

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICE  
REPORT TO COURT OF APPEALS OF MARYLAND**

**January 2015**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICE  
REPORT TO COURT OF APPEALS  
JANUARY 2015**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The overall purpose of the Court of Appeals' Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service is to promote increased efforts on the part of lawyers to provide legal assistance to persons of limited means. Specifically, the Standing Committee is charged with working with local pro bono committees, which include members of the judiciary, the bar and legal services and pro bono providers, to ensure that lawyers are given the opportunities to engage in pro bono efforts. Over the last few years, the Standing Committee's role has evolved from helping to design and respond to local pro bono action plans to offering specific project ideas, resources and technical assistance to the local efforts. It also seeks to endorse policies and systemic changes that impact access to the courts for indigent litigants, enhance pro bono participation and foster court efficiency in managing unrepresented indigent clients. Finally, the Standing Committee works to facilitate a smooth and informative pro bono reporting process.

The most significant changes to the pro bono landscape recently achieved by the Standing Committee include: 1) encouraging and expanding judicial support of pro bono activities, on the appellate, circuit and district court levels; 2) promoting National Celebration of Pro Bono Week/Month activities with record numbers of public service events; 3) offering successful examples and models for pro bono projects implemented on a local level; 4) recommending rule changes that would ease access to legal services and the courts for pro bono clients; and 5) analyzing the pro bono reporting data from years of annual lawyer service reports. The latter revealed interesting observations about the composition of the bar and the most likely prospects for engaging lawyers based on location, area of practice, and size of firm. One of the most telling observations was that the potential pool of volunteer lawyers in Maryland is limited substantially by the significant number of lawyers who practice outside of the state, do not actively practice or are in government service.

The Standing Committee intends on utilizing its experience and the recently acquired reporting data to engage in strategic planning for 2015 and beyond. It looks forward to examining the successes and challenges of integrating pro bono activity on both a state and local level with the goal of reinvigorating those areas of the state in need of pro bono support and activation with innovative and meaningful approaches.

## I. INTRODUCTION

When the Court of Appeals of Maryland (hereafter “the Court”) adopted three new rules impacting pro bono legal services in 2002, it took a significant step toward improving the legal services delivery system in the state. Rule 16-901 established the Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service (hereafter the “Standing Committee”), and Rule 16-902 mandated the creation of a Local Pro Bono Committee in each county. Together with Rule 16-903, which requires each attorney authorized to practice law in Maryland to file an annual report on the number of pro bono legal service hours rendered, these rules served to enhance access to free legal assistance and introduce organized pro bono service into new areas of the state. The Court also adopted revisions to Rule 6.1 of the Maryland Rules of Professional Conduct, which more specifically defined “*pro bono publico*” service and created a target goal of fifty (50) hours of volunteer service annually for attorneys engaged in the full-time practice of law. Along with the new rules and their implementation, these revisions revitalized the delivery of pro bono services in Maryland.

One of the most important outgrowths of the rules was the creation of the Standing Committee. In 2006, the Court received and adopted virtually all of the recommendations of the Standing Committee’s State Pro Bono Action Plan (submitted pursuant to Rule 16-901). Since then, the Standing Committee’s role has evolved from ensuring the growth of the local pro bono committee structure and assessment of local legal needs and plans to developing statewide policies impacting pro bono practice. Much of its focus, however, remains on the local committee work, including assessing legal needs, identifying relevant resources, and offering technical assistance on effective pro bono projects and models to address those needs. Standing Committee liaisons and representatives of the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland (PBRC) as its delegated staff, attend local committee meetings and assist in orchestrating local programs. The Standing Committee also organizes meetings and forums for local committees to share information and exchange ideas with one another. In fact, some of the most innovative and far-reaching initiatives over the last few years resulted from local pro bono committee and provider meetings facilitated by the Standing Committee and PBRC working to address the needs of the poverty population.<sup>1</sup>

The Standing Committee and PBRC also work with the Court and the Administrative Office of the Courts in crafting a streamlined and effective pro bono reporting process and serve as a resource for those lawyers unclear about their reporting responsibility. Finally, when appropriate, it focuses on systemic changes that enhance pro bono participation and court efficiency in managing unrepresented indigent clients typically by way of suggested rule changes, court-based projects or judicial education.

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<sup>1</sup> The Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland staffs the Standing Committee.

This purpose of this report is to update the Court on the Standing Committee's recent work and progress in implementing the rules. The ultimate goal of the Standing Committee's efforts is to further expand access to the justice system for those without the means or ability to access it on their own.

## **II. COMPOSITION OF STANDING COMMITTEE AND REVISION OF RULE 16-901**

The Court adopted revisions to the Standing Committee's composition in 2010. Rule 16-901 currently provides for attorneys from each of the appellate judicial circuits, a maximum of three circuit and district court judges, one organizational representative from each of three legal services programs (i.e., the Legal Aid Bureau, Inc., Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS), and the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland, Inc. (PBRC)), one additional pro bono referral organization on a rotational basis; and a member of the general public, as well as consultants appointed to the Committee from time to time.

On its own accord, the Standing Committee appointed liaisons from its membership for each jurisdiction. The purpose of the liaisons is to offer a personal and direct line of communication between the Standing Committee and each local committee. Liaisons attend local committee meetings, offer information on resources and statewide policy, and keep the Standing Committee apprised of local activities. They also relay concerns and suggestions from the local committees to the Standing Committee. This exchange of information and ideas through the liaisons has fostered greater collaboration and coordination among programs and helped to inform statewide policies and recommendations. For a list of current Standing Committee members, see Appendix A. For a list of designated liaisons, see Appendix B.

In 2012, the Hon. Karen Murphy Jensen replaced Ward Coe, III, as Chair of the Standing Committee. Under her leadership, and with additional judicial membership, the Standing Committee placed a renewed emphasis on judicial involvement in state, local and regional pro bono efforts.

## **III. JUDICIAL ENGAGEMENT IN PRO BONO**

In the Standing Committee's experience, judicial involvement has been essential to activating and sustaining pro bono initiatives. The local pro bono committee plans and reports clearly demonstrated that the most successful efforts benefited from strong judicial support. While judges on the Standing Committee have always been active supporters, more recently, educating the bench about the availability of free legal resources and ways to support pro bono initiatives became a priority for the members.

