

The First Judicial District Pro Bono Program Fact Sheet

The First Judicial District Pro Bono Program assists low-income Montanans with legal matters in Lewis & Clark and Broadwater Counties. Generally, the First Judicial Pro Bono Program has a waiting list of 15-30 persons who need attorneys in civil matters and cannot afford one. Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) cannot meet this need alone. With only 13 attorneys statewide, MLSA has about one attorney for every 11,000 Montanans in poverty. Some persons in the First Judicial District may wait up to a year before a pro bono attorney is found to assist them. The Pro Bono Program needs your help to eliminate the waiting list.

What services are provided to pro bono attorneys?

MLSA, as the administrator for the First Judicial District Pro Bono Program, provides the following services to pro bono attorneys:

- Malpractice insurance coverage while the pro bono case is active, at no cost to the pro bono attorney
- Mentors or co-counsel for pro bono attorneys who are new to family law, upon request by the pro bono attorney
- Space to meet with clients
- Pleadings forms – some forms are available online at montanalawhelp.org, montanaprobono.net, and courts.mt.gov/library/topic/default.mcp.x. Other forms may be provided by MLSA upon request.
- Calculations of child support, under the Montana Child Support Guidelines
- Low-cost or free mediation for pro bono cases
- Online reporting forms and pro bono information, including CLE materials, on montanaprobono.net
- Free access to LexisNexis7, sponsored by the Montana Supreme Court (contact Statewide Pro Bono Coordinator Patty Fain pfain@mt.gov for the password, which changes monthly)
- Free CLE opportunities – for attorneys who spend at least 50 pro bono hours in a year, the Montana State Bar waives the registration fee for the Bar-sponsored CLE of the pro bono attorney's choice

What if an attorney wants to volunteer, but not for full representation of a client?

- Every month, the Pro Bono Committee sponsors an advice/limited scope representation clinic for Montanans living in poverty. Attorneys volunteer their time (1-2 hours) to meet with clients to advise them about their legal issues. The clients may have questions about how to proceed on their own pro se, or may want legal advice about their options. The pro bono attorney's obligation is limited to meeting with the client for a 30-45 minute appointment on the day of the clinic. There is no obligation of continued representation.

PRO BONO CASE PREFERENCE SHEET

Name _____ Firm/Employer _____

Address preferred for communication from pro bono program. This address is my: [] home [] office

Telephone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

I PREFER CASES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS: [The need is greatest in the area of family law.]

Limited Representation (no court appearance required):

- Family Law (review dissolution and parenting plan pleadings, advice clinics)
Indian Wills (prepare wills for Montana Tribal Members)
Bankruptcy (review Chapter 7 bankruptcy petitions)
Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (help low-income clients with their tax concerns)

Direct Representation (may involve in-court assistance):

- General Family Law (dissolution of marriage, parenting plan, custody)
Adoption
Order of Protection Hearings (contested hearings)
Guardian Ad Litem (representing the best interests of the child in family law cases)
I would like GAL training I have had GAL experience and/or training
Mediation in Family Law Cases
I would like mediation training I have had mediation experience and/or training
Consumer Law (collection defense, bankruptcy, vehicle repossessions)
Housing Law:
Home Foreclosures Homeownership/Land Disputes Landlord/Tenant
Employment Law
Title VII discrimination wrongful termination unemployment insurance
Wills and Probate
Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (representation at IRS level or US Tax Court)

MENTORS

- I do not have a lot of experience in the practice area _____ selected above and will need a mentor or co-counsel.
I am willing to be a mentor for other attorneys in this practice area: _____

Please return this form to MLSA, 616 Helena Ave. #100, Helena, MT 59601; fax 406/442-9817; email aswanson@mtlsa.org. Questions? Contact August Swanson of MLSA at 442-9830 x 121.

First Judicial District Pro Bono Program: Training Needs Survey

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE PRO BONO ASSISTANCE TO OUR UNDER-RESOURCED NEIGHBORS. WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD COMPLETE THIS SHORT SURVEY TO TELL US WHAT TRAINING YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO ENHANCE YOUR PRO BONO EXPERIENCE. YOUR INPUT WILL HELP US BETTER SERVE OUR CLIENTS AND THE LEGAL COMMUNITY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY AND YOUR COMMITMENT TO SERVING OUR LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORS.

What topics would you attend a free training on if the training was geared toward pro bono attorneys and provided free? Assume that in exchange for the free training, you would be asked to commit to assisting a pro bono client in that area of the law. [Check all that apply]

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissolution of marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Orders of protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption | <input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship | <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian Ad Litem in family law cases |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mediation in family law cases | <input type="checkbox"/> Collections defense | <input type="checkbox"/> Car repossession defense |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home foreclosure defense | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant | <input type="checkbox"/> Land/homeownership disputes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment discrimination | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrongful discharge | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wills and probate | <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Wills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low-Income Taxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

What length of pro bono training would work best for you?

- 1 hour 2 hours 4 hours

What day and time for a pro bono training would work best for you?

- Weekday
 During lunch-hour After 5 pm Other: _____
- Saturday
 Morning Afternoon Evening

What can the 1st Judicial District Pro Bono Program do to enhance the experience of its pro bono attorneys and clients?

Any other comments? _____

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