

probono.net
bridging the justice gap

Annual Report



15 YEARS

BRIDGING THE JUSTICE GAP:

A GROWING ROLE AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE



Liz Keith, Program Director, and Mark O'Brien, Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

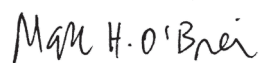
When we launched our first website, probono.net, in New York City in 1999, we had an ambitious vision: use technology to bridge the gap between those who couldn't afford an attorney and private attorneys willing to help. We originally focused on the lawyer side of the equation—connecting, coordinating and training pro bono attorneys and law students. What was novel was the application of technology, but our strength as innovators has proven to be our ability to mobilize broad-based collaborations around sustainable strategies to close the justice gap.

Within a few short years, the model went national, and legal aid partners led us to the other side of the access to justice equation—empowering the public with information, resources and self-help tools. As technology evolved, we found new ways to harness it, making it possible, for instance, to offer assistance in multiple languages, on mobile devices, and through face-to-face interactions conducted across a continent.

By the time we marked our 15th anniversary in 2014, more than 100,000 legal professionals had joined probono.net, and millions of low-income clients were being served nationwide.

Even as we expand our reach to match our vision and our partners' ambitions, we recognize there is more to do. Every day, countless numbers of low-income people face eviction, garnishment, foreclosure, deportation and other life-changing events, too often without benefit of counsel, knowledge of their rights, or even an understanding of the language in which their case is being heard.

Today, Pro Bono Net and our partners offer a range of technology-enabled programs to attorneys, those in need and to new justice partners ranging from public libraries and community colleges to healthcare workers and labor organizers. Our role as a catalyst for change has grown dramatically during the past 15 years. Today, and in the future, we will seek opportunities for continued growth, as we must.



Mark O'Brien
Executive Director, Pro Bono Net



Liz Keith
Program Director, Pro Bono Net



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PROGRAMS WITH A NATIONAL IMPACT

EMPOWERING THOSE IN NEED

For many Americans, the Great Recession continues to recede, a bump in the road that has been fixed and forgotten. But about one in seven still live below the poverty line. For these 45 million people, legal assistance is largely out of reach. Eighty percent are on their own when fighting an unlawful eviction, an abusive spouse, a crippling debt or other crisis. Pro Bono Net helps bridge that gap, enabling technology-enhanced attorney services and self-help guidance in communities across the country. In all, our partner network spans nearly two-thirds of the poor and working poor in the United States.



LawHelp.org

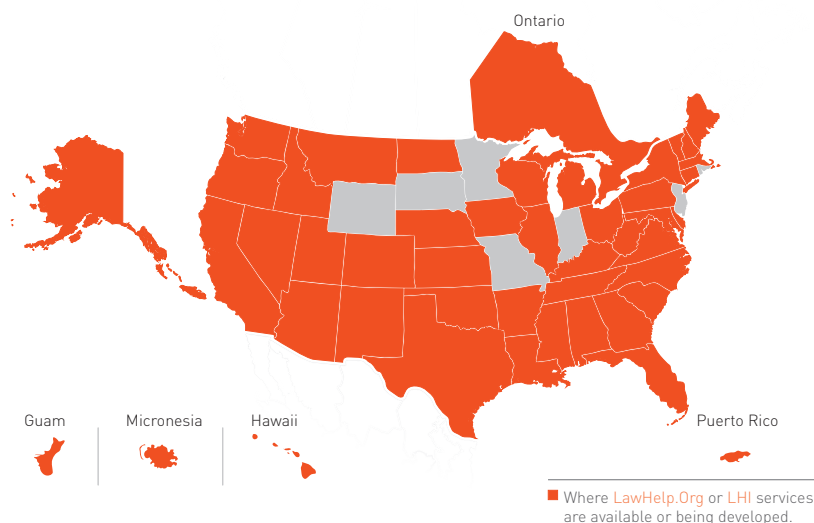
Through a network of statewide consumer legal information portals, this program provides referrals for legal assistance, know-your-rights information and tools for self-help. LawHelp is available in 23 states, and in the District of Columbia, Guam, Micronesia and Puerto Rico.