In order to encourage judicial education and support, the Standing Committee recommended that the Court of Appeals communicate with the bench about its support of pro bono activity. The Standing Committee approached Chief Judge Barbera with a request to issue a memorandum outlining the types of permissible activities in which judges could engage to support pro bono service. The Court embraced the concept and released a memorandum on September 22, 2014 to the circuit and district courts which explicitly encouraged judges to play an active role in fostering pro bono service.<sup>2</sup> The memorandum also referenced the Maryland Judicial Ethics Committee Opinion No. 2013-29 which specifically allows for such activities.<sup>3</sup> With clear leadership from the Court, the Standing Committee met with greater success in making presentations to other judicial bodies about both the need for and availability of pro bono legal services. Members also made significant strides in facilitating court-based pro bono initiatives such as legal clinics, advice for self-represented litigants and overall access to the justice system.

As an example, this past year, Judge Miriam Hutchins presented on pro bono initiatives and resources to the state's new judges and spoke to the Baltimore City Administrative Judges at a monthly meeting. She was also instrumental in expanding a Baltimore City District Court volunteer legal clinic for unrepresented litigants. Judge Karen Murphy Jensen addressed the Conference of Circuit Court Judges for the first time in 2014 as well and supported the Mid-Shore Pro Bono projects to increase bar and community support by serving on its advisory board. Judge Cathy H. Serrette consistently encouraged pro bono participation by hosting the monthly Prince George's County Local Pro Bono Committee meetings in her chambers, presented the local pro bono awards at the county's pro bono reception, and participated in cross-border pro bono custody trainings. In Harford County, Judge Angela Eaves regularly attended the local pro bono committee meetings and events, served as faculty for lawyer trainings, and encouraged lawyers to join the organized providers in delivering legal assistance.

The Standing Committee shared information about these and similar types of activities with the local committees and members of the bench to alleviate concerns from judges about their participation and facilitate greater support in local communities. Judicial engagement in various sectors of the state ranged from training volunteers in Baltimore County to inviting volunteers to lunch with members of the bench in Calvert County. The Court's leadership was critical. It is important that the message from the bench remain clear and consistent to ensure similar successes and sustain or raise the level of engagement. The Standing Committee encourages promoting these activities in every county and at every judicial level.

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<sup>2</sup> The memorandum is included as Appendix C.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics Opinion 2013-29 reaffirmed Opinion No. 124 and is included as Appendix D.

#### **IV. REQUIRED REPORTING OF PRO BONO**

The Standing Committee works with the Administrative Office of the Courts to oversee the annual reporting of pro bono service hours required by Rule 16-903.<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to the rule, reports are sent to licensed attorneys by January 10 for reporting on the prior calendar year's hours. By February 15, all reports should be completed and filed either online or by mailing the forms to the Administrative Office of the Court's designated post office box. Over the last few years, online filing increased substantially so that by the reporting cycle for 2013, 81.4% reported online. The increase in online filing enhanced the efficiency of the process and accuracy of the reports. This past February, approximately 84% of the licensed lawyers met the required deadline. During the subsequent few months, non-compliant lawyers received several reminders to file their reports. By the end of the full process, Maryland reached a 99.9% compliance rate.

In the early years of reporting, the Standing Committee and PBRC staff responded to numerous requests for assistance in the process, both in terms of interpretation of Rule 6.1's definition of pro bono as well as the process for filing.<sup>5</sup> In more recent years, PBRC typically responded to both types of requests unless the Standing Committee received a question of new import requiring specific guidance.

Since the combination of required reporting of IOLTA and the Pro Bono Legal Service Reports several years ago, PBRC staff also responded to inquiries about the IOLTA reporting process. PBRC staff contacted those non-compliant attorneys whose reports remained outstanding to encourage them to file. Lawyers received information as to the consequences of failing to file and assistance if required. Additionally, the staff spent time informing judicial law clerks, judges and active military about their exemptions from filing. They further assisted elderly, disabled, or other lawyers who had some difficulty filing online. Once again, the process ran smoothly and the effort by PBRC resulted in dramatically reducing the number of non-compliant lawyers. In fact, for the last three years, despite the increase in licensed attorneys, PBRC successfully decreased the number of attorneys who needed to be decertified because of its efforts. For the most recent reporting cycle (conducted in 2014 for calendar year 2013), the number of non-compliant attorneys decreased from 1270 to approximately 140.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Maryland was the second state in the nation to require annual reporting of pro bono hours and serves as a model for many other jurisdictions. Today, six additional states embrace mandatory reporting.

<sup>5</sup> This involves hundreds of telephone calls and email inquiries.

<sup>6</sup> For the reporting period covering calendar year 2011, of an original 1,120 non-compliant attorneys, approximately 222 were decertified. For the reporting period covering calendar year 2012, of an original 1,210 on the list, approximately 180 were decertified. These statistics were provided by the consultant ANASYS working in conjunction with PBRC.



The Administrative Office of the Courts contracts with a statistical consulting company, to distribute, collect and compile the results of the individual reports. The final report issued in the fall of the following calendar year summarizes the results and includes aggregate statistics with demographics on the bar and those benefiting from its service.<sup>7</sup> Entitled *Current Status of Pro Bono Service Among Maryland Lawyers*, these reports provide the only statistics and insight available into the composition of the bar in Maryland and provide useful information in analyzing who and how to approach lawyers in the context of pro bono assistance.

For most of the reporting period, the results have remained relatively consistent. The latest report found that overall, 55.7% of the full-time lawyers practicing in Maryland reported rendering some type of pro bono service in 2013, and that the majority of the work focused on those with limited means.<sup>8</sup>

In April of 2014, the Standing Committee and the Maryland Access to Justice Commission issued a *Longitudinal Analysis of Pro Bono Reporting from 2002-2012*. The joint report presents a compilation of the results from the annual *Current Status* reports prepared for Calendar Years 2002 through 2012. The data, presented without analysis, examined the results reported over this eleven-year period of time, noting several trends. Below is the Executive Summary of the report.

### **Demographic Changes and Observations**

- **The bar has grown significantly over this period.** The number of active lawyers went up by 6,625, an increase of 22%. (Page 4)
- **Many Maryland lawyers work outside the State.** Consistently, only about 60% of lawyers have their primary office in Maryland. (Page 5)
- **Maryland attorneys report working for government in record high numbers.** Those identifying as government attorneys equaled 19.8% (an increase from 17.8 % in 2005). (Page 11)
- **A high number of lawyers report they do not actively practice law.** In 2012 that number reached 14% of the bar. (Page 11)
- **Solo practitioners have become a relatively larger percent of those working in firms.** Those reporting they worked solo increased by about 10% while those reporting they worked in small, medium and extra-large firms decreased. (Page 10)
- **Montgomery County has eclipsed Baltimore as the area where the greatest number of lawyers practice.** (Page 6)

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<sup>7</sup>The most recent report can be found at: <http://www.mdcourts.gov/probono/reportsinfopackets.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> The 2013 *Current Status of Pro Bono Service Among Maryland Lawyers, Year 2013*, can be found at: <http://www.mdcourts.gov/probono/pdfs/probonoreport2013.pdf>.

