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State of Connecticut Judicial Branch

# Pro Bono Summit

October 5, 2011

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Catalog of Pro Bono Programs  
and Opportunities



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## Summary of Pro Bono Opportunities

### Agency/Project/Contact Info

#### 1. Center for Children's Advocacy

Educational Advocacy for children in foster care and/or juvenile justice system  
*Contact:* Martha Stone, Executive Director  
*Phone:* 860-570-5327  
*Email:* mstone@kidscounsel.org

#### 2. The Children's Law Center

The Truancy Intervention Project  
*Contact:* Melissa Stachelek,  
Project Administrator  
*Phone:* 860-832-8000  
*Email:* TruancyProject@clct.org

#### 3. Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc.

Co-Counsel for Civil Rights  
*Contact:* Jan VanTassel, Executive Director  
*Phone:* 860-262-5042  
*Email:* jvantassel@clrp.org

#### 4. Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc. New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.

In-office Volunteers

*Contact:* Steve Eppler-Epstein,  
Executive Director  
*Phone:* 860-344-0447 x109  
*Email:*  
Seppler-Epstein@ConnLegalServices.org

*Contact:* Branford Brown, Executive Director  
*Phone:* 860-541-5048  
*Email:* BBrown@GHLA.org

*Contact:* Pat Kaplan, Executive Director  
*Phone:* 203-946-4811 x115  
*Email:* PKaplan@NHLegal.org

#### 5. Connecticut Legal Service, Inc.

Stamford Day Laborer Wage Clinic  
*Contact:* Nadine Nevins, Managing Attorney  
*Phone:* 203-336-3851 x4105  
*Email:* NNevins@connlegalservices.org

#### 6. Connecticut Veterans Legal Center

Serving Connecticut's Veterans  
*Contact:* Margaret Middleton,  
Executive Director  
*Phone:* 203-903-2852  
*Email:* mmiddleton@ctveteranslegal.org

#### 7. Internal Revenue Service

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)  
*Contact:* Jodonna Powell,  
SPEC Territory Manager  
*Phone:* 860-756-4660  
*Email:* Jodonna.G.Powell@irs.gov

#### 8. Lawyers for Children America

Lawyers for Children America  
*Contact:* Priscilla Pappadia, Executive Director  
*Phone:* 860-273-0441  
*Email:* pappadiap@aetna.com

#### 9. State of Connecticut Judicial Branch

Volunteer Attorney Program  
*Contact:* Krista Hess, Program Manager  
*Phone:* 860-263-2734 x3043  
*Email:* Krista.Hess@jud.ct.gov

#### 10. Statewide Legal Services

Fast Track to Legal Services Evening  
Intake Clinic  
*Contact:* Claudia Magnan, Pro Bono  
Coordinator  
*Phone:* 860-852-1252  
*Email:* cmagnan@slsct.org

**11. Statewide Legal Services**

Housing Referrals

*Contact:* John Bozzi, Pro Bono Coordinator

*Phone:* 860-344-8096 x3040

*Email:* JBozzi@slsct.org

**12. Statewide Legal Services**

The Pardons Project

*Contact:* Claudia Magnan, Pro Bono Coordinator

*Phone:* 860-852-1252

*Email:* cmagnan@slsct.org

**13. Statewide Legal Services**

Pro Se Divorce/Custody Clinics

*Contact:* Claudia Magnan, Pro Bono Coordinator

*Phone:* 860-852-1252

*Email:* cmagnan@slsct.org

**14. Statewide Legal Services**

School Expulsion Project

*Contact:* John Bozzi, Pro Bono Coordinator

*Phone:* 860-344-8096 x3040

*Email:* JBozzi@slsct.org

**15. Statewide Legal Services**

Security Deposit Clinic

*Contact:* Claudia Magnan, Pro Bono Clinic Coordinator

*Phone:* 860-852-1252

*Email:* cmagnan@slsct.org

**16. Statewide Legal Services**

Thunderdome Family Clinic

*Contact:* Claudia Magnan, Pro Bono Coordinator

*Phone:* 860-852-1252

*Email:* cmagnan@slsct.org

**17. Statewide Legal Services**

Unemployment referrals

*Contact:* John Bozzi, Pro Bono Coordinator

*Phone:* 860-344-8096 x3040

*Email:* JBozzi@slsct.org

**18. Statewide Legal Services**

Wills/Health Care Directives/Power of Attorney

*Contact:* John Bozzi, Pro Bono Coordinator

*Phone:* 860-344-8096 x3040

*Email:* JBozzi@slsct.org

**19. University of Connecticut School of Law Tax Clinic**

Tax Clinic-low income taxpayer legal clinic

*Contact:* Diana Leyden, Director and Clinical Professor of Law

*Phone:* 860-570-5461

*Email:* Diana.leyden@law.uconn.edu

**NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

Center for Children's  
Advocacy

**NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY**

Educational Advocacy for  
children in foster care and/  
or juvenile justice system

**Who are the clients?**

Children 3-18 in the care and custody of DCF; youth who are 12 and over and who are at risk of incarceration.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Often have been unidentified as special education students; districts have violated Child Find requirements.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

School districts.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Administrative advocacy; administrative complaints with the State Dept. of Education.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Educational achievement.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

These youths have no other advocates to speak up for them and enforce their legal rights.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Dependent upon the case; need to go through training program if no special education background.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

At pro bono attorney's office.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Administrative hearing.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Daytime.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

Johnny is 12 and is in foster care. He is failing all his courses and did poorly on the mastery tests, in part because he has been moving from school system to school system as he bounces between residential, group homes and foster homes. No school system has properly identified him or given him what he is legally entitled to.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

Yes... prefer background in special education law.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Some training in special education law.

**Who provides the training?**

Staff at the Center.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

At U. of Ct. School of Law... one day.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

Not yet scheduled.

**Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

No.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Martha Stone  
 Executive Director  
 860-570-5327  
[mstone@kidscounsel.org](mailto:mstone@kidscounsel.org)

These youths have no other advocates to speak up for them and enforce their legal rights.

**NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

The Children's Law Center of CT, Inc.

**NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT OR OPPORTUNITY**

The Truancy Intervention Project

**Who are the clients?**

Middle school-aged children who are experiencing problems with school attendance.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Potential for filing of a Family With Services Needs petition.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Attorneys have three major roles:

- 1) Prioritizing the importance of education as a role model to, and advocate for, the child in matters related to or affecting school attendance.
- 2) Problem solver for the family assisting in identifying and utilizing community resources.
- 3) Representing the child in truancy and related proceedings.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Improvement in child's school attendance.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

High school drop-outs have a higher incidence of incarceration and are more likely to be life-long victims of poverty than their graduating peers. Educators report that the best predictor of

whether a student will become a drop-out is their history of school attendance. Truancy is frequently an early warning signal of stress affecting their family, and also their first encounter with the judicial system. The Project matches middle school-aged students with attorney volunteers who provide early intervention before truancy-related problems become intractable.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Weekly contact with the child totaling 3-4 hours or more per month, much of which will be outside normal work hours.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

Locations are determined by volunteer and child (with parental consent). For example: the library, the child's school/home.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Juvenile Court.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

The times are arranged through mutual agreement between the volunteer and the child.

**Case example**

Anna, age fourteen, had 17 unexcused absences when she entered the Truancy Project. As her attorney volunteer got to know Anna and her family, it was discovered that Anna was responsible for waking herself up in the morning for school. Certainly not an unreasonable responsibility for someone her age, but there was no alarm clock, no clock radio and no person in the morning at home to wake Anna on time. Anna's volunteer decided to touch base with her every day in addition to their weekly time together. So every morning the volunteer called

## High school drop-outs have a higher incidence of incarceration and are more likely to be life-long victims of poverty than their graduating peers.

Anna at 7 a.m. (to wake her up) wished her a great day at school, and through brief discussion encouraged her to make good choices (i.e. to get to school on time), and reminded her to take her medication (for ADHD). The arrangement had a profound effect on the child's attendance.

### **Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice? The Truancy Intervention Project has experienced attorney volunteers who will supervise if the person is not fully admitted.

### **If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

The program is designed to be comfortable for attorneys who are not litigators, have little or no courtroom experience and are not seeking a volunteer experience in a courtroom setting.

### **What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Training topics include special education law, understanding issues of culture and poverty, learning about community and state services available to clients and their families, and procedures in Family with Service Needs cases. In addition, non-compulsory supplemental

training on such topics as mentoring and adolescent psychological development is offered. We also have experts in areas such as special education law, juvenile law, benefits law, and child protection, who serve as resources to our volunteers. Consultants are available to provide assistance with identifying available social service programs.

### **Who provides the training?**

Training is delivered by attorneys and other service providers who are designated as subject matter experts.

### **Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Training is on a Saturday at the CBA in New Britain. Training is for six hours.

### **When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

Next training is October 22, 2011. Training is offered annually in the fall.

### **Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

Not as yet.

### **➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Melissa Stachelek  
Project Administrator  
860-832-8000  
[TruancyProject@clcct.org](mailto:TruancyProject@clcct.org)



**NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc.

**NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT OR OPPORTUNITY**

Co-Counsel for Civil Rights

**Who are the clients?**

Low income adults who are or are perceived to have a psychiatric disability.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

In addition to the challenges imposed by poverty, our clients regularly encounter discrimination, particularly in housing and employment.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

Generally, landlords and private employers and some state agencies, such as Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

CLRP is seeking co-counsel for litigation. Cases are usually based on state and federal fair housing statutes and the Americans with Disabilities Act, but also raise related civil rights claims, such as Section 1983 and constitutional issues.

The Equal Protection Clause of the Connecticut Constitution explicitly protects persons with physical and psychiatric disabilities.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

CLRP seeks to both protect the individual civil rights of clients and promote systemic change to dispel the stigma and discrimination against persons with mental illness.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Housing and employment are fundamental to the stability and recovery of our clients, and their ability to be self-sufficient and participate as full members of the community.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Depends upon cases.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

Private attorney's office.

CLRP seeks to both protect the individual civil rights of clients and promote systemic change to dispel the stigma and discrimination against persons with mental illness.

Housing and employment are fundamental to the stability and recovery of our clients, and their ability to be self-sufficient and participate as full members of the community.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Most often, federal court.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Depends upon nature of the collaboration.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

A client has been denied services from a job training agency because it has determined that the person cannot benefit from their services, but did not follow federally mandated procedures for making such a determination.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

Litigation experience is critical, and a familiarity with civil rights is helpful.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

There is no specific training, but CLRP's Legal Director would be actively involved as co-counsel.

➤ **To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Jan VanTassel  
Executive Director  
860-262-5042  
[jvantassel@clrp.org](mailto:jvantassel@clrp.org)

**NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

Connecticut Legal  
Services, Inc.

Greater Hartford Legal  
Aid, Inc.

New Haven Legal  
Assistance Association,  
Inc.

**NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY**

In-office Volunteers

**Who are the clients?**

Low-income people facing civil legal crises.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Denial of government assistance; refusal of medical treatment; problems of disabled children; problems of the elderly; domestic violence; issues relating to disability; housing issues.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

Case-dependent; can be government entities or private parties including landlords, banks, and abusive spouses.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Volunteers will meet with clients to develop a legal analysis of their problems; decide on appropriate legal course of action, provide in-depth legal counseling, and/or court or administrative representation.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

The primary goal of all of the assistance we provide is the resolution of the client's problem.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

We provide access to justice. Without our legal counsel and representation, the promise of "justice for all" is an empty phrase. Many low-income people are unable to represent themselves adequately in legal matters or even recognize that their problem has a legal component for which they can obtain assistance. We help them make informed decisions, resolve their civil legal problem, and provide them with the necessary information to take action in the future.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Minimum of one day/week to volunteer in-office.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

CLS has service offices in Willimantic, New London, New Britain, Waterbury, Bridgeport and Stamford.

Greater Hartford Legal Aid has its office in Hartford.

New Haven Legal Assistance Association has its office in New Haven.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Varies depending on the individual case.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Normal business hours.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

Some in-house volunteers are trained and supervised to handle federal disability benefit appeals. Others help elderly clients with nursing home or consumer problems. Others represent people being evicted from their apartments who have defenses to the eviction; others represent victims of domestic violence.