LawHelp Interactive

LawHelp Interactive is a national resource that allows people representing themselves to create legal documents and pleadings online using simple, TurboTax-style interviews. LHI is active in more than 40 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Ontario, and was used to create more than 500,000 legal documents in 2014, an increase of 25% over the previous year.

LiveHelp

People who need assistance finding online legal resources and referrals can use LiveHelp to get real-time chat-based support from trained navigators and volunteers. This service—especially important for those with low literacy, limited English proficiency or limited digital literacy—is available in 11 states and was used by more than 15,000 people in 2014.



LawHelp Network

ASSISTING

8 MILLION

PEOPLE IN NEED EACH YEAR
THROUGHOUT THE NATION

MOBILIZING JUSTICE NETWORKS

High levels of poverty, coupled with low levels of government funding for legal services, have left the nation's most vulnerable population largely on their own to navigate an often incomprehensible legal system when faced with debt, immigration and landlord issues. The stakes are very high—mistakes can result in the loss of housing, income and sometimes even custody of children. Since its inception, Pro Bono Net has helped the nation's legal community to become better trained and connected, opening the door to more pro bono opportunities and collaboration.



Probono.net

Our flagship site, probono.net, strengthens traditional lawyer-driven models of service. Our membership consists of more than 100,000 lawyers, law students and other volunteers and provides one-stop access to pro bono opportunities, training materials and practice resources.

Pro Bono Manager

Launched in 2007, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Pro Bono Manager is a social enterprise venture that offers large law firms a customized practice management solution to increase the effectiveness and reach of their pro bono programs.

Immigration Advocates Network (IAN)

Since 2008, Pro Bono Net has collaborated with leading immigrants' rights organizations to promote effective and efficient collaboration in the nonprofit immigration legal sector. IAN also develops award-winning online tools and mobile apps to help new Americans understand and protect their rights.

Disaster Mobilization

Pro Bono Net facilitates sector-wide collaborations to mobilize volunteers, coordinate services and provide self-help resources. In 2014, we continued our partnership with the American Bar Association, the Legal Services Corporation, Lone Star Legal Aid and others on an online National Disaster Legal Aid Resource Center.



Photo courtesy of Legal Services Corporation



THE FOLLOWING PAGES DESCRIBE SOME OF OUR CURRENT INNOVATIONS

USING THE POWER OF SELF-HELP TO IMPROVE LIVES

LawHelp connects those in need with information and resources to understand their legal issue and take action. In many areas of the country, there simply aren't enough lawyers to go around. To fill that gap, Pro Bono Net's partners have developed statewide legal information portals using LawHelp.org. At the same time, LHI provides pro se litigants with the means to create court forms and other legal documents. LHI is also pioneering new models of service delivery using online forms and remote legal assistance. These models of service delivery help people in need participate fully and equally in our justice system.



Self-Help Innovation in Hawaii

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii gets up to 20,000 calls a year for help, but is able to provide services in only half the cases. So Pro Bono Net worked with Legal Aid, as well as court and bar partners, to develop and promote a set of interactive online legal forms that can be accessed by pro se litigants through computers in libraries and courthouses. In a state where access to legal services is complicated by the remoteness of some islands, these interactive forms “help more people to effectively navigate the legal system and find solutions for their legal problems,” said Legal Aid society of Hawaii Executive Director M. Nalani Fujimori Kaina.

Reducing Language Barriers

Language and literacy barriers present additional hurdles for many seeking access to justice. Even when a website provides legal education resources in translation, it often assumes a basic working knowledge of English to locate the resources. In Minnesota, Pro Bono Net and our partners from Legal Services State Support have created mirror versions of LawHelpMN in Somali and Hmong, to ensure that these communities, the state's two largest language groups after English and Spanish, can use critically needed information.

