

## Strategies for Organizing a Local Pro Bono Celebration

In October, 2009, the first annual Pro Bono Week Celebration was held. Alabama lead the country in hosting one of the most successful Pro Bono Celebrations in the nation. This success was due to the efforts of many local bar associations. Below are strategies shared by the Mobile Celebration Committee. The Mobile Bar mixed training seminars, direct service opportunities, educational forums and recognition ceremonies to highlight pro bono needs and activities.

### The following are tips for planning a successful week:

- 1) Identify key people to plan the week. Contact the VLP and work with the Bar Association to plan a number of events highlighting area pro bono activities. Meet often to respond to needs and provide support.
- 2) Involve and seek input from local stakeholders.
- 3) Decide on goals for the week (and month) and plan events that accomplish those goals. Do you want to celebrate your accomplishments, attract/train new volunteers, raise community awareness, or all of the above? Consider moving some of your bars annual events or clinics to fall during pro bono week. This will bring greater attention to the program and to the need for pro bono activity.
- 4) Set a calendar of events early on. Seek extra opportunities to fill in gaps. Add your events to the Calendar of Events on the State Bar's web site, [www.alabar.org](http://www.alabar.org)
- 5) Invite attorney participation. Invited firms to participate in and sponsor clinics and CLE trainings.
- 6) Use the attention of the legal and outside communities to hold a fundraiser. Turn all the attention focused on pro bono activity into a profitable fundraiser to benefit the Volunteer Lawyer Programs, Law School Public Interest Fellowships, or scholarships for pro bono attorneys to attend CLE programs.
- 7) Provide options for service. Hold a Counsel and Advice clinic, a Wills for Heroes clinic, or a divorce clinic, etc.- something that experienced or new volunteers could do in a group setting to get their feet wet.
- 8) Provide a free CLE opportunity. Many attorneys look for CLE hours at the end of the year. Provided free CLE to VLP members/new sign ups in October. Cover subjects helpful to VLP attorneys (and often those involved in solo practice). Use the CLE training to spotlighted attorneys who do not handle certain subjects in their daily practices, but who would take on those cases for VLP. *See the CLE materials provided on this disk.*

- 9) Advertise! Contacted local television and radio stations about pro bono week. Raise awareness within the community at large, both about the good work being performed by lawyers everyday in your community and about the services that are available to the public through the state's Volunteer Lawyer Programs.
- 10) Evaluate and begin again!
- 11) See attached 2009 Celebration event listings by county- created and managed by the State Bar. This is a great source for ideas and contacts!