

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT *PRO* *BONO* PROGRAM

VOLUNTEER GUIDE MARYLAND

This Volunteer Guide contains descriptions of *pro bono* opportunities which have been screened and determined to be generally appropriate for federal government attorneys and legal staff. Individual volunteers are still responsible for seeking necessary approval to participate from their agencies and must conduct a review for conflicts of interest on each individual matter. Employees are reminded that they are prohibited from acting as an agent or attorney for any person before any agency, department or court in any matter in which the United States has a direct and substantial interest. Employees should understand that they are acting in their individual capacities and not as representatives of their agencies and should act accordingly in all *pro bono* work.

Attorneys do not need to be members of the Maryland Bar in order to participate.
See information about Maryland Rule 15 in Part II of this Guide.



PART I

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DOING PRO BONO WORK AS A FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS DOING PRO BONO WORK

I. Definitions and Limitations

What types of services may I provide?

Pro bono legal work and volunteer services may be broadly defined to include many different types of activities performed without compensation. Examples include, but are not limited to, services to persons of limited means or other disadvantaged persons, assistance to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, health, and educational organizations, services to individuals or groups seeking to protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights, and activities seeking to improve the law or legal system.

What types of pro bono and volunteer services are prohibited?

Any service that would conflict with your official duties is prohibited. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.802. For example, federal employees, in most cases, are prohibited from representing parties before the federal government. 18 U.S.C. § 205. (See questions below on conflicts of interest.) In addition, each federal agency has its own regulatory standards of conduct which its employees must follow. For example, Department of Justice attorneys may not provide services that involve criminal or habeas corpus matters, whether federal, state, or local. 5 C.F.R. § 3801.106.

May I provide services to political organizations?

Yes, however, you must comply with the restrictions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. § 7234) and the your agency's policy concerning political activities by high-level and political appointees. It should be noted that the Office of Personnel Management has stated that it would be inappropriate to grant administrative leave to employees to engage in partisan political activities. Also, because partisan political activity is subject to more restrictive rules than other non-official activity, no partisan political activity may take place on government time or by using government property. See 5 C.F.R. Part 734.

May I represent someone in an action against the United States?

No. 18 U.S.C. § 205 prohibits you from representing another person before any court or agency of the United States, in a matter in which the United States is a party or has a direct and substantial interest. There are limited exceptions for representing your immediate family (spouse, child, and parents), fellow employees in personnel administration proceedings, and certain employee organizations in limited circumstances.

May I assist persons seeking government benefits?

Yes, in limited ways. You may provide non-representational assistance, such as filling out forms for a person seeking government benefits. However, you should be mindful

that you may not contact a federal agency, with the intent to influence, on behalf of another person except those persons permitted by 18 U.S.C. § 205(e). You may not represent a third party before any government agency.

May I prepare income tax returns?

Yes, however, you are prohibited from representing another person before the IRS in connection with a tax return.

May I assist family and friends?

Yes, provided the services you are providing fall within the definition of pro bono and/or volunteer services and you are not receiving compensation.

NOTE: There are some limited exceptions to this rule which may permit employees to represent family and friends in non-pro bono matters as long as the United States is not a party and the matter is not criminal in nature. You should contact your Deputy Designated Agency Ethics Official (DDAEO) if you would like to represent a family member or friend and the representation does not fall within the definition of pro bono or volunteer services.

II. Use of Position and Agency Resources

May I use my official position in connection with my pro bono and/or volunteer services?

No. You may not indicate or represent in any way that you are acting on behalf of the your agency, or in your official capacity, when providing pro bono or volunteer services.

May I use office letterhead or my business cards?

No. You may not use office letterhead, business cards, fax cover sheets, etc., or otherwise identify yourself as a federal government employee in any communication, correspondence, or pleading.

May I use agency resources such as phone, email, internet, or other government property in connection with my pro bono services?

Each agency has its own policy on the use of its resources and property. Some agencies will allow for the personal use of government equipment and facilities provided there is only a negligible cost to the government (such as electricity, ink, small amounts of paper, and ordinary wear and tear). You should contact your supervisor or ethics officer to find out about your agency's policy.