NYC Consumer Debt Defense Initiative

In 2014, Pro Bono Net collaborated with the New Media Advocacy Project and the Feerick Center for Social Justice to produce an innovative know-your-rights video for New Yorkers being sued for consumer debt or

harassed by credit agencies. The video explains the steps in a lawsuit and key actions to take. (Additional help in the consumer debt area is available through a system of automated legal forms that is equipping both pro se litigants and pro bono advocates with better tools. See page 11.)

LawHelp Interactive

In early 2015, in partnership with Blue Ridge Legal Services, Pro Bono Net completed a ground-up rebuild of its award-winning online-document assembly platform, LawHelp Interactive. The new platform will meet the evolving needs of our partners. The old system was costly to maintain, difficult to integrate with other systems and unable to incorporate new approaches, including online intake, e-filing, mobile services and remote volunteering. Thanks to the new platform, volunteer attorneys in Oklahoma, for example, will be able to provide document review assistance remotely to clients in rural areas.

INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF THE PRO BONO BAR

It is not enough just to have more lawyers willing to help—they need real-time access to opportunities and training to ensure effective engagement. Pro Bono Net’s goal is to raise the number of volunteers able to provide high-quality pro bono assistance and match them with resources and tools to support their work.

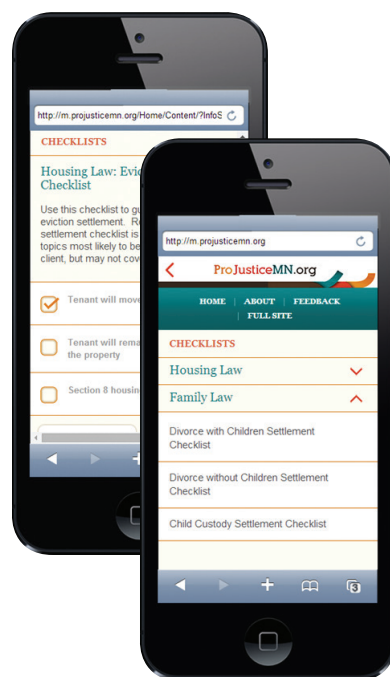


Matching Lawyers with Opportunities in Massachusetts

MassProBono.org, launched in April 2014, more effectively matches volunteer lawyers with pro bono service opportunities across the state. We worked with longtime partner, the Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP) of the Boston Bar Association, as well as Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, the Massachusetts Bar Association and others on this initiative supported by a Technology Initiative Grant from the Legal Services Corporation. Lawyers can now select from a “wide array of what is available and the different ways they might be able to volunteer, based on their background and how much time they have,” said Barbara Siegel, project manager at VLP. The site is particularly valuable to volunteers looking for short-term time-sensitive opportunities, such as walk-in legal clinics and Lawyer for the Day projects.

Pro Bono to Go in Minnesota

Attorneys frequently volunteer in clinics, courts and out in the field, making it a challenge to provide “just-in-time” mentoring and advice to volunteers. Pro Bono to Go is changing that. Developed with partners including Legal Aid Services of Northeastern Minnesota, Legal Services State Support and the Minnesota State Bar Association, this web app provides volunteers in the field with access to a mobile-optimized library of guides and checklists on their mobile phone or tablet. This unique approach to offering mobile assistance to volunteers leverages a set of customized resources published through ProJusticeMN.org, Minnesota’s statewide pro bono and legal aid support website.



Pro Bono to Go helps volunteers assist clients in reaching comprehensive settlements with adverse parties. Settlement Checklists identify issues that should be discussed with the client, and points to address in an agreement.



PRO BONO TO GO GIVES PRO BONO ATTORNEYS CONFIDENCE THAT THEY HAVE COVERED ALL THE BASES WHEN REPRESENTING A CLIENT OUTSIDE THEIR NORMAL PRACTICE AREA.

—MARY KACZOREK,
Supervising Attorney,
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid

ENABLING COLLABORATION

Pro Bono Net's work building cross-sector collaborations is driving transformative models of service delivery that reach more people in need. Three ongoing projects illustrate the impact of this effort.