John and Katherine are an elderly married couple and their only sources of income are John's pension and social security, which are deposited into a joint bank account. When a judge ordered Katherine to pay a debt from years earlier, the creditor executed on the couple's joint bank account. Katherine filled out a form to have the income from John's pension and social security payments—the couple's only income—exempt from the execution as specified by law. They were granted a hearing. The judge at the hearing asked a lawyer in the courtroom to help the creditor and Katherine and John come to an agreement. Under the agreement, Katherine and John agreed to pay over \$1,500 plus additional fees. Feeling that this agreement was unfair, John and Katherine contacted CLS for guidance. Their CLS attorney reviewed their case, and helped John and Katherine request the return of their money. When the courts granted John and Katherine a second hearing, they had the assistance of their CLS attorney. The judge ruled in favor of John and Katherine and ordered that their money be returned to them.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

No.

**If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

Volunteers work under attorney supervision. Appearance in court on behalf of clients requires full admission.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

No.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Training is tailored to the type of volunteer work and the background of the volunteer attorney.

**Who provides the training?**

Legal services attorneys in that office.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Training is help on-site and is tailored to the individual volunteer attorney and the type of work the attorney will be doing.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

We train volunteer attorneys as needed.

**Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

No.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

*Connecticut Legal Services:*

Steve Eppler-Epstein

Executive Director

860-344-0447 x109

Seppler-Epstein@ConnLegalServices.org

*Greater Hartford Legal Aid:*

Branford Brown

Executive Director

860-541-5048

BBrown@GHLA.org

*New Haven Legal Assistance Association:*

Patricia Kaplan

Executive Director

203-946-4811

PKaplan@NHLegal.org

**NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.

**NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT OR OPPORTUNITY**

Stamford Day Laborer Wage Clinic

**Who are the clients?**

The clients are low-wage workers in the Stamford area who have not been paid the wages and overtime they have earned. They are mostly uneducated, unaware of their legal rights and non-English speaking.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

They have not been paid wages and overtime for work they have performed in violation of Connecticut and federal wage and hour laws.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

Employers: individuals; small and large businesses; LLCs; corporations; and DBAs.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Telephone negotiations, preparation of demand letters, small claims writs, answers, executions and judgment liens; sometimes representation in small claims court.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

To make the workers whole for the work that they have performed, to educate workers on ways to protect themselves against this wage abuse in the future, and to collect double damages to prevent the employers from continuing to cheat workers.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

These are low-wage workers who often do not have savings or other resources to fall back on if they are not paid. Without timely payment of their wages they cannot fulfill their and their family's subsistence needs. Their housing is at risk and their ability to feed their family is compromised.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

The clinics are held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. We take clients from 6pm to 8pm but work is not usually completed until 9 or 9:30 pm. The Monday prior to each clinic volunteers receive an email asking if they will be attending that week's clinic. We ask that volunteers attend a minimum of 6 clinics per year. A 2-3 hour training is required before attendance at a clinic. If an attorney accepts a case for small claims representation: reviewing the file, meeting with the client, preparing the case and the client and representing the client in small claims court should take a total of approximately six hours.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

The evening clinic is held at the Stamford office of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. at 20 Summer Street in Stamford. Small claims representation: you can meet with clients at Connecticut Legal Services' Stamford office at 20 Summer Street or at your office, whichever is more convenient for you and the clients. We will mail you the file. The hearing takes place in the Superior Court in Stamford on Hoyt Street.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Small claims court in Stamford.

These are low-wage workers who often do not have savings or other resources to fall back on if they are not paid.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

The evening clinic is every other Wednesday from 6pm to about 9-9:30 pm. The small claims calendar is called at either 10 am or 2 pm. You can schedule meetings with the clients and perform any necessary case work at your convenience.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

Mr. Diaz worked for a veterinarian in New Canaan. He was never paid overtime. His pay stubs corroborated many, many hours of overtime. A demand letter was sent to the employer demanding payment. The employer's bookkeeper responded. She said the worker was not owed overtime pay because he 'voluntarily worked overtime'. She was told that was not the law. They checked with their attorney and soon after mailed a check to the worker.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

No.

**If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

All clinic volunteers are trained and supervised by Connecticut Legal Services (CLS) attorneys who are present at each clinic. All the work that is produced at each clinic is reviewed by CLS attorneys. Attorneys represented clients in small claims court must be fully admitted.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

No.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

For participation in the clinic, a 2-3 hour training is provided to each volunteer on the applicable wage and hour laws and clinic operation and procedures. All volunteers are provided with a clinic manual. Updates and additional training are provided on an as needed basis. For small claims representation, we provide memos on issues that have come up regularly in small claims court and 'Tips on Representing Workers in Small Claims Court.'

**Who provides the training?**

The training and training materials are prepared by Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. attorneys.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Trainings have been held at the Stamford office of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. and at private law firms and companies when we have been able to get a group together. Trainings usually last 2-3 hours.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

Training is held on an ad hoc basis when there are at least 2 or 3 new volunteers to be trained.

**Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

Although we prefer that trainings be attended in person, we have conferenced-in a volunteer to a training.

**> To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Nadine Nevins  
Managing Attorney  
203-336-3851 x4105  
[NNevins@connlegalservices.org](mailto:NNevins@connlegalservices.org)

NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Connecticut Veterans  
Legal Center

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

Serving Connecticut's  
Veterans

**Who are the clients?**

Connecticut Veterans Legal Center exists to help military veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness overcome legal barriers to stable housing and income.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness face a huge array of issues including, but not limited to, family, tax, criminal, pardon, DMV, immigration, child support, landlord-tenant, foreclosure, consumer and student debt, consumer fraud, and social security benefits and overpayments. The CVLC also helps veterans secure medical, educational and compensatory benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and corrections to military records from the Department of Defense.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

Adverse parties include landlords, banks, insurance companies, spouses, various state agencies, federal and state prosecutors, the IRS, the VA, and third party debt collectors.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Pro bono lawyers volunteering with the CVLC have provided full representation to veterans, advice to CVLC staff attorneys in handling cases and investigation into possible claims.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

To help veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness remove legal barriers to stable housing and income.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

CVLC's clients are actively engaged in treatment and recovery from serious mental illness and substance abuse. While they are doing the hard work of personal transformation, we provide support to alleviate the stress of legal problems like criminal records, outstanding traffic violations, or a dispute with a landlord, which can derail recovery.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

CVLC clients have a range of issues, so there are lots of options ranging from a single court appearance or meeting to longer-term client relationships.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

CVLC meets with clients at a VA community mental health facility. CVLC hopes all of its volunteers will come to see the special facility where we work and how this arrangement serves our clients. We also offer space for pro bono attorneys to meet with clients. However, most pro bono work happens at the volunteer's office.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Small claims, civil, housing, support enforcement, family, Department of Veterans Affairs, Social Security and other administrative hearings.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

CVLC is co-hosting a series of estate-planning events for veterans across the state in 2011-2012 with the Estate and Probate Section of the CBA. Those events are held in the evenings. Otherwise, pro bono work is done at the volunteer's convenience.

## Veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness face a huge array of issues.

**Case example**

Recently a formerly homeless female veteran who had been deployed with the first unit sent to Iraq was facing eviction in Waterbury due to \$300 in unpaid rent when her employer reduced her hours. A volunteer attorney in her town quickly jumped into the case and negotiated a settlement that let the veteran and her five-year-old daughter avoid homelessness and pay back the outstanding debt at a pace she could manage. Great outcome!

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Not necessarily. There are several types of assistance CVLC provides that do not require admission, including assistance with discharge upgrades and pardons.

**If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

In some instances, in-house counsel not licensed in Connecticut have partnered with outside-counsel to represent veterans. In limited circumstances CVLC would assume representation so that a lawyer without full admission could assist.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

CVLC volunteer attorneys have had great success representing veterans in areas of the law that were new to them.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

The CVLC provides training to lawyers and other advocates interested in helping veterans seeking a discharge upgrade or other correction to their military records.

**Who provides the training?**

The CVLC, in partnership with the CBA and Yale Law School's Veterans Legal Services Clinic.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

There are no training dates currently scheduled, but could be arranged on request.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Margaret Middleton  
Executive Director  
203-903-2852  
[mmiddleton@ctveteranslegal.org](mailto:mmiddleton@ctveteranslegal.org)



NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Internal Revenue Service

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

Volunteer Income Tax  
Assistance (VITA)

**Who are the clients?**

Low income taxpayers, persons with disabilities, elderly, and persons who do not speak English as their first language.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Clients often have difficulty understanding tax laws, notices, and filings.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

US Treasury – Internal Revenue Service.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Prepare tax returns; become certified volunteers and assist with free tax preparation at a VITA site where clients may need assistance with filing multiple year tax returns.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Free preparation of tax returns. Save on tax preparation fees. Receive credits that they would not normally be aware of. Learn about credit repair, budget coaching, first-time homebuyer workshops and Individual Development Accounts for education and business.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

They want to be compliant, but cannot afford a paid preparer. They do not know how to prepare a tax return and need assistance. Often these clients fall prey to service providers that wish to take advantage of them.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Approximately 4 hours a week during filing season – Jan 15-April 15.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney’s office, etc.)?**

At a VITA site which may be in a library, senior center, non-profit office, community center, etc.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

(Unusual) Before the Taxpayer Advocate or representing clients for Tax Audits.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Depends upon the hours of operation of the site in which they volunteer. Most VITA sites are open in the evenings; some are open during the day.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

Taxpayers bring in their paperwork and the volunteer prepares a basic tax return.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

No.

**If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

IRS requires that all volunteers be certified to prepare returns by successfully passing a test. Volunteers are mentored by returning volunteers and site coordinators.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

No – it is only important to have a desire to help.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

IRS offers free training. Face-to face classes are offered and Link and Learn is available 24/7 in the Internet. Self-study is also available.

**Who provides the training?**

IRS in conjunction with partners in the community.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Face-to-face classes are offered at various locations throughout the state. Link and Learn is available 24/7 on the Internet.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

Face-to-face training is usually offered in January. Link and Learn and self-study materials are available the middle of November.

**Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

Via the Internet.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Jodonna Powell

SPEC Territory Manager

860-756-4660

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Often these clients fall prey to service providers that wish to take advantage of them.

NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Lawyers for Children  
America

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

Lawyers for Children  
America

**Who are the clients?**

Abused and Neglected Children involved with the Juvenile Court Child Protection Division.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Need legal representation and advocacy during child protection proceedings.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords spouses banks government entities)?**

Parents or caretakers who have committed abuse or neglect.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Representation at Juvenile Court proceedings and DCF administrative hearings.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

To ensure that each child's safety, medical, mental health, and educational needs are met, to ensure permanent placements.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Children need individual representation during child protection proceedings to ensure that their best interests are served.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Cases can last anywhere from 6 weeks to several years.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

Hartford, Rockville, Middletown, New Haven and Bridgeport, CT.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

See above.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Court appearances during daytime, visits with child possibly outside of normal work hours.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

LFCA is fortunate to have many capable and experienced attorney volunteers. We are especially grateful to have Attorney Sheila Huddleston, a partner with the Hartford firm of Shipman & Goodwin, LLP as a volunteer. Attorney Huddleston represented the legal interests of one of our child clients not only at the Connecticut Appellate Court but all the way to the Connecticut Supreme Court. The decision handed down by the Supreme Court in this case clarifies the issue of out-of-court statements made by children during abuse/neglect investigations and their admissibility in court.

At the initial neglect trial the psychologist deemed it to be harmful for the child to testify in court about the statements made to police, social workers and the psychologist during the investigation. The Department of Children and Families' position was that the children can be harmed by the very system that is designed to protect them. The statements were allowed in without the child having to testify.

Under the rules of evidence, out-of-court statements are not allowed unless the person who made them is unavailable under the rules or testifies where they can be cross-examined by counsel preserving the constitutional right of confrontation. Testifying in court is upsetting for anyone but for a child it could be very damaging psychologically especially when the statements are made against a parent or caretaker.

The issue before the court in this case involved the admissibility of the out-of-court statements the child made during the investigative phase of an abuse/neglect allegation against the child's custodial parent and whether one of the permissible exceptions to the rule applied.

Both of the children reported witnessing domestic violence and substance abuse by the mother and her boyfriend, which included driving under the influence with the children in the car, being subjected to verbal and physical abuse and being locked in a room as punishment by the mother's boyfriend.

A report was made to the DCF hotline and an investigation was opened. The children were found to have been neglected. The mother appealed the trial court's decision to the state appellate court. The Appellate Court, relying on the rationale that the testimony of abused children requires special consideration agreed with the trial court's decision. The mother appealed to the Connecticut Supreme Court which concluded that the Appellate Court correctly found that the statements made by the children were admissible at the trial.