## **Types of Legal Work Lawyers Do**

- **Primary practice areas have been consistent over time, and do not clearly align with pro bono demand.** The top legal area where lawyers provide pro bono assistance has consistently been family law (Page 9), yet family has consistently been ranked as only the 7th most prevalent practice area for lawyers. Family practitioners make up about 5.6% of all active lawyers. (Pages 7 and 8)
- **The top five practice areas include Litigation, Corporate/Business, Other, Criminal, and Government; the top pro bono practice areas reported are Family, Corporate/Business, Real Estate, Litigation and Criminal.** (Pages 7-8)
- **A very small percent (about 1.6%) of Maryland lawyers work for a legal services organization providing legal help to people of limited means.** About another 1.4% report they work for a public interest organization. The pool of lawyers available to serve the needs of the poor is severely limited, increasing demand for the pro bono contributions of private counsel. (Page 12)

## **The Pro Bono and Financial Contributions of Maryland Lawyers**

- **The number of hours of pro bono services provided by Maryland lawyers has increased by 16.75% since reporting began in 2002.** In 2012, attorneys reported providing 1.16 million hours of service. (Page 18)
- **Consistently, about one-half of those hours were provided to people of limited means.** The remainder were to non-profit organizations to further their organizational purposes, to non-profits in matters that address the needs of persons of limited means, and to civil rights matters, in that order of prevalence. (Page 19)
- **Financial contributions made by attorneys to organizations that provide legal services to people of limited means have increased dramatically, by 89% since 2002.** In 2012 attorneys reported providing over \$4.1 million to these organizations. (Page 21). The percentage of attorneys who make any financial contribution has increased since 2002 by about 14.65%. Approximately 18% of all lawyers reported making financial contributions in 2012. (Page 22)

## **Performance in Light of the Aspirational Goals of MRPC 6.1**

- **The percentage of full-time lawyers doing any pro bono has averaged 57.37% over the eleven years.** While all lawyers are required to report on their pro bono activity, the aspirational standard of 50 hours per year articulated by Rule 6.1 applies only to those who practice law full-time. (Page 14)

- **The percent of full-time lawyers meeting the 50-hour aspirational goal increased by a relative 25.42% since reporting began.** In 2002, 17.7% of full-time lawyers met that goal. By 2012 that had risen to 22.2%. (Page 15)
- **The percent of *all* lawyers and full-time lawyers reporting doing any pro bono has decreased slightly during the last eleven years.** The percent of all lawyers doing pro bono work over the eleven years averaged 46.99%. (Page 13) The percent of all lawyers doing pro bono decreased by a relative 6.49% over that period. (Page 13). **The percent of *full-time* lawyers doing any pro bono decreased by a relative 1.89% over that same period.** (Page 14)
- **Attorneys in the Western and Eastern regions of the state consistently report higher pro bono participation rates than their colleagues in other parts of the state.** (Page 16 and 17).
- **Elder law and family law attorneys are more likely to meet the 50-hour goal than their colleagues in other practice areas. Government attorneys are the least likely to meet the goal.** (Page 20).<sup>9</sup>

As evidenced by these observations, the amount of pro bono work varies significantly depending upon the location, practice area and size and type of firm through which the lawyers practice. A more in-depth analysis reveals the specific factors that may help determine whether a lawyer will engage in pro bono work. As a general rule, those living in smaller or more rural jurisdictions, who work in solo or small firms, and/or who engage in a more generalized law practice tend to offer a greater proportion of pro bono services. These factors explain why the Eastern and Western regions of the state consistently boast the highest rate of pro bono participation. Solo and small firm practitioners also tend to donate a greater percentage of pro bono hours than those in larger practices, to some extent, presumably, because of the sheer fact that such a large percentage of the practicing bar belong to smaller firms. Even so, with the exception of lawyers in very large firms, there appears to be an inverse relationship between the size of the firm and the amount of service hours (i.e., the larger the firm, the fewer hours of pro bono).

Not surprisingly, private practitioners also substantially outpace those in government service or who serve as corporate counsel in terms of pro bono assistance. In the last reporting cycle, about 77% of full time government lawyers and 67% of corporate counsel did not render *any* pro bono service as compared to 32.2% of those in private practice. Alternatively, close to 26.3% of the private attorneys reported achieving the aspirational

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<sup>9</sup> The *Longitudinal Analysis of Pro Bono Reporting: 2002-2012; A Joint Report of the Maryland Access to Justice Commission and The Court of Appeals Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service- April 2014* can be found at: <http://www.mdcourts.gov/mdatjc/pdfs/longitudinalanalysisprobonopracticereport201404.pdf>.

goal of 50 hours or more of service for the year versus 5.7 % of government lawyers and 7.8 % of corporate counsel.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of practice areas, about 77% of full time family law lawyers reported some pro bono work, followed by 73.7% of the trusts and estates lawyers, 69% of the elder law and bankruptcy bars, and 68.8 % of the general practitioners. Those with the lowest participation rates included: insurance, government, health, administrative, and banking law attorneys. Consistent with those trends, 32.8% of the lawyers in the family/domestic law arena provided more than 50 hours, followed by 29.4% in general practice, and 26.2% practicing elder law.

In reviewing the overall reporting data and the state's record of pro bono, it is important to note that a high percentage of Maryland lawyers work for the government (approximately 20%) which places certain limitations on their ability to participate. A significant percentage of licensed lawyers do not practice law (approximately 14%), obviously limiting their likelihood of being engaged in any pro bono work. Finally, only 60% indicate that their primary office is in Maryland. Those factors combined mean that the pool of potential volunteers is substantially smaller than the pool of licensed practitioners. It also suggests certain challenges to integrating pro bono lawyers into the traditional delivery system and the need for innovative methods of involvement.

While the primary focus on pro bono service hours is on representing indigent clients, lawyers can also count activities "devoted to activities for improving the law, the legal system, or the legal profession". These figures appear to be increasing. For calendar year 2013, 7,373 lawyers reported participating in these types of activities totaling 409,908 hours (compared to 7,266 lawyers giving 406,079 hours in 2012).