E-Filing for Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has serious ramifications, and individuals need help and information. In New York, LHI enables advocates in domestic violence cases to electronically submit petitions on behalf of victims to courts from offices or shelters, making preparation quick and accurate. Thanks to the Domestic Violence Advocate-Assisted Family Offense Petition Program, nearly 5,100 petitions requesting orders of protection were e-filed in 2014, in 45 of the state's 62 counties. Advocates use an online interview to help litigants complete petitions, and transfer them into the Family Court's Universal Case Management System (UCMS), eliminating countless hours of data entry time for court clerks and sharply cutting the wait time for litigants. In 2015, the New York courts received the Legaltech News Innovation Award for Best Use of Technology in a Pro Bono Project for this project.

Help for Consumer Debt Victims

A cutting-edge collection of online resources is helping level the playing field for vulnerable New Yorkers subject to debt collection abuse. Each year, tens of thousands of New Yorkers go to court without attorneys—risking financial ruin. The NYC Consumer Debt Defense Project enables litigants to create legal documents to use in court and respond to debt collection issues. Similarly, it allows legal services organizations and volunteer attorneys to quickly generate high-quality legal documents. In a matter of minutes, instead of hours, they have a thoroughly researched and carefully drafted response. The tool is a “huge leap forward,” says Dora Galacatos of Fordham's Feerick Center which operates court-based pro bono clinics throughout the city. The project is a result of a partnership between Pro Bono Net and MFY Legal Services, a nonprofit law firm serving low-income New Yorkers. “Debt collectors win cases even when they sue the wrong person because people do not have a way to fight back,” said Carolyn Coffey, supervising attorney at MFY Legal Services. “These forms give New Yorkers a fighting chance in court and help low-income people avoid financial ruin.”

App to Assist the Homebound

The Debt & Eviction Navigator, DEN, is a web app for tablet computers that lets social workers perform quick “legal health” screenings for homebound and disabled seniors they visit, helping them understand their rights and access benefits. Often isolated and physically unable to get to a legal aid office, this group is particularly at risk when confronted with housing and debt issues or elder abuse. DEN was created by students in a “Technology, Innovation, and Law Practice” practicum, co-taught by Mark O'Brien at Georgetown University Law Center, in collaboration with Pro Bono Net and the Jewish Association Serving the Aging (JASA) in Queens, NY. Using the Neota Logic expert systems platform, DEN virtually walks non-attorney navigators through a series of questions to help spot consumer and housing issues, allowing the navigators to direct seniors to appropriate referrals and resources. The DEN was selected through online voting for the People's Choice award during Georgetown's annual “Iron Tech Lawyer” Competition.

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF IMMIGRANTS

The U.S. legal system is daunting even to many native-born Americans. For recent immigrants, language and cultural barriers can make the system that much more forbidding. Since 2008, Pro Bono Net, through our Immigration Advocates Network program and in partnership with the leading immigrants' rights organizations, has been helping immigrants overcome obstacles on the path to safety and security. With IAN, we have created award-winning websites and mobile applications—www.citizenshipworks.org, www.weownthedream.org and Pocket DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). Citizenshipworks is an online platform that makes naturalization accessible to all, regardless of income level, geography or ability to navigate complex legal processes, and provides opportunities for “virtual” pro bono service from any lawyer’s desktop. In light of the President’s announcement last November recasting immigration policy, IAN is deploying technology that will enable the nonprofit sector to scale up and collaborate effectively to help vulnerable immigrants across the country apply for deferred action.

Launch of Administrative Relief Site

IAN has joined with other leading organizations to offer a range of resources through adminrelief.org. Advocates can learn how to prepare potential applicants by identifying which documents and information they should start collecting that may be helpful in determining their eligibility for administrative relief. The site also makes training resources available to immigration law practitioners and others to understand the DACA and DAPA (Deferred Action for Parental Accountability) programs. Sample documents are provided to ensure consistent and high-quality services.