May I ask my secretary to assist me?

No. Pro bono and volunteer services are not official duties and may not be assigned to or required of support staff.

May I use Westlaw and other electronic computer databases?

Each agency has its own policy on this issue. Contact your supervisor or agency ethics officer to find out about your agency's policy.

May I participate in pro bono and/or volunteer services on government time?

You are encouraged to seek pro bono and volunteer opportunities that can be accomplished outside of your scheduled working hours. However, activities may sometimes occur during the work day. You may be granted annual leave, leave without pay, or may be permitted to make up any time you are away from the office. Contact your supervisor or agency ethics officer to find out about your agency's policy.

May I be given administrative leave?

Generally, it is inappropriate to pay an employee for time engaged in pro bono or volunteer services. However, in limited circumstances, it may be appropriate to excuse an employee from duty for brief periods of time without loss of pay or charge of leave. Excused absence should be limited to those situations in which the employee's services meet one or more of the following criteria: is directly related to the agency's mission; is officially sponsored or sanctioned by the agency; or will enhance the professional development or skills of the employee in his or her current position. See OPM Guidance at www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2002/volunteerweek.htm.

Some agencies have issued policies specifically permitting the use of administrative leave for pro bono activities, such as the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Labor Relations Board, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, and others. Check with your agency pro bono representative or ethics officer to find out if your agency has such a policy.

III. Conflicts of Interest**Who should I talk to about any possible conflicts of interest?**

Your Deputy Designated Agency Ethics Official (DDAEO).

What constitutes a conflict of interest?

Any activity that would:

1. Violate any federal statute, rule, or regulation, including for example, 18 U.S.C. § 201 et seq. and the Standards of Conduct at 5 C.F.R. § 2635;
2. Interfere with the proper and effective performance of your official duties, including time availability;
3. Cause a reasonable person to question the integrity of your agency's programs or

operations;

4. Require your recusal from significant aspects of your official duties;
5. Create an appearance that your official duties are being performed in a biased or less than impartial manner; or
6. Create an appearance of official sanction or endorsement.

Must I get approval to provide pro bono services?

Each agency has its own policy regarding its employees' outside activities. An employee seeking to engage in any pro bono legal work or volunteer services must follow his or her agency's procedures for outside activities. You should consult with your ethics officer regarding approval requirements.

IV. Miscellaneous

What about malpractice coverage?

The federal government does not provide malpractice coverage. Generally, volunteer programs organized by the local bar or more established referral programs provide malpractice coverage. For example, all of the organizations in this Guide provide malpractice coverage for its volunteers. You should ask the organization through which you will be providing pro bono services whether it will provide malpractice coverage for you.

May I participate if I am not a member of the state bar where I am located?

To do pro bono work in any state, you must be a member of that state's bar unless an exception is provided in the bar rules. Currently, four jurisdictions have such exceptions: the District of Columbia, Illinois, Colorado, and Maryland.

D.C. Court of Appeals Rule 49(c)(9)(C). For more information, go to http://www.probono.net/governmentprobono/resources/folder.484009-District_of_Columbia. For a fillable Certificate *Pro Bono Publico*: http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/documents/dcca_form9.pdf.

Illinois Rules Governing the Legal Profession and Judiciary - Rule 756(j) - <http://www.iardc.org/rulesct.html#Rule 756>.

Colorado Court Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 223. www.coloradosupremecourt.com/pdfs/Regulation/Rule_223.PDF.

Maryland Rules of Procedure, Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 15. See <https://www.courts.state.md.us/sites/default/files/import/accesstojustice/pdfs/probonoattorneysrulefactsheet010216.pdf>. Also, Maryland Rules of Procedure Rule 19-215. <https://mdcourts.gov/sites/default/files/rules/supporting/178title19chapters100x300.pdf>.

Texas New Opportunities Volunteer Attorney (NOVA) Pro Bono Program, see https://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Legal_Access_Division&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=42304.

Are there activities I can do that do not involve client representation?