Rule 6.1 on *pro bono publico* also offers an alternative for those who cannot render legal pro bono service by way of a financial contribution. While the annual reports suggest substantial donations, it has been difficult to determine whether the organizations actually receive the level of funding reported.

In 2012, the AOC with assistance from the Access to Justice Commission and the Standing Committee, revamped its web-based reporting system to allow lawyers to pledge funds to a legal services organization while reporting their pro bono hours online. Those lawyers desiring to make a donation indicated their pledge on the form and once finished, were directed to the organization's website to complete the donation. During the 2013 reporting cycle, 761 donations were made by 686 lawyers (a definitive increase over 2012 where 721 donations were made by 603 lawyers.) The total financial contribution to organizations that

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<sup>10</sup> For a number of years, tracking the bar admittance date further indicated that the majority of pro bono service came from those more seasoned practitioners who had been in practice for a number of years.

provide legal services to people of limited means was \$4,263,009 from 6,705 contributing lawyers. Compared to 2012, the financial contributions pledged increased by \$88,297, reflecting about a 2.1 % increase, from a slightly higher number of contributing lawyers.<sup>11</sup>

The Standing Committee typically analyzes the results of the annual report and utilizes the data to help inform changes to its pro bono policies and outreach efforts. For example, the large percentage of government lawyers inspired the Standing Committee to engage in targeted recruitment of government lawyers and in developing a uniform government pro bono policy. The Standing Committee also continued to attempt to shepherd the adoption of a new Pro Bono Practice Rule through the Rules Committee which would enable those without a Maryland license to handle pro bono work under the supervision of a legal services organization. This rule would be particularly helpful to government attorneys and corporate counsel licensed elsewhere. The Standing Committee also emphasized informing bar members about malpractice insurance, training, and other litigation support services to further support government, corporate counsel and out-of-state attorney participation.

The longitudinal study provided useful insight into the pro bono trends over the years and will be used by the Standing Committee to reassess its activities and conduct strategic planning in the spring. In sum, the Standing Committee believes that the reporting process is highly efficient and effective in raising awareness of the need for pro bono service as well as in helping to identify gaps, challenges and trends that will inform the Committee's work.

## **V. PROPOSED CHANGES TO RULES IMPACTING PRO BONO CLIENTS AND COUNSEL**

### **A. Pro Bono Practice Rule**

As noted above, the Standing Committee helped craft and endorse a rule (along with the Access to Justice Commission) that would directly permit lawyers licensed outside of the state, or on inactive or retired status to engage in pro bono representation under the supervision of a legal services organization. The Standing Committee believed that a Pro Bono Practice Rule could potentially make a significant difference in the pro bono effort by reaching attorneys barred in other jurisdictions, and especially federal government attorneys or corporate counsel living near Washington, DC. These attorneys present an untapped resource. A proposed rule (Rule 15.2) was considered at the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure (hereafter "Rules Committee") and the Standing

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<sup>11</sup> The pledges alone do not necessarily mean that the organizations actually received the full amount pledged (the AOC has no connection with the collection or payment of funds). However, the AOC has sought information from the organizations to determine if the pledged amounts are, in fact, received. It appears as if this mechanism has raised the level of funding for legal services organizations to some degree and anecdotally, has attracted new donors. The full amount reported on the forms is still not able to be confirmed due to a variety of factors.

Committee offered comments. It is now pending additional review with other rules impacting attorney practice.

## **B. Waiver of Advanced Filing Fees**

Over the years, pro bono providers consistently complained about the uneven application of the advanced waiver of court filing fees as proscribed in Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article's Section 7-202 (Court Fees). Section III(B)(1)(J) of the notes to Section 7-202 allows for Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) grantees to submit a form memorandum to the court on behalf of a client represented by the organization (through a staff or volunteer lawyer) for an automatic advance waiver of filing fees. In brief, a number of jurisdictions would not accept the memorandum from the MLSC-funded program and instead would require counsel to file a complete petition and go through the motion process pursuant to Rule 1-325. This consumed unnecessary time for volunteer lawyers, added additional processing for the court, and delayed access for clients.

For several years, the Standing Committee, along with the Access to Justice Commission, worked with the Rules' Committee on revising the language and proposing amendments to the rules to eliminate the various problems encountered with the fee waivers. The subcommittee continued to raise additional concerns such as the impact on final fee waivers, appeals and unrepresented litigants. This required multiple meetings and briefings with the General Provisions Subcommittee, submission of comments, and testimony by Standing Committee members.

While the proposed amendments were being considered, the Standing Committee and Access to Justice Commission chairs decided it was important to reeducate the courts about the existing process for automatic fee waivers. In July of 2013, the chairs submitted a memorandum to the Circuit and Administrative Court Clerks requesting that they adhere to the existing procedures and explained what those entailed.<sup>12</sup>

In mid-October of 2014, the AOC posted information on its website to aid attorneys in requesting filing fee waivers for their indigent clients.<sup>13</sup> These new procedures were to comport with the proposed amendments to Rule 1-325. Also posted online was a page for self-represented litigants with information about how to file for a fee waiver.<sup>14</sup> Thus, prior to formal adoption of the proposed amendments, the proposed new fee waiver procedures went into effect in Anne Arundel County District Court and Circuit Court as well as in appeals originating from Anne Arundel County. Pre-adoption use occurred to align with the roll out

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<sup>12</sup> The memorandum can be found at Appendix E.

<sup>13</sup> The procedures can be found at: <http://mdcourts.gov/courts/feewaiverprocedures.html>.

<sup>14</sup> The page can be found at: <http://mdcourts.gov/legalhelp/filingfeewaivers.html>.

of Maryland Electronic Courts (“MDEC” or e-filing), which began in Anne Arundel County. If and when adopted, however, the amended rule would operate statewide.

The Standing Committee along with PBRC supported amending Rule 1-325 to bring greater ease and clarity to the fee waiver process for indigent persons in Maryland. At this juncture, the rules are still pending in the Rules Committee with a few potential revisions and are to be considered again in January of 2015. The Standing Committee will stay apprised of the status and is confident that the new rules will soon help resolve at least one obstacle to accessibility to the courts for indigent pro bono clients.

