



NEW NATIONAL WEB COLLABORATIONS TO SUPPORT ADVOCATES AND VOLUNTEERS

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In 1999, the vision of using web tools to share *pro bono* training materials, promote collaboration and enhance the legal delivery system was only a dream. Back then, the idea that one program would post its volunteer manual online for others to use was unheard of.



Times have certainly changed. 2009 marked Pro Bono Net's 10th anniversary and the launch of several new national collaborations on the probono.net platform. Today Pro Bono Net supports a broad range of access to justice initiatives and serves more than 55,000 advocates across thirty states and many practice areas. The latest collaborations reflect efforts by Pro Bono Net and our partners to respond to emergent needs in the legal services community, and to build the capacity of the sector to use technology to support innovation in service delivery. Below are highlights of recently developed web-based tools and resources to support advocates and volunteers working on issues ranging from domestic violence to immigration to *pro bono* assistance for active-duty service members.

National Domestic Violence *Pro Bono* Directory

This fall, the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence, in conjunction with Pro Bono Net, launched the first *National Domestic Violence Pro Bono Directory*, a comprehensive online database of programs providing *pro bono* legal services to victims of domestic violence. The Directory is available at www.probono.net/dv. It includes the types of cases that programs accept, the scope of representation, and the supervision, support and training provided to volunteers.

The National Domestic Violence *Pro Bono* Directory was viewed more than 5,000 times in October, its inaugural month. Programs offering volunteer opportunities can submit a program profile using the "Add an Organization" link on the Directory. Programs with existing profiles can use the "Corrections" function on their profile to submit any updates to the Guide admin-

istrator. www.probono.net/dv also features a national training calendar maintained by the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence. Programs can submit trainings for inclusion on the calendar using the "Add Event" link on the Calendar page.

National *Pro Bono* Opportunities Guide

The National Domestic Violence *Pro Bono* Directory is an outgrowth of the National *Pro Bono* Opportunities Guide, www.volunteerforprobono.org, which launched in 2007 as a joint effort of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on *Pro Bono* and Public Service, the ABA Center for *Pro Bono* and Pro Bono Net. The National *Pro Bono* Opportunities Guide provides searchable listings of more than 1,100 programs in need of volunteer attorneys. Users can pinpoint placements based on location, area of law, population served and other criteria, and then contact programs by phone, email or a web-based form. State-based versions of the Guide are available on many statewide advocate sites and are actively maintained by local providers.

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Disaster Legal Aid Resources for Individuals, Programs and Volunteers

Expanding on the 2005 Katrina Legal Aid web-

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site, www.katrinalegalaid.org, the ABA, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, the Legal Services Corporation and Pro Bono Net collaborated to launch National Disaster Legal Aid, www.disasterlegalaid.org. The expanded site is designed to help individuals and attorneys address legal issues that arise in the aftermath of major disasters, such as hurricanes and floods.

For legal services programs, DisasterLegalAid.org includes general disaster resources, sample disaster practice manuals, and LSC program-specific information. For individuals in need of legal help, the site provides general information on issues such as housing, insurance claims, employment and other vital issues, as well as links to disaster-specific resources. In the aftermath of a disaster, the site also helps to recruit and mobilize *pro bono* attorneys by connecting them with local programs in need of help. Programs are encouraged to submit feedback and content suggestions to info@probono.net.

Resources for Law Firm Associates in Public Interest Placements

Hundreds of would-be associates who had their law firm start dates deferred are working as fellows and externs with legal services and public services organizations. In order to support these recent graduates and junior law firm associates in their legal services placements, Pro Bono Net has launched an online resource, www.probono.net/fellows.

The site includes a range of resources to help ease the transition to legal services and educate fellows on poverty law. Among the resources now available is an on-demand webinar, "Public Interest Perspectives: An Introductory Training for Private Attorneys in Public Interest Placements," which was conducted by The Association of Pro Bono Counsel (APBCO) and the Association for Legal Career Professionals (NALP). The webinar provides an overview of the differences in law firm and nonprofit practice settings, insight on working with low-income clients and background on the economic challenges faced by the public interest community. www.probono.net/fellows also includes a calendar of events and a library of other training materials provided by the New York City Bar/City Bar Justice Center, New York Immigration Coalition, the Public Interest Clearinghouse and other leading programs. All law firm attorneys working at legal services programs or seeking placements, as well as nonprofit program staff supervis-

ing law firm attorneys, can get involved by registering at www.probono.net/fellows.

Immigration Advocates Network

The Immigration Advocates Network (IAN) is a free national online network that supports legal advocates working on behalf of immigrants' rights. A collaboration of leading immigration advocacy groups and Pro Bono Net, www.immigrationadvocates.org provides free, easily accessible and comprehensive online resources in a password-protected website for nonprofit and public interest advocates. Members can access a library of more than 2,000 substantive resources and training manuals on various immigration law, policy and program management topics. ImmigrationAdvocates.org also provides an extensive set of video, podcast and audio resources from leading immigration practitioners on developments in immigration law, such as U visas and raids, and fundraising for nonprofit immigration programs.

Members can stay abreast of important changes with up-to-date immigration practice advisories from immigrants' rights organizations. IAN also provides a monthly e-calendar of immigration trainings and events, as well as national webinars and teleconferences.

National Language Access Advocates Network

The National Language Access Advocates Network (N-LAAN) is a national, volunteer-driven organization working toward equal access by linguistic minorities. N-LAAN provides a forum for language access advocates to develop experience, share resources and devise strategies for more effective enforcement of language rights. www.probono.net/nlaan serves as the online home for N-LAAN and provides resources and networking tools for advocates working on behalf of Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons. The resource library contains dozens of materials on language access issues, including presentations from N-LAAN conferences, model innovations, training resources, and legal analysis of language access issues. Public interest lawyers and advocates working on language access issues can also join the N-LAAN listserv.

For additional resources on this topic, the Empire Justice Center's Language Access Resource Center offers an extensive collection of materials about the rights of LEP individuals. The Center can be accessed via www.empirejustice.org. Many of the materials are Center's materials and are referenced in www.probono.net/nlaan as well.

Military Pro Bono Project

Launched in 2008, the ABA Military *Pro Bono* Project (MPBP) is a web-based initiative to improve access to *pro bono* civil legal assistance for active duty service members.

Referrals of eligible service members originate in military legal assistance offices. MPBP legal staff then offer eligible cases to private attorneys and firms that have registered for the project website, www.military-probono.org, and are qualified providers for that case. The site contains a listing of available cases, a case opportunities listserv, and administrative and support resources for participating military and *pro bono* attorneys. MPBP has worked with statewide *pro bono* sites in several states to make local legal aid and volunteer networks aware of the project and case opportunities.

National Wage and Hour Clearinghouse

To help workers' rights advocates combat the growing problem of "wage theft," the National Employment Law Project (NELP) launched the National Wage and Hour Clearinghouse at www.just-pay.org. Developed in collaboration with experienced advocates, the Clearinghouse supports legal services programs, unions, community groups, plaintiffs' attorneys and others working to make headway against the erosion of the minimum wage floor and right to overtime pay. The Clearinghouse Library contains model legal briefs, advocacy materials, and research in wage and hour law. NELP also moderates an active Clearinghouse listserv and notifies members about important news and developments through e-newsletters. Membership in the Clearinghouse is free for nonprofit organizations.

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For additional national networks and resources to support legal aid, *pro bono* and public interest programs, or for more information about Pro Bono Net's work supporting justice networks, please visit www.probono.net.



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