Absolutely! Government attorneys regularly staff brief advice clinics. At these clinics, attorneys provide brief advice and referral for clients on a walk-in basis and do not take on the cases. You can also research legal issues for an online law library, the People's Law Library.

What if I have never done any pro bono work before?

It is never too late to start doing pro bono work. There are lots of resources and support to help you. First, you can start by going to a training. The Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland and other organizations host trainings throughout the year on substantive areas of law that are designed for attorneys who are new to the subject area. Some trainings are available online as well. Second, local legal services organizations assign mentors to government attorneys to help you with your work. Third, most local legal service providers have terrific manuals, sample forms, and a pleadings bank that you can use. Many attorneys start by co-counseling their first pro bono case. And you don't have to start by taking a case – you can participate in a legal clinic, volunteer at an intake site or do a range of other activities.

Is there a committee which helps government agencies to develop pro bono policies and programs?

Yes. The Interagency Pro Bono Working Group has been established to assist federal agencies in developing pro bono policies and programs. The Working Group also organizes events to encourage more government attorneys to participate in pro bono work. The Working Group is chaired by the Department of Justice Pro Bono Program Manager and includes representatives from both large agencies, such as the Department of Transportation, and smaller agencies, such as the Office of Government Ethics.

How can I get my agency involved?

Call the DOJ Pro Bono Program Manager, Laura Klein, at (202) 353-7529 or e-mail laura.f.klein@usdoj.gov.

PART II

**OUT-OF-STATE ATTORNEYS AND *PRO*
BONO LEGAL SERVICES**

**MARYLAND RULES OF ADMISSION TO
THE BAR, RULE 15**

MARYLAND RULE 15

Out of State Attorneys and *Pro Bono* Legal Services

Eligibility: In order to provide *pro bono* services if you are not licensed in Maryland, you must:

- Be employed by or associated with a “legal services program;”
- Be a law school graduate;
- Practice under the supervision of a member of the Maryland Bar; and
- Obtain proof that you are authorized to practice under Rule 15.

Legal Services Program means:

- An entity that provides civil legal services to low income individuals who meet the financial eligibility requirements set by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) and that is on MLSC’s list (which is updated annually and posted on the website at <http://www.mdcourts.gov/courts/pdfs/mlscapprovedproviders.pdf>);
- The office of the Maryland public defender;
- A clinic that offers pro bono legal services and is located in courthouse facility; or
- A local *pro bono* committee or bar association affiliated project that provides pro bono legal services.

Proof of eligibility: To obtain proof that you are authorized to practice under Rule 15, you must file a written request with the Clerk of the Court of Appeals. The request may be filed in person or by mail. Some legal services providers will file it for you. The request must be accompanied by:

- Evidence of law school graduation;
- A certificate of good standing from the jurisdiction where you are licensed; and
- A statement by the Executive Director of the Legal Services Program for whom you wish to provide services. This statement must include:
 - ✓ A certification that you are employed by or associated with the program;
 - ✓ Whether you are receiving any compensation other than reimbursement of necessary and reasonable expenses; and
 - ✓ An agreement that within 10 days after you cease being associated with the program, the Executive Director will file the required notice of cessation.

Clerk’s Certificate: Upon filing your proof of eligibility and a \$10 fee, the Clerk will issue a certificate that authorizes you to practice under Rule 15. The certificate will have an effective date, but because you are not receiving any compensation for your services, it will not expire.

Termination: Authorization to practice under Rule 15 automatically terminates when you cease your association with the Legal Services Program.

Important:

- You must not represent that you are a member of the Maryland Bar, except in connection with the pro bono representation;
- You must comply with the Maryland Lawyers' Rules of Professional Conduct;
- You are required to report an IOLTA compliance report and the Pro Bono Legal Service Report, but you do not have to contribute to the Client Protection Fund (see information posted on the website at <http://www.courts.state.md.us/probono/probonoioltareporting.html>); and
- You must notify the Executive Director of the Legal Services Program if you are or become subject to any disciplinary proceeding.