## **VI. LOCAL PRO BONO COMMITTEES**

### ***A. Introduction***

A principal role of the Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service is to oversee and facilitate the work of the Local Pro Bono Committees in each county. Pursuant to Rule 16-902, the Local Pro Bono Committees were charged with establishing goals and priorities for pro bono services in their counties and devising a Local Pro Bono Action Plan tailored to the needs of their jurisdiction. In its early years, the Standing Committee assisted the work of the Local Pro Bono Committees by creating a template for the Local Pro Bono Action Plans, conducting a statewide survey of legal services providers in the state and providing county-specific information to the Local Committees, designing a survey of human and social services agencies and a client survey for use by the Local Committees, and preparing a *Local Pro Bono Committee Resource Manual*. The Standing Committee also hosted several regional meetings of Local Pro Bono Committees to share ideas and encourage program planning. More recently, the Standing Committee decided it would be beneficial to hold joint meetings of the Local Pro Bono Committees and the Standing Committee at the Maryland Partners for Justice Conference and make individual county visits as requested.

### ***B. Joint Meeting of the Standing Committee and Regional and Local Pro Bono Committee Chairs***

Since 2011, at the behest of a number of local pro bono committee chairs, the Standing Committee has coordinated a joint meeting with the Local Pro Bono Committee Chairs during the annual Maryland Partners for Justice Conference at the Baltimore Convention Center.<sup>15</sup> The meeting encourages attendance from the local committees, and particularly from private bar members. Always well-attended, with favorable evaluations, the meeting raises important, practical issues related to the challenges of operating and sustaining a

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<sup>15</sup> The annual conference is the only statewide legal services conference dealing with access to justice issues and is hosted by the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland.

successful pro bono effort.<sup>16</sup> The Standing Committee reviews the variety of resources available to assist Local Pro Bono Committees in their work, including training, an MLSC Litigation Fund and other support services available for pro bono attorneys, short-term pro bono opportunities available for attorneys unable to provide full representation of pro bono clients, and resources available to the public, such as The Peoples' Law Library of Maryland.

### ***C. National Celebration of Pro Bono Month***

In 2010, the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service launched the concept of a National Celebration of Pro Bono Week. The annual event in October significantly enhanced the level of short-term pro bono opportunities locally and inspired innovative projects statewide. Several members of the Standing Committee and Local Pro Bono Committees actively participate in the planning and coordination of the events and in promoting and sharing ideas. Each year the celebration has brought in new partners.

The Standing Committee recently conducted a brief survey of the local committees to determine the extent to which they were supporting a variety of pro bono initiatives and the challenges they faced in doing so.<sup>17</sup> The committees confirmed a broad range of pro bono service activities for lawyers, including outreach events, community education, self-help desks, community clinics, Homeless Resource Days, Pro Bono Days, and "Ask a Lawyer" programs. A number of these programs launched during National Celebration of Pro Bono Week and have continued ever since.

This past year, Maryland boasted the coordination and facilitation of over 72 pro bono service projects, trainings and recognition events that took place across the state during National Celebration of Pro Bono Month.<sup>18</sup> The vast majority of those events (59 of them) centered on engaging pro bono lawyers in direct legal assistance to the public. This represents a marked increase in activity, as just two years prior, the total number of events reached only 21. It is especially encouraging to note that the local pro bono committees have become far more engaged in the activities, with a record 35 of the events sponsored by or co-hosted with local committees.<sup>19</sup> An impressive array of public service projects including courthouse clinics for civil and domestic cases, community workshops around foreclosure prevention, court-based self-help centers specializing in bankruptcy and consumer rights, and community education occurred in over a dozen locales. A number of these events began

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<sup>16</sup>The evaluations from the 2013 and 2012 Joint Committee Meetings reflect well on the usefulness of the sessions, as 91% to 100% of the responses ranked the meeting as very good to excellent.

<sup>17</sup> For the results of that aspect of the survey, see Appendix F.

<sup>18</sup> National Celebration of Pro Bono Week in Maryland now extends to the full month of October due to the extensive number of events and activities.

<sup>19</sup> In 2012, only five local committees claimed ownership of pro bono events.



as one-time projects but quickly became integrated on a weekly or monthly court or community schedule.<sup>20</sup>

#### ***D. Training of Volunteer Lawyers***

One of the most effective methods of recruiting and retaining volunteers is to offer quality training that prepares them for the pro bono work in which they are to engage. Training has become an integral part of the pro bono delivery system's toolkit and local committees have effectively used training in conjunction with other legal services providers to both entice volunteers and enhance the comfort level of unseasoned lawyers. The training typically is provided for free or at a reduced cost in exchange for a pro bono commitment. The Standing Committee and PBRC constantly remind local committees and bar associations about the availability of training resources.<sup>21</sup>

#### ***E. Alternative Dispute Opportunities***

The Standing Committee encourages a wide range of pro bono opportunities for lawyers. The greater variety in service models available, the more likely committees will find options for those lawyers not traditionally engaged in pro bono service. Transactional work and alternative dispute resolution opportunities offer non-litigation practitioners a meaningful way to use their skills. Some local committees are working with local pro bono providers on ADR such as mediation projects and collaborative law initiatives to broaden their reach.<sup>22</sup>

#### ***F. Homeless Resource Days***

Coordinated by the Department of Social Services, Homeless Resource Days are "one-day, one-stop" events where individuals and families experiencing homelessness can access benefits, medical care, substance abuse resources, mental health counseling, pro bono legal advice, and a variety of social services which can ultimately lead to housing and self-sufficiency. Following the successful completion of the first event, Governor Martin O'Malley asked the Department of Social Services to replicate the event across the state. The Standing Committee considered a legal component to be crucial to the mission of Homeless Resource Days and assisted in publicizing and educating members of the legal services community and the bar about the events. Originating in Anne Arundel County, volunteer lawyers annually assist at Homeless Resource Days in at least four counties across the state.

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<sup>20</sup> Copies of the complete statewide calendars of events compiled by the PBRC for the last three years are attached as Appendix G.

<sup>21</sup> For a list of the types of trainings offered to volunteers in conjunction with PBRC, see Appendix H.

<sup>22</sup> The AOC encourages ADR methods for pro bono. A good example of ADR is the Pro Bono Family Mediation Project in Baltimore City.

### ***G. Pro Bono Days***

Pro Bono Days became another successful initiative for engaging volunteers in short-term service. The events are typically sponsored by the Legal Aid Bureau, local pro bono committees and local and statewide pro bono providers. These one-day clinics allow anyone with a legal issue to walk into a clinic and receive brief legal advice. According to a recent survey conducted by the Standing Committee, at least eight (8) county committees participate in Pro Bono Days.

### ***H. Ask a Lawyer in the Lobby, Courthouse or Library***

The “Ask a Lawyer” concept inspired by a local committee and now replicated in various jurisdictions and locations, including courthouse lobbies and libraries, proved to be another effective way to engage volunteers in limited pro bono service with minimal resources. The Anne Arundel County courthouse library model began as an annual Pro Bono Week event but is now a weekly courthouse fixture. A number of counties adopted similar models, even in smaller jurisdictions such as Cecil and Garrett Counties.