Unaccompanied Children Resource Center

The Unaccompanied Children Resource Center, uacresources.org, promotes access to justice for children in immigration court proceedings. The UAC website was created in response to the surge of unaccompanied minors, primarily from Central America, seeking refuge in the United States. Many of the children do not have access to a lawyer, and the government is not obligated to provide one. The UAC website offers information and referrals to children and their advocates or guardians, as well as training manuals, webinars and practice advisories to the bar. The resources include a national directory of volunteer opportunities. The UAC website is a joint project of Pro Bono Net, IAN and the American Bar Association.

Immigo App—Supporting Immigrant Integration

Immigo puts the most up-to-date information about changing immigration laws and policies into the hands of immigration advocates in the field. The app was developed by IAN and the National Council of La Raza, in partnership with Pro Bono Net and Verizon. “Immigo is the first-ever mobile app designed to connect individuals working with immigrants to comprehensive trainings, resources and legal referrals,” said Matthew Burnett, IAN’s director. The app is available on Apple and Android devices.

Immigration Advocates Network

NOW HAS NEARLY	AN INCREASE OF
7,800	10%
MEMBERS	IN THE LAST YEAR

RESPONDING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

In the wake of human and natural disasters, Pro Bono Net has played a key role in organizing collaborative responses by the legal community.

Hurricane Katrina was a galvanizing moment for Pro Bono Net. We were still a small organization, but were able to mobilize quickly to assist our partners in the region, and then leverage LawHelp.org and probono.net projects to deliver critical information to the public and help coordinate response efforts by legal aid staff and volunteers.



Photo courtesy of National Disaster Legal Aid

Many disasters have a disproportionate and long-term impact on low-income communities; equipping the legal aid community with resources to respond more effectively helps survivors rebuild their lives. In that vein, Pro Bono Net partnered with Lone Star Legal Aid, the American Bar Association, the Legal Services Corporation, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association and Texas Legal Services Center to re-launch the National Disaster Legal Aid Resource Center at DisasterLegalAid.org.

The new site builds on our work in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It provides resources to three key audiences: people in need of help, legal aid professionals and pro bono volunteers. The new design makes it easier to navigate and is mobile-responsive, a key element given that smartphones are increasingly used in the wake of a disaster. A new version of the National Pro Bono Opportunities Guide allows attorneys to quickly find ways to help. An interactive interview, powered by LawHelp Interactive, helps

survivors of FEMA-declared disasters to easily appeal a denial of FEMA benefits. Legal services attorneys with questions about disaster response can use the site to submit queries to the Disaster Legal Aid National Advisory Group.

In addition, Pro Bono Net supports regional disaster-planning initiatives in the Midwest and San Francisco Bay Area, and provides training and consulting services to legal aid programs on incorporating technology strategies into response efforts.



Photo courtesy of Legal Services Corporation

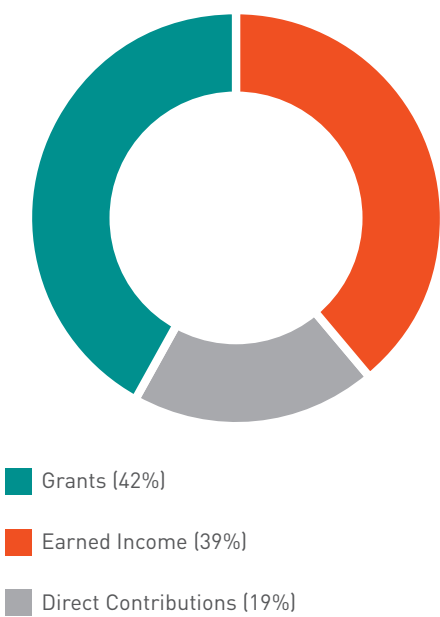


PRO BONO NET SERVES AS A DOOR OR A PORTAL TO CONNECT THOSE LAWYERS WHO WANT TO DO PRO BONO WORK WITH THE RESOURCES AND TRAINING MATERIALS THAT THEY NEED.