Other Information:

- The Court of Appeals Maryland is located at the **Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building, 361 Rowe Boulevard, 4th floor, Annapolis, MD 21401**
- The Maryland courts website is: **www.courts.state.md.us/index.html**

For more information, contact Laura Klein, 202-353-7529 or Laura.F.Klein@usdoj.gov.

PART III

LEGAL SERVICES PROVIDERS

**COMMUNITY LAW CENTER
COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
DISABILITY RIGHTS MARYLAND
MARYLAND LEGAL AID
MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION PRO BONO PROGRAM
THE PEOPLE'S LAW LIBRARY
PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTER OF MARYLAND
SENIOR LEGAL SERVICES OF BALTIMORE**

COMMUNITY LAW CENTER

Community Law Center is Maryland's only legal services organization dedicated solely to strengthening neighborhoods and the nonprofit sector. We provide legal advice and representation to nonprofit organizations and neighborhood groups throughout Maryland, as well as producing publications and presenting educational workshops for nonprofits and volunteer attorneys. With staff attorneys and over 600 volunteer attorneys, Community Law Center is equipped to provide representation to neighborhoods and nonprofits for all of their legal needs.

Place: Community Law Center offices are located at 3355 Keswick Road, Suite 200 (second floor of the main building), Baltimore, MD 21211. Phone: 410-366-0922. Email:

mail@communitylaw.org.

Bar membership: Pursuant to Maryland Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 15, attorneys do not need to be members of the Maryland Bar. Community Law Center can sponsor attorneys who are not licensed in Maryland to handle pro bono matters through our Pro Bono Program.

Malpractice Insurance: Malpractice insurance is provided by Community Law Center.

Training/Orientation/Assistance: CLC provides trainings in various areas of law relevant to client needs. Once a volunteer is matched with a client organization, the Pro Bono Program Staff Attorney will check in regularly with the volunteer to provide guidance. We can connect the volunteer with a Community Law Center staff attorney for guidance as well.

Kinds of Cases: The Pro Bono Program helps improve the safety, quality of life, and economic vitality of neighborhoods in Maryland by addressing a wide range of legal issues on behalf of community and nonprofit organizations. The types of legal matters addressed through the Pro Bono Program include:

- Formation, revival, and maintenance of nonprofit organizations (including advising an organization's Board of Directors on its role and responsibilities, drafting bylaws, and filing articles of incorporation);
- Real estate leases;
- Transfer of real property;
- Zoning decision appeals;
- Contracts (drafting and negotiation);
- Employment issues;
- Addressing nuisance properties (including vacants and drug nuisances)
- Liquor license protests; and
- Much, much more!

Contact: Shana Roth-Gormley, Pro Bono Coordinator, ShanaR@communitylaw.org, 410-366-0922 x118.

April 2020

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Community Legal Services of Prince George's County (CLS) has a mission to educate, represent and empower low-income members of the Prince George's County Community regarding civil legal matters.

PLACE: Various offices in Maryland.

BAR MEMBERSHIP: Pursuant to Maryland Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 15, attorneys do not need to be members of the Maryland Bar.

NUMBER OF LAWYERS: Unlimited.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE: Provided through CLS.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION/ASSISTANCE: Most training is provided through the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland.

KINDS OF CASES: CLS has a number clinic and representational opportunities. It should be noted that CLS does not screen for immigration status, so agencies which require a prescreening should not volunteer with CLS. Also, please note that most CLS clinics operate during business hours only and therefore may require volunteers to take annual leave to participate. CLS has weekend clinics for expungements throughout the year. (Note: DOJ and DHS attorneys are prohibited from providing assistance on expungement matters.)

- Foreclosure Prevention Clinic: Attorneys provide legal advice to clients and then the client will meet with a housing counselor as well. Attorneys do not go to court. This clinic operates only on Monday and Friday mornings and Friday afternoons.
- Latino Legal Access Clinic in Langley Park: Volunteers must be able to communicate in Spanish. We help with family law, tenant, unpaid wages. This clinic operates every day except Tuesdays during business hours. Again, CLS does not ask about immigration status unless it might affect the outcome of the case.
- Domestic Violence Cases: We have a need for attorneys to represent in domestic violence matters both victims and respondents in these cases.