### ***I. Lawyer Care Brochures***

The Standing Committee compiled and published legal services directories for each county to assist in educating the public of the available resources. Dubbed Lawyer Care Brochures, the standard template is updated by PBRC with the assistance of the local committees as necessary. Some jurisdictions request updates annually and the electronic versions are sent to the committees for wide-scale distribution. A few of the committees modified the brochures but all find them to be invaluable public resources. These brochures become particularly useful at Pro Bono Days and resource fairs where large members of the public gather.

### ***J. Summary of Local Pro Bono Committee Activities***

The Local Pro Bono Committees have continued to work at the county level through a broad spectrum of activities to assure access to justice for Maryland’s indigent and underrepresented. While the nature and degree of the work done by each Local Pro Bono Committee varies, most of the Local Pro Bono Committees remain actively engaged in the effort to increase the amount of pro bono service provided by attorneys in their counties. The following summarizes some of the recent activities of the Local Pro Bono Committees in Maryland’s counties.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that the focus of this report is primarily on local pro bono committee work. Therefore, the extensive amount of pro bono services rendered and projects engaged in through organized pro bono referral organizations and others engaging in direct pro bono work are in addition to the efforts articulated in this report.

### **1. Allegany County**

As the membership of the Allegany County Pro Bono Committee and Board of Directors of Allegany Law Foundation, Inc. are nearly identical, the groups work collaboratively, meet jointly and share activities, such as planning and committee work. The efforts support the staff of the Allegany Law Foundation, which screens and places pro bono and Judicare cases, hosts an in-house brief legal advice and referral hotline, addresses senior issues, and coordinates the attorneys working in the Family Law Self-Help Clinic at the Allegany Circuit Court. Allegany Law Foundation continued to co-sponsor Foreclosure Solutions Workshops with PBRC, legislative officials, and Maryland DHCD at locations where distressed homeowners were likely to gather, including the Farmers' Market, HRDC Tax Clinic and One Stop Job Center. They also hosted "Ask a Lawyer" programs at the Department of Social Services and the Farmers' Market. The Local Committee would like additional webinar trainings to educate a broader number of lawyers and expand their resources.

### **2. Anne Arundel County**

The Anne Arundel County Pro Bono Committee can claim several innovative initiatives which are currently entrenched in the culture of the bar. It continued to coordinate its *Ask a Lawyer in the Library* program on a weekly basis in the law library and more recently, public library settings, in which volunteer attorneys offer free, limited legal advice on civil matters. It also continued its participation in the County's Homeless Resource Days, presented to the Inns of Court, assisted with Pro Bono Days, and sponsored a recognition lunch for the volunteers. The Committee also approached the former Administrative Judge who agreed to send a letter to the bar requesting that they participate in pro bono service.

### **3. Baltimore City**

As the membership composition of the Baltimore City Pro Bono Committee and Bar Association of Baltimore City's Pro Bono and Access to Legal Services Committee are nearly identical, the group shares activities, including meetings, committee work, and priority setting goals. It continued to host biannual Pro Bono Days held at the Legal Aid Bureau and helped the bench in setting up a legal clinic in the District Court. Each year, the court and local bar request an updated Legal Services directory (formerly called the Lawyers Care Brochures) provided by PBRC. These abbreviated guides are invaluable to the courts as litigants seeking legal assistance know little about the resources available.

### **4. Baltimore County**

The Baltimore County Pro Bono Committee meets regularly to focus on training, volunteer recognition, and providing short-term pro bono opportunities for attorneys. The Committee

offers an annual *Best Practices in Family Law* training during National Celebration of Pro Bono Week to address the county's overwhelming need for pro bono assistance in family law cases. It sponsors on average two Pro Bono Days per year and formally recognizes the pro bono activities of attorneys during the annual pro bono awards reception in October. The Committee seeks to increase its client base for its "Ask a Lawyer" service in the lobby of the courthouse as the monthly clinics receive relatively few clients.

### **5. Calvert County**

The Calvert County Pro Bono Committee continues to coordinate volunteer attorneys for the weekly Family Law Self-Help Clinic at the Calvert County Circuit Court and hosts a quarterly appreciation luncheon for the volunteers with the Calvert County Circuit and District Court Judges as a thank you for their pro bono work. The Local Pro Bono Committee Chairs from Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties maintain regular contact to discuss the implementation of a best practices seminar to recruit additional pro bono attorneys. The Calvert County Pro Bono Committee also handles referrals for county residents seeking pro bono or reduced fee representation. The Local Chair personally screens and places these cases with volunteer attorneys. Despite the relatively small bar size, the Local Chair has successfully placed cases by recruiting volunteers through phone calls, emails, and announcements at bar association meetings. The Pro Bono Committee has also coordinated with the Legal Aid Bureau and the Office of the Public Defender to extend services to those who would not otherwise qualify due to income eligibility restrictions or type of case.

### **6. Caroline County – Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Committee**

The Caroline County Pro Bono Committee, as part of the Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Pro Bono Committee, works together with Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot counties to coordinate pro bono services throughout the five-county region on the Eastern Shore. Pursuant to Maryland Rule 16-902(c) — the local committees joined to effectuate a single Pro Bono Action Plan—Administrative Judges from all five Mid-Shore counties issued Administrative Orders designating Mid Shore Pro Bono, Inc. as the Regional Pro Bono Committee for these counties with all the duties and responsibilities imposed under Maryland Rule 16-902(b). Mid-Shore Pro Bono, Inc. screens and places pro bono and Judicare cases, participates in the Foreclosure Prevention Pro Bono Project and co-sponsors foreclosure solutions workshops with PBRC, supports a Debtors Assistance Project (DAP); and regularly partners with a variety of legal service providers to offer pro bono training opportunities to volunteer attorneys in the Mid-Shore counties.

The Mid-Shore counties expanded family law *pro se* courthouse clinics to operate in all five Circuit Courthouses. The District Court operates a *pro se* clinic, which is held on different days than the family law *pro se* clinic. The *pro se* clinic, jointly run with the Department of

Aging, handles wills and powers of attorney. Mid-Shore is also experimenting with Collaborative Law for family law cases.