When a case is appealed and goes to the Appellate and then the Supreme Court it requires an enormous time commitment and legal expertise. The outcome here will benefit all child victims and prevent them experiencing the harm and the trauma of having to testify in court when they tell a caring adult about abuse or neglect they are experiencing at home.

## Children need individual representation during child protection proceedings to ensure that their best interests are served.

### **Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

### **What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Full-day core training mandatory, optional continuing trainings, continued mentoring provided throughout case lifetime by Lawyers for Children America staff.

### **Who provides the training?**

Lawyers for Children America staff and Yale Child Study Center Staff.

### **Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Throughout the state of CT. Full day training.

### **When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

Next training to be determined. Approximately 6-7 trainings conducted annually.

### **Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

Possibly.

### **➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Priscilla Pappadia  
Executive Director  
860-273-0441  
pappadiap@aetna.com

**NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

State of Connecticut  
Judicial Branch

**NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY**

Volunteer Attorney  
Program

**Who are the clients?**

The clients are any self-represented party who needs legal help in the area of family or foreclosure law. The criteria for participation is that the client must have a legal issue or question in the subject area and may not be represented by an attorney at the time they meet with the volunteer attorney. The program does not income-qualify participants and the participant needn't have a case pending or a case pending in the Judicial District court location where the program is running.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

As the Volunteer Attorney Programs are available in the areas of family or foreclosure law, clients may be facing a range of problems including but not limited to divorce, custody, child support, contempt, civil unions, grandparent rights, loan modifications, foreclosure, foreclosure mediation.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

The adverse parties include banks, landlords, spouses, custodial/non-custodial parents, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

The volunteer attorneys provide the self-represented parties with a range of options that may be appropriate to help resolve their problem. They advise them on specific legal procedures and

answer specific legal questions about 'should I?' or 'what would happen if?' types of questions. The attorneys utilize the other resources provided by the Judicial Branch such as the Law Libraries and the Court Service Centers to further assist parties.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

The participants are able to get their legal questions answered and leave the session with a clear idea of what options are available to them and what the consequences of those options are. The self-represented party leaves the session more informed and educated.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Even though the Volunteer Attorney Program does not income-qualify the participants, these parties do not have access to competent legal counsel. Many have lost their jobs or are under-employed and are forced to make the choice between paying their mortgage or hiring an attorney. The economic turndown has created a new class of indigent self-represented parties, many of whom have some means to support their families, but have little or no access to discretionary funds.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Depending on the Judicial District court location, the program runs either once a week or two-times per month for a 2-hour period. Volunteer attorneys are generally asked to select between three and five dates over a 1-year period.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

The Volunteer Attorney Program runs in the Judicial District courthouse in a courtroom (if available) or a hearing room.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

The Volunteer Attorney Program does not require the attorneys to file appearances on behalf of the parties they meet with and provide advice to.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

The Volunteer Attorney Programs run from 9-11am.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

A party to a divorce action may not understand what their rights are to the marital assets or what type of relief they can seek from the court. The volunteer attorneys advise them on such issues as the automatic orders and what they mean, as well as available options in terms of what motions they can file and what types of pendente lite or post-judgment relief they may be able to ask the court to order. Similarly, in a foreclosure action, the volunteer attorneys may advise clients on such issues as Foreclosure Mediation, loan modifications, foreclosure scams, HAMP Affidavits and HUD certified counselors. Depending on the circumstances of the foreclosure action, the volunteer attorneys may discuss whether the client has a viable defense to the foreclosure, or may simply advise them on how to negotiate a graceful exit.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes. The volunteer attorneys must be a member of the bar in good standing in accordance with Practice Book section 2-65.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

The application process for the Volunteer Attorney Program asks the attorney to indicate how many years they have been practicing law and how many years of experience they have in the subject area. The attorneys are also asked to provide the name of a professional reference. The Program does not require a minimum number of years of experience in the subject area, but the volunteers are required to demonstrate some experience.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Training was provided for the volunteers in the New Haven foreclosure Volunteer Attorney Program through the CT Fair Housing Center

as the number of attorneys experienced in foreclosure defense in the New Haven bar was insufficient to support the needs of the program. Historically, training has not been provided in the family programs.

**Who provides the training?**

The CT Fair Housing Center provided the training to the New Haven volunteer attorneys.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

CT Fair Housing conducts regular foreclosure clinics for defendant homeowners in foreclosure cases. The Center offered to provide this same training for the New Haven volunteer attorneys. The training was 2 hours.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

The CT Fair Housing Center conducts foreclosure clinics for homeowners. The training was adapted for the volunteer attorneys in New Haven. Attorney Jeff Gentes, Foreclosure Prevention Attorney at the CT Fair Housing Center, conducts the Foreclosure Prevention Clinics. Currently, clinics are being offered in Hartford County on October 18, November 15 and December 20, 2011 and in Fairfield County on October 19, November 16 and December 21, 2011. There are also training materials that are available as handouts. Additional clinic dates for 2012 will be announced as they're scheduled.

**Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

The foreclosure training cannot be attended remotely via teleconference or webinar. However, regional training sessions are scheduled to accommodate participants from different parts of the State.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Krista Hess  
Program Manager  
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Krista.Hess@jud.ct.gov

NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Statewide Legal Services

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

Fast Track to Legal  
Services Evening  
Intake Clinic

**Who are the clients?**

Low income people seeking civil legal advice and representation.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

All Civil Law issues such as Housing, Family Law, Public Benefits, Employment and Consumer Law.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Clients may be confused as to how to answer the questions on the on-line intake form. In our Evening Intake Clinic, Volunteers will make an initial contact to clients and help them fill out the on-line form.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

More clients can speak to someone without having to wait on the phone.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Clients get personalized service going through the intake process faster to get help. It gives them information about additional resources along with information about Legal Aid.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Clinics will be held weekly for about 2 hours. Volunteers can come for one clinic or on a rotating basis.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

Statewide Legal Services, 425 Main Street, Middletown, CT.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

This will be an early evening clinic.

Clients get personalized service going through the intake process faster to get help.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

Volunteers will be given a web-generated request for service. They will interview applicants by phone to continue the application. Volunteers will determine if the applicant qualifies for legal service within the CT Legal Aid Network and complete the application after which the application will be given to the appropriate advocate.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

No.