CONTACT: Jessica Quincosa, Executive Director, at Quincosa@clspgc.org. See www.clspgc.org.

May 2020

DISABILITY RIGHTS MARYLAND

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) has a mission to create an integrated and just society by advancing the legal rights of people with disabilities. Each year, thousands of individuals with disabilities contact DRM seeking legal assistance. DRM maintains a Pro Bono Attorney Referral Program in which we match those people whom our resources are unable to serve with attorneys who are willing to provide free legal representation.

PLACE: Our offices are located at 1500 Union Avenue, Ste. 2000, Baltimore, Maryland 21211. We serve clients throughout the state.

BAR MEMBERSHIP: Pursuant to Maryland Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 15, attorneys do not need to be members of the Maryland Bar.

NUMBER OF LAWYERS: Unlimited.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE: Provided through DRM.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION/ASSISTANCE: DRM provides free training, materials and ongoing technical assistance in exchange for covering a pro bono case.

KINDS OF CASES: DRM assists students with all types of disabilities from birth – age 21 in K-12 special education matters, with an emphasis on placement in the least restrictive environment; appropriate assessments, educational and behavioral plans, services and supports; access to school curriculum and high school diplomas; inclusion in school based and out of school activities; and student discipline matters, including inappropriate school exclusion, restraint, seclusion, and the use of school police and arrests. DRM also advocates for appropriate educational programming and related services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

CONTACT: Robin Murphy, Executive Director, RobinM@disabilityrightsmd.org, 410-727-6352. See also www.disabilityrightsmd.org.

May 2020

MARYLAND LEGAL AID (MLA)

Maryland Legal Aid is a nonprofit legal services organization which provides assistance to low-income residents statewide. We provide a variety of services including representation, brief advice and counsel, and referrals to other sources of assistance. Maryland Legal Aid's mission is to provide high quality legal services to the State's poor through a mix of services and to bring about the changes poor people want in the systems that affect them.

PLACE: Various offices in Maryland.

BAR MEMBERSHIP: Pursuant to Maryland Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 19, Maryland Legal Aid can assist attorneys with admission to the Maryland Bar.

NUMBER OF LAWYERS: Unlimited.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE: Provided through MLA.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION/ASSISTANCE: MLA provides both live and online training in various areas of law. Mentoring and support on cases is also provided. Volunteer attorneys can use MLA office space during office hours to meet with clients.

KINDS OF CASES: MLA needs volunteers for:

- **Family law** cases, including custody, divorce and child support cases.
- **Security Deposit Cases** – Many clients do not receive their security deposits when they change housing. Often a letter from an attorney can encourage a landlord to return the security deposit.
- **Brief Advice Legal Clinic** – Offered at various locations and times around the state. Federal government attorneys have volunteered at a clinic on Saturday afternoons at a community center in Gaithersburg.
- **Wills, Power of Attorneys, and Estate Planning** – Assist clients who need wills and powers of attorney. Assist clients with their questions regarding estate planning issues. Volunteers can meet clients in person or handle matters remotely.

CONTACT: Julianne Tarver, jtarver@mdlab.gov, Pro Bono Program Director. See www.mdlab.org.

March 2020

MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE

The mission of Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS) is to provide quality civil legal assistance to Marylanders with limited income **at no** cost. MVLS is the largest pro bono legal services provider in the state both in terms of volunteers, over 1,000 lawyers on its panel, and clients served, more than 75,000 since our founding in 1981. Our core pro bono program expands the capacity of Maryland's overburdened legal services delivery system which can serve only 20% of low-income clients in need of civil legal services. With volunteer and staff attorneys, MVLS helps over 5,000 low-income Marylanders every year.

PLACE: MVLS is based in Baltimore, but assists clients statewide.

BAR MEMBERSHIP: Pursuant to Maryland Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 15, attorneys do not need to be members of the Maryland Bar.