### ***7. Carroll County***

The Carroll County Pro Bono Committee receives significant support from the judiciary and newly admitted attorneys in the county each receive a letter from the Circuit and District Court Judges promoting pro bono legal service. The Committee works closely with the Courts and Family Law Administrator to improve the delivery of legal services in Carroll County, particularly in the area of family law. The Family Law *Pro Se* Clinic in the Circuit Courthouse operates two days a week. Fifteen pro bono attorneys staff the clinic on a rotating basis. The Pro Bono Committee also engages volunteers to participate in Homeless Resource Days.

### ***8. Cecil County***

Cecil County has not had a full committee for some time but the Chair is seeking to reconstitute the committee with the assistance of the bench and bar in the near future. Nonetheless, it manages to support pro bono service through community education programs, outreach, “Ask a Lawyer” sessions, volunteer BIA programs, and estate planning with the Register of Wills for local churches. Cecil County has been exploring the notion of joining with Harford or Mid-Shore to expand its pool of volunteers and incentivize more lawyers to do pro bono work.

### ***9. Charles County***

Although it does not maintain a full local Committee membership, the Charles County Pro Bono Committee continues to coordinate the volunteer attorneys staffing the two walk-in clinics at the courthouse: the General Practice Self-Help Clinic and the Family Law Self-Help Clinic, which are open to the public once a week. These clinics have operated with volunteer lawyers for years. The Committee is actively working towards becoming compliant with Rule 16-902.

### ***10. Dorchester County – Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Committee***

Dorchester County is a part of the Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Committee, working together with Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot counties to coordinate pro bono services throughout the five-county region on the Eastern Shore. (*See description for Caroline County.*)

### ***11. Frederick County***

The Frederick County Local Pro Bono Committee partners with the local Legal Aid Bureau office to operate a Pro Bono “Night” twice a year, attracting 100-160 clients at each event. The Committee also runs a monthly advice clinic with volunteers. In a unique role, the Local Pro Bono Committee screens and places cases in the county, referring complicated family law cases to private law firms. The Local Committee also runs informational or *pro se* clinics in courts or libraries. The local bar association hosts a fundraiser for its Justice for All Fund, which supports legal services in the county.

### ***12. Garrett County***

The small bar in the county makes it challenging to maintain interest and activity in the local pro bono committee. Without an active committee, Garrett County lawyers still hosted a Law Day, a Pro Bono Day and an “Ask a Lawyer” program. The Standing Committee’s liaison who lives in Garrett County, actively works to engage lawyers in these types of activities. It was suggested that judicial support may help engage the bar more broadly.

### ***13. Harford County***

Harford County works closely with its local pro bono program, the Harford County Bar Foundation, and in fact, the current chair is the director of that program. For the past few years, the Committee co-sponsored Pro Bono Days and “Ask a Lawyer” programs in the county in addition to assisting the referral program. It consistently reaches out to the community to explore other partnerships and engages in community education. Its most recent outreach effort, entitled “Access to Justice: Opening the Courthouse Doors” included a panel of legal services providers explaining to other local non-profits the range and availability of their services. The committee believes that the successful seminar helped bridge service gaps within the community and enhance collaboration.

### ***14. Howard County***

The Howard County Pro Bono Committee works closely with the Howard County Bar Association. It operates two main pro bono programs: a Civil Law Clinic in the public library and the Family Law Pro Se Clinic in the Circuit Courthouse. The Local Committee helps update and distributes the Lawyers Care brochure (prepared by the Standing Committee) listing available pro bono legal services to the Howard County District and Circuit Courts, as well as local library branches. The Committee collaborated with the MSBA Young Lawyers Section and Howard County Bar Association to hold a “Wills for Heroes” program, at which volunteer attorneys drafted wills for over 80 members of the Howard County Police and Fire

Departments, and volunteer attorneys provided legal advice to inmates at a Women's Detention Center.

### ***15. Kent County – Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Committee***

The Kent County Pro Bono Committee is a part of the Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Committee, working together with Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, and Talbot counties to coordinate pro bono services throughout the five-county region on the Eastern Shore. *(See description for Caroline County.)*

### ***16. Montgomery County***

The Montgomery County Pro Bono Committee works closely with the Montgomery County Bar Foundation (MCBF) Pro Bono Program. The MCBF provides client intake, screening, and referrals for the large numbers of pro bono clients seeking assistance. MCBF coordinates eight (8) civil, non-family evening walk-in legal advice clinics each month which are staffed by volunteer attorneys in four locations across the county. In an effort to increase access for as many potential clients as possible, all clinic locations are handicapped accessible, include Spanish interpreters, and allow volunteer attorneys the opportunity to use the Montgomery County Free Language Line if needed. Important documents are distributed in both English and Spanish. Pro bono attorneys also help staff the Family Law Self-Help Center at the Montgomery County Circuit Court and participate in the Homeless Resource Day. The Bar Association of Montgomery County strongly supports the pro bono program and includes pro bono information in packages sent to new admittees, posts information for pro bono opportunities on its website, dedicates a pro bono column in the monthly bar newsletter, and includes MCBF Pro Bono Program notices in weekly email blasts. The county program is attempting to incorporate pro bono clients into its collaborative law project as well.

### ***17. Prince George's County***

The Prince George's County Local Pro Bono Committee similarly works closely with its active local pro bono referral program, Community Legal Services of Prince George's County (CLS). For years CLS has sponsored regular community and court-based pro se clinics relying on volunteers from the committee and beyond. For several years it co-sponsored foreclosure solutions workshops with PBRC. It added "Ask a Lawyer" Clinics each day during National Celebration of Pro Bono Week and assisted with a Homeless Resource Day as well. More recently it held senior rights events in the county as a means of outreach and co-sponsored a criminal record expungement project using volunteer attorneys at four (4) walk-in clinics in local libraries. Prince George's County Bar Association helps promote these pro bono opportunities in its weekly membership emails. Strong judicial support in the county has helped sustain many of these efforts.

### ***18. Queen Anne's County – Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Committee***

Queen Anne's County is a part of the Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Consortium, working together with Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, and Talbot counties to coordinate pro bono services throughout the five-county region on the Eastern Shore. *(See description for Caroline County.)*

### ***19. St. Mary's County***

The St. Mary's County bar has attempted to reconstitute its local pro bono committee on several occasions but has found it challenging. More recently, it has met with some success in working with MVLS to develop an effective referral system for pro bono cases rather than attempt to place cases itself or through another local entity.