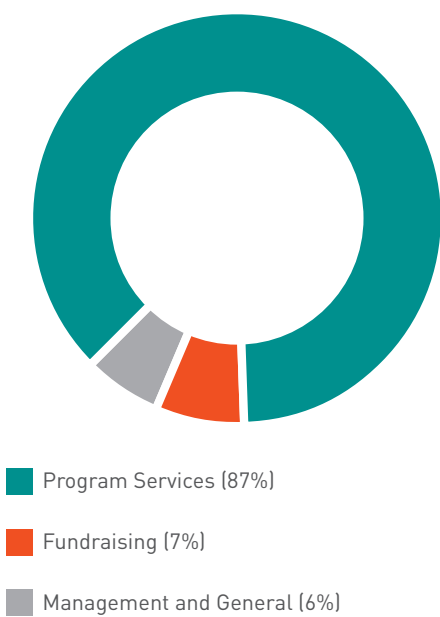
—BRENNAN DEVANEY,
Pro Bono Counsel,
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom

FINANCIALS

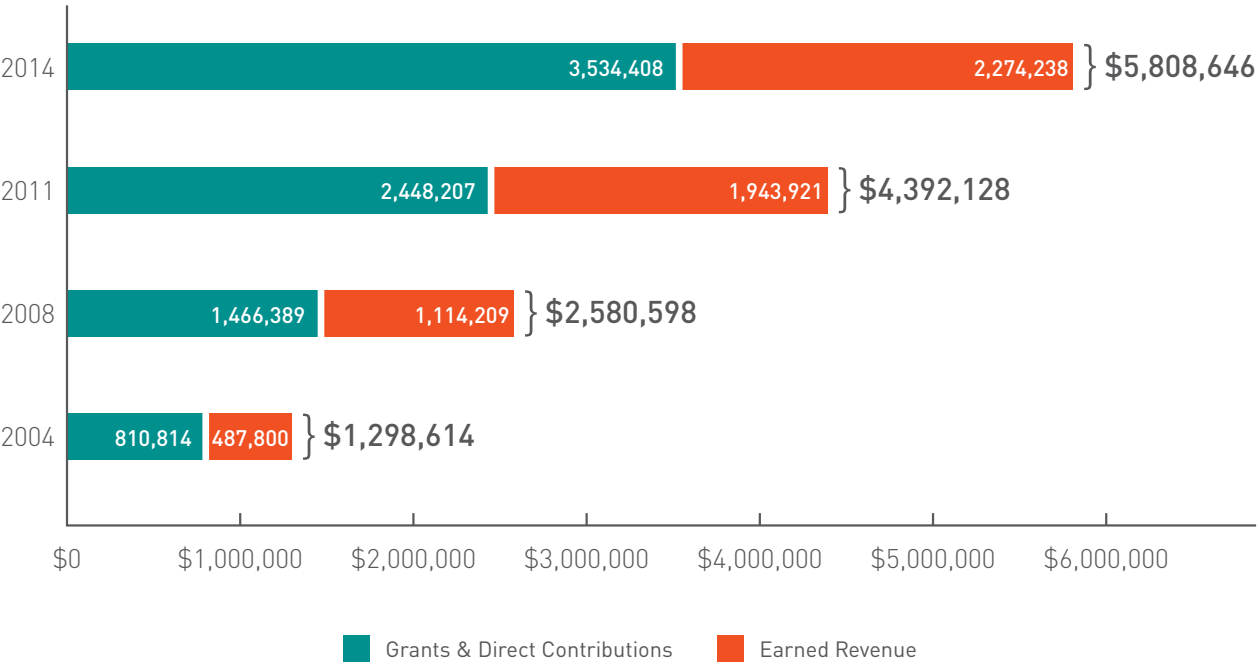
Income Distribution



Expenses



Grants and Direct Contributions/Earned Revenue



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the Year Ending December 31, 2014