NUMBER OF LAWYERS: Unlimited.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE: Provided through MVLS.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION/ASSISTANCE: MVLS offers trainings to volunteers on all topics that MVLS provides legal assistance with, including landlord-tenant law, family law, debt collection and bankruptcy, foreclosure and tax sale, tax controversy, and estate planning and estate administration. It also has training materials available on its website. Mentorship is provided by staff attorneys and expert volunteers.

KINDS OF CASES: Many MVLS pro bono opportunities are located in Baltimore, including housing and family law cases, foreclosure prevention, deed changes, name changes, estate planning, tax controversy including state matters, and consumer matters. MVLS has volunteers who provide legal assistance to clients in every Maryland county. MVLS also offers a Bankruptcy Bypass Clinic, which provides assistance to clients who are collection-proof and do not need to file for bankruptcy, but who need help dealing with creditors. Volunteer attorneys can do this work remotely from any location. MVLS also offers expungement cases, but attorneys employed by the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security (and any agencies affiliated with those agencies) may not participate in expungement cases due to the connection to criminal matters.

CONTACT: Sarah Witri, Pro Bono Program Manager, at switri@mvlslaw.org. See www.mvlslaw.org.

March 2020

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION PRO BONO PROGRAM

The Montgomery County Bar Foundation Pro Bono Program was the first of its kind in Maryland and provides free legal advice to residents of Montgomery County through its Attorney Referral Program and its advice clinics. It offers services in a wide variety of legal areas.

DATE & TIME: Legal Clinic hours are held in five different locations throughout the county on weekday evenings. Attorneys can also take cases at any time.

PLACE: The Bar Foundation's offices are located at 27 West Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD, 20850.

BAR MEMBERSHIP: Pursuant to Maryland Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 15, attorneys do not need to be members of the Maryland Bar.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE: Provided through the Pro Bono Program.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION/ASSISTANCE: The Pro Bono Program provides free training through the Montgomery County, MD, Bar Foundation Continuing Legal Education program and mentoring by veteran volunteer attorneys.

KINDS OF CASES: The Bar Foundation refers low income Montgomery County residents to volunteer attorneys. The Pro Bono Program handles the following types of cases: guardianship, custody (only if custody has not already been established), adoption, absolute divorce, debt collection (defense only), wills and powers of attorney, and landlord/tenant cases. The Program does not handle criminal cases, traffic issues, appeals, modifications, child support, legal separations, limited divorces, employment issues, or social security disability issues. Volunteers are needed to take individual cases and/or to volunteer at one of its advice and referral clinics in Montgomery County.

CONTACT: Debbie Mantilla Craven, Clinic Coordinator, 301-762-5831, debbie@mcbfprobono.org. See www.montbar.org.

March 2020

THE PEOPLE'S LAW LIBRARY OF MARYLAND

The People's Law Library (PLL) is a legal information and self-help website maintained by the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library of Maryland, a court-related agency of the Maryland Judiciary. PLL is supported by Maryland's non-profit legal services providers, *pro bono* attorneys, and the legal academic community. We rely on a network of volunteers, including many attorneys from Judiciary departments, bar associations, law school legal clinics and Maryland Legal Services Corporation grantee organizations. The Thurgood Marshall State Law Library manages content development.

PLACE: Volunteers may work at any location.

BAR MEMBERSHIP: Attorneys may be licensed in any state. Maryland Bar membership is not required.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE: No malpractice insurance is required.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION/ASSISTANCE: Volunteers are provided materials and guidance when editing, updating, and drafting materials. Assistance is remote via email and telephone.

KINDS OF CASES: The purpose of the PLL is to provide self-represented litigants in Maryland state courts information about the law, including summaries of the law, links to primary and secondary legal resources, and referrals for legal services. The site offers legal information, not advice. Volunteers research topics of state law of a civil nature and draft explanations in general, plain English terms.

CONTACT: To volunteer, contact Leland Sampson,
Leland.Sampson@mdcourts.gov. Website: www.peoples-law.org.

March 2020

PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTER OF MARYLAND

As the pro bono arm of the Maryland State Bar Association and the statewide clearinghouse on pro bono, the Pro Bono Resource Center (PBRC) recruits, trains, and connects hundreds of volunteer attorneys with pro bono opportunities across the state.