### ***20. Somerset County***

The Somerset County Bar consists of less than ten private practice attorneys who all generally provide pro bono legal service in the county on their own. It does not maintain a local pro bono committee. The county nevertheless, consistently ranks among the top in the percentage of lawyers giving 50 or more hours of pro bono legal service. In an effort to reduce truancy in the county, Somerset County extended the weekly Self-Help Legal Program to include legal services for the Board of Education at two locations to address custody and guardianship issues prior to a child entering school. The lawyers also sponsor an elder law program where attorneys volunteer at three (3) of their senior citizen centers and help clients complete powers of attorney forms, facilitate ADR in family court for a reduced rate, accept CINA and Adult Guardianship cases for reduced fees, and support a self-help clinic on Fridays where attorneys are paid at a reduced rate. Somerset County is one of the poorest counties in Maryland.

### ***21. Talbot County – Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Committee***

Talbot County is a part of the Mid-Shore Pro Bono Regional Committee, working together with Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, and Queen Anne's counties to coordinate pro bono services throughout the five-county region on the Eastern Shore. *(See description for Caroline County.)*

### ***22. Washington County***

The Washington County Pro Bono Committee continued to encourage pro bono participation among its practitioners. County attorneys tend to provide pro bono legal service directly rather than through a formal referral process from legal service providers which makes it



challenging to seek additional volunteer services. The bar association is supportive of the local committee's efforts and assists with recruitment and funding. The Committee operates a Courthouse Family Law Clinic/Self-Help Assistance Program, has hosted Pro Bono Days with Legal Aid, and sponsored a Law Day in the community.

### ***23. Wicomico County***

Wicomico County does not retain a full pro bono committee but its chair (Vice President of the local bar association) helps facilitate public service events with the local bar association. For instance, lawyers coordinated a Law School for the Public program, Pro Bono Days, "Ask a Lawyer" sessions and a foreclosure solutions workshop with PBRC. The county also sponsors a weekly pro se courthouse clinic. Cases are sometimes placed in conjunction with MVLS.

### ***24. Worcester County***

The Worcester County Pro Bono Committee has been dormant for several years. Its chair has attempted to engage volunteers in an organized fashion but the small size of the bar and limited practice areas make it challenging.

## ***K. Assessment of Local Pro Bono Committee Activities***

The level of organized pro bono activity clearly varies substantially amongst the various county committees. Those areas with strong local pro bono providers tend to be better equipped to sustain case referrals and organized initiatives given the staffing support that exists. There are numerous examples of Local Pro Bono Committees actively partnering with the pro bono referral programs and legal services organizations in their communities to provide an effective system for client intake and referral, community outreach, public education, volunteer training and recognition.

Still, a number of local pro bono committees have successfully operated courthouse and community clinics for years on their own. The culture that exists in these smaller jurisdictions engenders community involvement and a sense of responsibility to improve the lives of those around them. The impressive track records prove that with the appropriate leadership, dedication and culture, such activities thrive. Short-term projects like Law Days and Homeless Resource Days can also sustain themselves with limited time commitments from the committee.

The National Celebration of Pro Bono Week/Month fostered the creation of many of the current projects and programs operated by the local committees. Judicial support also

clearly impacted these efforts. The Standing Committee plans on continuing its efforts to assist those committees that are struggling, coordinate local activities around National Celebration of Pro Bono Month and beyond, encourage greater judicial involvement, and identify and implement mechanisms for engaging out-of-state, government and corporate counsel in meaningful pro bono opportunities.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Pursuant to Rule 16-901(c) (6), the Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service makes the following recommendations regarding the work of the Local Pro Bono Committees and the implementation and effectiveness of the Local Pro Bono Action Plans.

### ***A. For the Court of Appeals***

**Recommendation #1.** The Court of Appeals should encourage all County Attorney Offices, State's Attorney's Offices, and bi-county agencies to adopt pro bono policies permitting and facilitating pro bono work by the attorneys on their staff.

**Recommendation #2.** The Court of Appeals should continue to emphasize the appropriate role and ability of the judiciary to encourage and support pro bono activities, including at judicial conferences and other forums.

**Recommendation #3.** The Court of Appeals should encourage court personnel to join and actively participate in local committees as consultants.

**Recommendation #4.** The Court of Appeals should consider establishing an Honor Roll for outstanding pro bono lawyers based on designated criteria.

### ***B. For the Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service***

**Recommendation #5.** The Standing Committee should continue to work with the Local Committees to encourage pro bono service by attorneys employed by the state, county, municipal and federal governments.

- The Standing Committee should promote adoption of pro bono policies within government agencies to allow lawyers in their offices to engage in pro bono practice.
- The Standing Committee should make presentations on government attorney pro bono opportunities and involvement.

**Recommendation #6.** The Standing Committee should work with the Local Pro Bono Committees and providers to increase awareness of training opportunities and to

encourage lawyers to accept pro bono cases in areas of heightened demand, especially family law.

**Recommendation #7.** The Standing Committee should assist local committees in engaging members of the judiciary to support local pro bono activities.

**Recommendation #8.** The Standing Committee should explore enhanced use of technology to increase access to legal services for those in rural communities.

**Recommendation #9.** To the extent practicable, the Standing Committee should encourage local committees to work with existing pro bono and legal services organizations to enhance efficiency and effective coordination.

**Recommendation #10.** The Standing Committee should seek funds to support the Chair or another member of the Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service to attend the ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference.

**Recommendation #11.** The Standing Committee should encourage greater use of alternative dispute resolution methods to resolve problems for pro bono clients.

**Recommendation #12.** The Standing Committee should engage in strategic planning to further increase access to legal services and the courts through pro bono participation.

### ***C. For Local Pro Bono Committees***

**Recommendation #13.** The Local Committees should encourage court personnel to join the Committee as consultants and actively participate in the process.

**Recommendation #14.** The Local Committees should encourage representatives from legal services providers serving the county to join the Committee as consultants and actively participate in the process.

**Recommendation #15.** The Local Committees should encourage members of the judiciary to send a “welcome” letter to newly admitted attorneys expressing the Court’s strong belief in the importance of pro bono service and to explore other means of encouraging pro bono participation.

## **VIII. Appendices**

- A. Standing Committee Members and Terms, 2014-2015***
- B. Standing Committee Pro Bono Chairs and Liaisons, 2014-2015***
- C. Memo from Judge Barbera on Judicial Involvement in Pro Bono Activities 9-2014***
- D. Memo on Opinion Request # 2013-29 from MD Judicial Ethics Committee 2-2014***
- E. Memo from Judge Jensen on Fee Waiver Requests for Clients of Civil Legal Services Programs 7-2013***
- F. Local Activities Bar Graph Figures***
- G. National Celebration of Pro Bono Calendars 2012- 2014***
- H. Support Services - Training Statistics 2013-2014***