**If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

Clinics are held under supervision of a legal aid staff attorney or manager.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

No.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Volunteers will be trained in all aspects of intake and customer services skills required to serve our client population.

**Who provides the training?**

SLS Staff.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Training held at SLS office on a rolling basis. We can be flexible with anyone wishing to train during evening intake hours or daytime.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

October 27, 2011 at 5:30 - 7:30.

**Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

Yes.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Claudia Magnan

Pro Bono Coordinator

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**NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

**Statewide Legal Services**

**NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY**

**Housing Referrals**

**Who are the clients?**

Low income Connecticut residents.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Eviction and foreclosure.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Lawyers represent clients that are faced with an eviction or foreclosure.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Clients will come through the process in the best possible position to stabilize their lives and to avoid homelessness.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Low income clients are always vulnerable to losing their basic shelter through eviction or foreclosure. Any kind of emergency can disrupt their family finances. It is very hard to recover from this situation. Many clients don't know that you can try to stop these actions or that they can request more time to gather their resources.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Duration of the case.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

Attorney's office.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Superior Court.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Office hours.

## Low income clients are always vulnerable to losing their basic shelter through eviction or foreclosure.

### **Case example**

Client and wife have lived at present address for a little over a year. Client and his landlord got into an argument regarding repairs that the client wanted. Landlord refused to make the repairs and served client with a Notice to Quit. Client called our office in a panic because he thought that he had to leave in 3 days.

### **Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

### **If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

Yes.

### **What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

There will be eviction training offered by the CBA and Legal Services.

### **When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

Winter 2011.

### **Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

No.

### **➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

John Bozzi

Pro Bono Coordinator

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NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Statewide Legal Services

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

The Pardons Project

**Who are the clients?**

People with a criminal record who want to have it erased.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Clients have problems finding jobs or public housing because of their criminal records.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

n/a.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Paralegals volunteer for two projects.

1. Outreach – go to Department of Labor to give information about the Pardon Project and hand out materials.
2. Paralegal volunteers come to Statewide Legal Services and prepare the pardon application for clients using information that clients have provided.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

We hope that people with old convictions will be granted a pardon and have their records erased.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Clients would be able to find employment without the criminal records holding them back. They also would be able to get into public housing.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Usually a 3 hour commitment every time they volunteer.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney’s office, etc.)?**

Either at a Department of Labor facility or Statewide Legal Services office.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

n/a.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Daytime.

## We hope that people with old convictions will be granted a pardon and have their records erased.

### **Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

John has just been laid off from a job that he held for 4 years. He has had a hard time finding a job because of an old criminal record. He gets lots of interviews but they all fall apart when potential employers do the criminal records check. He never hears from them.

If John can get his record erased, he will be able to get a job. He will also be able to volunteer for his son's Little League team.

### **Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

No.

### **If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

All pardon applications are reviewed by an attorney before they are sent out.

### **If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

n/a.

### **What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Paralegals are trained by SLS staff.

### **Who provides the training?**

Statewide Legal Services.

### **➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Claudia Magnan

Pro Bono Clinic Coordinator

(860)852-1252

[cmagnan@slsct.org](mailto:cmagnan@slsct.org)

NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Statewide Legal Services

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

Pro Se Divorce/Custody  
Clinics

**Who are the clients?**

Low income clients.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Clients wanting to start a divorce or custody action.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

Spouses or parents of children.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Assist clients to complete Family Court forms so that they can represent themselves in Family Court.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Clients will be able to file paperwork in court to start a divorce or custody case.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Many clients have handicaps or literacy issues and find the court paperwork daunting.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Each clinic is 3 hours long and volunteer lawyers usually see 3 clients during that clinic.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

Our Family Law Clinics are held in three locations:

1. Hartford – Greater Hartford Legal Aid, first and third Tuesday of the month from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
2. New Haven – New Haven Legal Assistance, second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
3. Middletown – Statewide Legal Services, first and third Wednesday of the month from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

n/a.

Many clients have handicaps or literacy issues and find the court paperwork daunting.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic etc.)**

Morning clinics from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 a.m.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

Mary and her husband have been separated for 2 years. They have one child together, but no property. Mary wants to end this marriage but doesn't know how to start, and is intimidated by the paperwork.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

**If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

n/a.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

Yes. We ask lawyers to take a family law training or to observe the clinic until they are ready to do a clinic on their own.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Observing the clinic.

**Who provides the training?**

Family Law training at CBA.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Connecticut Bar Association, New Britain.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Claudia Magnan  
Pro Bono Clinic Coordinator  
(860) 852-1252  
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NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Statewide Legal Services

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT OR OPPORTUNITY

School Expulsion Project

**Who are the clients?**

Children (with the parents on their behalf).

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Expulsion from school.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

State and federal procedural protections leading up to an administrative hearing.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Avoid expulsion or minimize sanctions.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

The Pro Bono Expulsion Project seeks to address the unmet legal need of meaningful representation for low income students facing significant loss of time in school. Despite the state and federal protections, the majority of low income children go unrepresented at these proceedings.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work?**

The duration of the case.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

At the attorney's office, the client's home and on the school premises.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

The attorney will be appearing at the administrative hearing.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Usually daytime hours, but the attorney may work with the client and family on evenings and weekends if desired.

**Case example**

"Garry" is a 16 year old who lived most of his life in foster care until moving in with his sister last year. He was suspended for 10 days on suspicion of carrying narcotics and his DCF worker was notified that the school was pursuing expulsion. His school assessment showed that while Garry is currently an F student, by all accounts he could be getting A's but for the fact he is hanging out with bad influences. Garry has no other history of problems other than his poor grades in school. Garry's pro bono attorney got the school to agree to an educational plan that avoided expulsion but did include more oversight with DCF and regularly scheduled meetings with his sister. Garry's grades have improved and his newer circle of friends are more interested in music and art rather than hanging out and getting into trouble.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

No.

**If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

It is unusual for non-attorneys to take these cases. However should a non-attorney wish to do so, they should be working within an office setting under an attorney who already has experience.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

Yes.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

The Connecticut Bar Institute in cooperation with experienced attorneys from the Connecticut Legal Services provide in-depth training at least once a year.

**Who provides the training?**

The CBA and CLS.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

New Britain at the CBA. Other venues may be offered.

The Pro Bono Expulsion Project seeks to address the unmet legal need of meaningful representation for low income students facing significant loss of time in school.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

TBA.

**Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

No.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

John Bozzi

Pro Bono Coordinator

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NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Statewide Legal Services

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

Security Deposit Clinic

**Who are the clients?**

Low income clients.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Self-represented clients suing in Small Claims to reclaim wrongfully withheld security deposits.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

Landlords.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Pro Bono volunteers help fill out the Small Claims court paperwork and give advice on how clients can represent themselves in court.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Clients will have the chance to represent themselves in Small Claims court.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

The money from a Security Deposit is often needed for a Security Deposit in another apartment. For low income people, any source of money needs to be pursued.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

The clinics are 3 hours long.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

We have two locations for our Security Deposit Clinics:

Hartford – Greater Hartford Legal Aid – 2nd Wednesday of the month; And

New Haven - New Haven Legal Assistance the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

n/a.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Evening clinic – 5:30-8:30.

The money from a Security Deposit is often needed for a Security Deposit in another apartment. For low income people, any source of money needs to be pursued.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

John and his wife moved from their apartment. After their move they wrote a letter to Landlord asking for the return of their security deposit (\$1200.00).

They have not heard from the landlord even though they left the apartment in good condition.

They need the money to pay the security deposit to their current landlord who agreed to rent to them and let them pay the current security deposit when they get their old deposit returned.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

Short training or observing 3 clinics before doing a clinic on one's own.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

See above.

**Who provides the training?**

Security Deposit trainings are offered through the CBA. For those who can't attend the trainings, the materials can be made available and they can observe the clinics as they happen.

➤ **To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Claudia Magnan

Pro Bono Clinic Coordinator

(860) 852-1252

[cmagnan@slsct.org](mailto:cmagnan@slsct.org)

NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Statewide Legal Services

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT OR OPPORTUNITY

Thunderdome Family Clinic

**Who are the clients?**

Low income clients with easy divorce cases.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Clients want a divorce but do not feel able to represent themselves in court.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

Spouses.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

The original fictional Thunderdome was a gladiatorial arena where conflicts were resolved in a post-apocalyptic world. Our Thunderdome is a new type of arena – a legal training workshop where lawyers new to family law learn how to handle simple cases in a non-apocalyptic way. Novices enter. Veterans leave.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Volunteer attorneys will be trained for family law at an appropriate pace, fostering a connection between volunteers and the SLS pro bono program. Creates a positive experience for volunteers resulting in a greater number that will continue with the program beyond their first case. Each attorney is given a client.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Clients will be represented by attorneys in court.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

There is a commitment by attorneys to handle the case through to the finish.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney’s office, etc.)?**

Trainings are held at the Connecticut Bar Association. Clients can be seen at legal aid offices or at lawyer’s offices.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Superior Court.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Classes are in the evening – 5:30-7:30.

Appointments with clients are done at the lawyer’s convenience.

**Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

Mary wants to get a divorce but doesn’t think that she can do it by herself. She has agreed to be part of the Thunderdome clinic and get the representation from a lawyer as his/her first case.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

**If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

n/a.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

No. The purpose of Thunderdome is to train lawyers to be confident family law lawyers.

## There is a commitment by attorneys to handle the case through to the finish.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

6 mos training.

1. The first class is an intensive multi-hour general overview of divorce law.
2. Second clinic provides training on client interviewing and working with our clients. Client applications are distributed that evening and all attorneys will meet with their clients on site for the next hour.
3. All subsequent clinics train for 1 hour and the second hour is for questions and discussion about cases. Trainings are relevant to the stages of the case and include Filing and pleading; Service and jurisdiction; Simple discovery; default; agreement; Preparation of judgment and final hearing.

All attorneys will be invited to an on-line group where they can ask questions and talk about the cases and all entries are sent to all participants.

**Who provides the training?**

Various family law attorneys.

**Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Connecticut Bar Association. The first training may run for 3 hours. The monthly trainings/workshops will run for 2 hours.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

Once every 6 mos. The next training should be in January 2012.

Watch for Beyond Thunderdome – a class that takes lawyers beyond simple divorces.

**➤ To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Claudia Magnan  
Pro Bono Clinic Coordinator  
(860) 852-1252  
[cmagnan@slsct.org](mailto:cmagnan@slsct.org)

NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Statewide Legal Services

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

Unemployment Referrals

**Who are the clients?**

Low income clients.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Clients have recently been separated from a job and have been denied Unemployment Compensation.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Lawyers give clients realistic expectations on their chances of winning an Unemployment hearing. Lawyers represent clients at the hearing.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Clients will have some sort of financial support while they are looking for a new job.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Without this support, clients face losing their basic necessities such as housing and transportation.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Duration of the case.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

Attorney's office.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

Department of Labor hearing.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

During office hours.

**Case example**

John has been working at his company for four years. Recently he called in sick for three days because he had pneumonia. His boss was irate that he was out sick for three days and fired him. John applied for unemployment and was surprised to find out that he would have to go to a hearing. At the hearing John's boss says that he violated company policy by using up too many sick days. The Department of Labor finds that John is ineligible for benefits. John calls our office because he doesn't know what to do.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

No.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

Yes.

**What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

Training in Spring 2012.

**Who provides the training?**

CBA or Legal Services.

**When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

Early Spring 2012.

**Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

No.

➤ **To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

John Bozzi

Pro Bono Coordinator

860-344-8096 x3040

[jbozzi@slsct.org](mailto:jbozzi@slsct.org)

Without this support, clients face losing their basic necessities such as housing and transportation.

NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY

Statewide Legal Services

NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY

Wills/Health Care  
Directives/Power of  
Attorney

**Who are the clients?**

Low income clients.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

Elderly or ill clients who need the peace of mind that a will, Health Care Directive or Power of Attorney can provide.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Drafting the necessary documents. Explaining options to clients.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

Clients will have these documents should they need them.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

Attorney's office.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Office hours.

**Case example**

Mary is 74 years old and is worried about what would happen to her should she become incapacitated. Mary doesn't have many assets, but does have a few family heirlooms that she wants to pass on to certain members of her family. Also, Mary wants a say in what would happen to her medically should she be unable to communicate her wishes.

**Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

Yes.

**If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training, please describe.**

Yes.