PLACE: Variable.

BAR MEMBERSHIP: Pursuant to Maryland Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 15, attorneys do not need to be members of the Maryland Bar.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE: Malpractice insurance is provided by the PBRC or the organization working with the PBRC.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION/ASSISTANCE: PBRC offers a variety of trainings to prepare volunteers.

KINDS OF CASES:

Consumer Protection Project: Volunteer for Courthouse Clinics and Pro Bono Cases

District courts across Maryland continue to enter affidavit judgments against low-income consumers in thousands of cases where improper debt collection and consumer debt buying tactics occur. While a large percentage of the defendants have legitimate defenses, their inability to acquire legal guidance and lack of understanding of the legal process result in judgments entered against them. Low-income Marylanders also need assistance with medical and hospital bills, automobile repossessions, landlord-tenant disputes, and other consumer issues. To assist low-income consumers, PBRC trains and engages pro bono lawyers to provide brief legal advice at clinics in District Court in Baltimore City (in partnership with Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS)) and Prince George's County and to accept cases for representation statewide. In about 88% of Project cases, defendants represented by pro bono attorneys engaged by PBRC obtained favorable outcomes for their clients through either dismissals, judgments in the client's favor, or reasonable settlements. *To register for a volunteer training or learn more, contact Nicole McConlogue at nmcconlogue@probonomd.org.*

Home Preservation Project: Volunteer for Community Clinics and Pro Bono Cases

PBRC's Home Preservation Project has provided thousands of Maryland homeowners struggling to stay in their homes with access to critical legal assistance. PBRC initially spearheaded the award-winning **Foreclosure Prevention** component of this Project in 2008, and, through an unprecedented collaboration with state agencies, legal services programs, nonprofits, faith-based groups, and elected officials, PBRC has engaged over 1,400 pro bono lawyers, resulting in direct legal help for over 2,800 homeowners facing foreclosure with one-on-one legal consultations, and facilitated pro bono representation and mediation for over 1,400 homeowners. PBRC continues to organize foreclosure prevention clinics for distressed homeowners across the state and trains and engages volunteer attorneys to provide brief legal advice or to take on a pro bono case through the Project's partners.

PBRC's newest initiative, **Project Household**, is a collaborative effort between PBRC, MVLS, Maryland Legal Aid, and Senior Legal Services to stabilize housing for seniors in Baltimore

City. Project Household provides brief advice and representation on a wide range of issues such as foreclosure, debt collection, utilities shutoffs, bankruptcy, and estate planning, and connects seniors with social workers, household repairs, and weatherization resources to assist in their ability to maintain their homes. ***For more information about any component of the Home Preservation Project or to obtain training, volunteer for a clinic, or accept case referrals, contact Margaret Henn at mhenn@probonomd.org.***

CONTACT: Annie Brinkmann Speedie, Director of Programming, abrinkmann@probonomd.org. See www.probonomd.org.

March 2020

SENIOR LEGAL SERVICES

Senior Legal Services (SLS), a joint program of the Bar Association of Baltimore City and Baltimore Bar Foundation, Inc., has provided free legal advice, services, and representation to Baltimore City residents age sixty (60) and older since 1991. Its mission is to provide legal advice, advocacy, counseling, education and representation to the senior community in Baltimore City, and to improve the quality of life and negate the exploitation of Baltimore seniors.

PLACE: Our offices are located at 111 N. Calvert Street, Ste. 631, Baltimore, MD 21202.

BAR MEMBERSHIP: Pursuant to Maryland Rules Governing Admission to the Bar Rule 15, attorneys do not need to be members of the Maryland Bar.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE: Malpractice insurance is provided by SLS.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION/ASSISTANCE: SLS can provide a seasoned member of the MD Bar to mentor volunteer attorneys.

KINDS OF CASES: We advise and represent clients on a broad range of civil legal matters, including estate planning, consumer and debt collection issues, landlord/tenant disputes, housing matters, foreclosure prevention, probate, and guardianship.

CONTACT: Jacqueline A. Jones at 410-396-1322 or jjones@baltimorebar.org

May 2020