

Minutes
Public Service And Trust Commission
Pro Bono Committee
Programs Subcommittee
March 21, 2011
11:00 AM

Teleconference
225 Spring Street, 2nd Floor, Room 206
Wethersfield, CT

The first meeting of the Public Service and Trust Commission Pro Bono Committee Programs Subcommittee was held by teleconference at 225 Spring Street, 2nd floor, Room 206, Wethersfield, CT at 11:00 a.m. on March 21, 2011

Members participating via telephone: Attorney Steve Eppler-Epstein (chair), Attorney Edward Heath, Attorney Alfred Casella, Attorney Ian Lodovice and Attorney Amy Haberman.

Guests invited to provide prospective from legal aid entities: Attorney Pat Kaplan and Attorney Branford Brown

The meeting was called to order by Attorney Eppler-Epstein at 11:02 a.m.

1. Attorney Eppler-Epstein asked members to introduce themselves and gave an overview of the goals of the Pro Bono Committee and the Programs Subcommittee and explained that other subcommittees may need this subcommittee's input before they can proceed with their charge.
2. The subcommittee discussed who might be the target audience for the Pro Bono Summit in September and what they might be looking for from this event. Some discussion was held about helping pro bono coordinators in law firms become more aware of pro bono opportunities and connecting those with the people willing to provide services. The summit should concentrate on these coordinators but also must be open to anyone interested.

A discussion was held about the need to have 10-12 pro bono opportunities highlighted at the summit. The outline for each program should include:

- a) a list of contact people;
- b) an overview of its work;
- c) training opportunities and time commitment;
- d) a way to address the concern of in-state practice (is it possible to partner with legal aid or another law firm who have attorneys

registered to practice in Connecticut or to have in-house counsel with Connecticut registration take the lead?)

Attorney Margaret Middleton's Veteran's Legal Aid Clinic was cited as an example of a program which could be included.

Discussion continued about current pro bono referrals throughout the state and categorizing them into three basic models:

- 1) traditional model where a direct referral is made to a law firm or attorney;
- 2) pro se clinics where volunteer attorneys are trained by legal aid staff;
- 3) volunteer attorneys work in house at legal aid offices

The subcommittee discussed the need for new pro bono opportunities and overcoming infrastructure problems. One idea might be to have a law firm take responsibility for coordinating a particular pro se clinic for a definite time. Probate Courts also have a need for volunteers to be appointed as conservators and GMRs but the concern was whether this type of work would fit into the definition of pro bono work.

Discussion continued about ways to encourage people to attend the summit. It was suggested that adding a discussion about malpractice insurance issues to the agenda would help towards this end.

The subcommittee agreed that there was still work to be done in order to finalize a list of programs included at the summit. The subcommittee might need to consider incentives which could be built to encourage attorneys to participate in pro bono service. There was discussion about the particular ideas from the Recognition Subcommittee which include a waiver of the client security fund fee, some type of award or recognition by the Chief Justice as well as financial incentives such as helping large law firms promote their pro bono service to corporations. There was also a suggestion that pro bono partnerships could be created where attorneys from large law firms could team up with in-house attorneys from different corporations.

Finally, the subcommittee discussed possible dates for the next meeting and agreed that a final date and time will be decided within the next few days.

3. The teleconference was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