➤ **To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

John Bozzi

Pro Bono Coordinator

860-344-8096 x3040

[jbozzi@slsct.org](mailto:jbozzi@slsct.org)

**NAME OF NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

University of Connecticut  
School of Law Tax Clinic

**NAME OF PRO BONO PROJECT  
OR OPPORTUNITY**

Tax Clinic-low income  
taxpayer legal clinic

**Who are the clients?**

Low income taxpayers with tax controversies and tax litigation cases involving individual income tax problems.

**What legal problem do these clients face?**

IRS collection actions such as levying of wages or social security benefits, filing of liens, audits of individual income tax returns, withholding of Earned Income Credit tax refunds, Collection due process hearings, etc; similar Conn. tax issues.

**Who are the adverse parties (if any) for this type of work (e.g. landlords, spouses, banks, government entities)?**

IRS; Conn. Dept of Revenue Services.

**What legal strategies do the pro bono lawyers use to assist the clients?**

Some familiarity with tax and tax procedure. Training will be provided if necessary.

**What are the outcome goals of this assistance?**

To assist low income taxpayers in getting much needed refunds or to stop collection by putting accounts in not collectible status or submitting an offer in compromise.

**Why is this assistance important to these clients?**

Without the assistance, many low income taxpayers would not have the tax refunds, wages or social security benefits necessary to pay their ordinary and necessary living expenses, or would not be able to correct the amount of tax they owe.

**What time commitment is required to do this pro bono work ?**

Depends on the case. Some can be resolved with an initial meeting with the client and a few phone calls. Other may require a financial statement to be prepared which could talk up to 10 hours. We work with the pro bono attorney upfront to see what amount of time he or she is willing to spend on the matter. If something comes up, we can take the case back in house.

**Where is the pro bono work done? (at a legal aid office, at the pro bono attorney's office, etc.)?**

At the pro bono attorney's office or in the Tax Clinic offices.

**If the pro bono attorney will be appearing for the client, in what court or other forum is that appearance?**

United States Tax Court.

**At what time of day is the pro bono work done (evening clinic, etc.)**

Anytime that works for both the pro bono attorney and the client, unless the pro bono attorney has to meet with an IRS or DRS employee. This is usually set up during the day.

Without the assistance, many low income taxpayers would not have the tax refunds, wages or social security benefits necessary to pay their ordinary and necessary living expenses.



### **Give a short (1-paragraph) case example**

The Tax Clinic represents between 60 to 100 low income taxpayers every year.

'I was amazed at the spectrum of issues our Tax Clinic clients faced. Within weeks of enrollment, I was applying a wide range of substantive and procedural tax law to my clients' needs. We worked on challenging cases.'

– Brennan Price, '04, Axinn, Veltrop & Harkrider, LLP, Hartford, CT.

Clients are provided high quality legal representation at three levels before the Internal Revenue Service and the Connecticut Department of Revenue Service.

1. Audits: Students prepare for and represent clients in connection with audits of income tax returns.
2. Appeals: Students represent clients with regards to the appeal of an adverse audit, the exercise of due process rights after the IRS first tries to collect a past tax by a levy or a lien or the denial of an offer in compromise, or the appeal of an adverse determination of the request for innocent spouse; and
3. Collection during the process of proposing an alternative payment plan or a compromise of tax liabilities.

The Tax Clinic also represents its clients in litigation. The Tax Clinic appears before the United States Tax Court with respect to litigation of tax matters, including adverse audit determinations or denials of collection alternatives and generally once a semester attends the United States Tax Court trial session in Hartford, CT. The Tax Clinic also represents clients before the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut, the United States Court of Federal Claims, and the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit with respect to refund actions and Freedom of Information litigation.

The Tax Clinic does not fill out tax returns or provide other accounting services. The Law School sponsors a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site that is operated in Hartford during the tax filing season. Students interested in enrolling in the Tax Clinic or in providing tax-related public service are encouraged to participate.

### **Does this pro bono work require full admission to practice in Connecticut?**

No. But it does require the pro bono attorney to be in good standing with the IRS.

### **If no: how are those without full admission partnered and supervised to ensure avoidance of issues regarding unlicensed practice?**

If an attorney is in good standing with the IRS, they must abide by the IRS rules of practice. The Tax Clinic director will supervise those not licensed to practice in CT.

### **If it is important that a pro bono lawyer already have particular legal background or training please describe.**

Some basic knowledge of federal income tax.

### **What training is provided to pro bono lawyers doing this work?**

We do periodic CLE courses at the CT Bar Association, or provide one-on-one training with a pro bono volunteer.

### **Who provides the training?**

Diana Leyden, the Director.

### **Where is the training held? How long does the training last?**

Usually at the CBA offices in New Britain, CT.

### **When is the next training (after October 1) and how often is training offered?**

None scheduled yet.

### **Can the training be attended remotely (webinar or teleconference)?**

Not at this time.

### **To sign up for this pro bono opportunity or to get more information contact:**

Diana Leyden  
Director and Clinical Professor of Law  
860-570-5461  
[diana.leyden@law.uconn.edu](mailto:diana.leyden@law.uconn.edu)

## Pro Bono Opportunities Response Form

We might be interested in providing pro bono legal help in the following projects – please have someone contact me:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Agency/Project

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Center for Children's Advocacy<br>Educational Advocacy for children in foster care and/or juvenile justice system                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>Housing Referrals  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Children's Law Center<br>The Truancy Intervention Project  | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>The Pardons Project  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc.<br>Co-Counsel for Civil Rights  | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>Pro Se Divorce/Custody Clinics   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.<br>Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.<br>New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.<br>In-office Volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>School Expulsion Project   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut Legal Service, Inc.<br>Stamford Day Laborer Wage Clinic  | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>Security Deposit Clinic  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut Veterans Legal Center<br>Serving Connecticut's Veterans  | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>Thunderdome Family Clinic  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Revenue Service<br>Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>Unemployment referrals   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers for Children America   | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>Wills/Health Care Directives/Power of Attorney                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State of Connecticut Judicial Branch<br>Volunteer Attorney Program   | <input type="checkbox"/> University of Connecticut<br>School of Law Tax Clinic<br>Tax Clinic-low income taxpayer legal clinic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Legal Services<br>Fast Track to Legal Services Evening Intake Clinic   |   |



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The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the ADA, contact an ADA contact person listed at [www.jud.ct.gov/ADA/](http://www.jud.ct.gov/ADA/).