervised by experienced legal aid attorneys and gain practical, real-world experience, including intake, client relations, and courtroom advocacy. The Fellows project will demonstrate to other potential corporate partners the power of strengthening Connecticut's communities and vulnerable populations by supporting non-profit legal providers that help the poor, elderly, disabled, children, battered women, and low-wage workers.

Key goals of LawyerCorps Connecticut are:

- Establish a sustainable fund for purposes of increasing the availability of valuable, high-quality legal services to Connecticut's neediest residents free of charge
- Help raise awareness of the need to close the justice gap in our courts
- Provide attorney Fellows with hands-on courtroom experience, client relations, advocacy and policy skills necessary to help solve real-time problems in Connecticut legal court system
- Spark a lifelong commitment among the Fellows for providing legal services to the less fortunate in our communities
- Enlist new partners to invest in justice, thereby increasing the number of Fellows available to the Legal Aid community, because we all benefit when the court system works

Pro Bono Reporting – Update

As part of the annual electronic attorney registration process, the Pro Bono Committee once again asked registering Connecticut attorneys to voluntarily report their pro bono activities during the prior year.

In 2013, 17,350 attorneys responded to the survey; 6,056 of whom reported that they had done some pro bono work during the reporting period. In 2014, 18,089 attorneys responded to the survey of which 6,528 attorneys reported engaging in some form of pro bono service. These numbers represent a 5.7% increase in the number of attorneys who responded to the survey and a 7.8% increase, in the number of attorneys reporting service. While the gain is positive, it is clear that there is still much capacity within the legal community to do more.

See the 2014 survey results to follow:

Pro Bono Survey Statistics	Report Date: June. 24, 2014
Survey Period: January 1, 2014 – June 24, 2014 8:00 AM	

Number of Attorneys Responded To Survey	18,089
Number of Attorneys Declined Survey	11,037

Pro Bono Hours	No of Attorneys
0 hours	11,561
1-10 hours	1,993
11-20 hours	1,614
21-35 hours	1,125
36-50 hours	703
51+ hours	1,093
Attorneys reporting pro bono work	6,528

A Look Ahead

After the success of the 2014 Summit, Judge Bright re-focused the Committee's work to concentrate on two very specific areas; following up with attendees on discussions, ideas and initiatives born out of the May Summit and developing uniform, consistent and relevant ways the Judicial Branch can formally recognize attorneys who do pro bono work.

To further this end, Judge Bright created two new workgroups under the auspices of the Pro Bono Committee - Follow-Up Summit and Recognition, and he asked members of the Committee to volunteer to serve on one of the Workgroups.

The issue of recognition has been a reoccurring theme for many pro bono attorneys and a source of frustration for the Committee due to the inherent difficulties experienced when trying to implement uniform recognition policies across 13 Judicial Districts. Judge Bright and the Pro Bono Committee remain steadfast in their goal of providing meaningful recognition to attorneys who make pro bono service a priority in their day-to-day practices.

The ideas and concepts discussed during the Summit break-out sessions were both creative and sometimes novel. They showed the type of thinking that helps to form the vision for the future of the Pro Bono Committee - that is, let's not be bound by what has been tried already or done before or even by the restrictions that are often visited upon us by lack of time and resources. Instead, we should examine any model that will help those who cannot afford legal services get the assistance they so desperately need.

Connecticut has an enormous number of diverse resources in its legal community and the future successes of pro bono truly rely upon every one of those resources coming together to work towards the common goal of providing access to justice through pro bono representation and assistance for all Connecticut citizens.