	2014		
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Contributions	\$1,341,411	\$1,790,758	\$3,132,169
Donated software	4,285		4,285
Donated goods and services	315,011		315,011
Interest and other income	82,943		82,943
Program fees	1,850,623		1,850,623
Product subscription fees	423,615		423,615
Net assets released from restriction	830,510	(830,510)	-
Total support and revenue	4,848,398	960,248	5,808,646
EXPENSES			
Program services	4,041,821		4,041,821
Management and general	265,126		265,126
Fundraising	318,778		318,778
Total expenses	4,625,725	0	4,625,725
NET ASSETS			
Beginning	345,947	625,110	971,057
Change in net assets	222,673	960,248	1,182,921
Ending	\$568,620	\$1,585,358	\$2,153,978

SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS



I AM ALWAYS IMPRESSED WITH THE WAYS IN WHICH PRO BONO NET CONTINUES TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN LEGAL AID AND PRO BONO ATTORNEYS AND STAYS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE INNOVATIONS IN THE DELIVERY OF PRO BONO ASSISTANCE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY. THEY ARE A PIVOTAL PARTNER IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION'S ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE.

—ALISON KING, *Pro Bono Counsel, Kaye Scholer*

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PEOPLE FEEL MORE IN CONTROL OF THEIR CASE RIGHT FROM THE ONSET, THAT THEY CREATED THEIR OWN PETITION, THAT THEY DIDN'T NEED A COURT EMPLOYEE OR AN ATTORNEY TO ACTUALLY GET THE CASE STARTED FOR THEM. [TALKING ABOUT THE NY E-FILING PROJECT.]

—MIKE WILLIAMS, Clerk of Court, Bronx Family Court

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These organizations provided donated goods or services in 2014

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Individuals

Those listed below contributed \$1,000 or more in 2014

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Nick Baughan

LeeAnn Black
Michael Cooper
Catherine Donovan & Gavin Murphy
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Karl & Carol Hertz
Michael Hertz & Dorothy Thomas
Steven L. Holley
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Karen Levy
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Albert Rosenblatt
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Stephen Warnke & Susan Sommer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



I THINK THE BOARD APPRECIATES AND REALLY IS MOTIVATED BY THOSE ACTS OF HELP, THOSE TIMES WHEN PRO BONO NET REALLY DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE UNDERSERVED.

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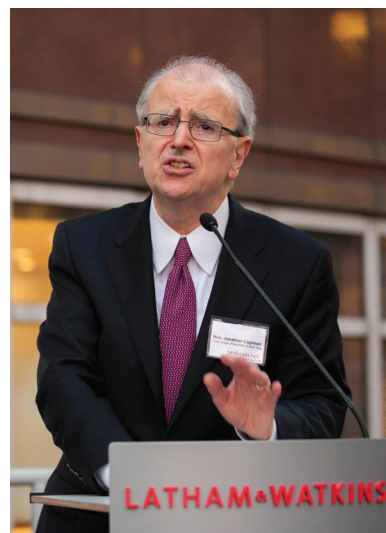
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Stephen A. Warnke, Esq., Treasurer

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In 2014, Pro Bono Net came together with many of our partners and supporters to celebrate our 15th anniversary. It was an honor to be joined by Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman (pictured) who spoke forcefully about the importance of equal access to justice and highlighting Pro Bono Net's role.

PRO BONO NET STAFF



THE STRENGTH OF PRO BONO NET HAS ALWAYS BEEN ITS ROOTEDNESS IN THE VERY REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS OF THE COMMUNITIES WE ARE TRYING TO SERVE.

—MARK O'BRIEN, *Executive Director*

Praise Apampa (2015)

Director of Finance & Administration

Zizi Bandera (2015)

Community Engagement Coordinator,
Immigration Advocates Network

Don Bellamy

Senior Developer

Matthew Burnett

Director, Immigration
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Kanchana Hedge

QA Personnel

Claudia Johnson

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Liz Keith

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Project Manager

Simon Rah (2015)

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Program Coordinator, Immigration
Advocates Network

Karin Romans

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Sandra Sandoval

Field Support Coordinator,
Immigration Advocates Network

Jessica Stuart

Product Manager, Pro Bono Manager

Greg Tenzer

Senior Developer

Jillian Theil

Training and Field Support Coordinator

Sebastian Zavala (2015)

Program Manager, Immigration
Advocates Network

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