

GEORGIA LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

2009 PRIVATE ATTORNEY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

Organization

The Georgia Legal Services Program will operate its Private Attorney Involvement Program with its traditional management and structure. It will continue to operate from a central administrative office (The Pro Bono Project of the State Bar of Georgia) under the leadership of an experienced attorney, the Pro Bono Director, and an administrative assistant, and through 10 GLSP field offices (Albany, Augusta, Columbus, Dalton, Gainesville/Athens, Macon, Piedmont, Savannah, Valdosta, and Waycross/Brunswick). In each office there is a PAI Team, which usually includes a combination of a managing attorney, office manager, PAI Coordinator, and/or an administrative secretary.

Presentation of the 2009 Plan to Bar Associations

Each year, the Pro Bono Project provides an update on its activities to the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia. The written PAI report is either included within the Board book or is posted to the State Bar of Georgia website. The PAI plan is also posted to our statewide volunteer lawyer and advocate website, www.GeorgiaAdvocates.org and on www.GLSP.org.

II. PRIVATE ATTORNEY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

PAI Model

Mixed Delivery System

The GLSP PAI program is a mixed delivery system. It includes Judicare or contract programs in several offices, pro bono special initiatives in various stages of development and experimentation, and lawyer referral programs. The emphasis in 2009 will be on further establishing the PAI program as an integral part of the GLSP legal delivery system, to expand the number and variety of pro bono programs in the GLSP service area, to partner with local bar associations to provide eligible clients with an opportunity to receive quality volunteer legal services, and to enhance technology efforts to support the PAI delivery system and to reach out to potential volunteers. GLSP has a goal to place 819 pro bono and contract cases with volunteers in 2009.

Judicare or Contract Programs

Judicare or contract programs involving individual private attorneys are operated in several dozen counties statewide, except the 5-county metro-Atlanta area (which is not served by

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GLSP). The rate paid to Judicare attorneys is \$50 per hour, with some maximum set fees, including costs over \$500 requiring approval by the Pro Bono Director. GLSP uses several fund sources to contract with private attorneys, and will focus contract case funds on very rural areas of the state. GLSP offices will work to place 250 Judicare/contract cases in 2009.

Pro Bono Programs

Since 1990, the Pro Bono Project has strongly encouraged all of the GLSP field offices to increase recruitment and utilization of pro bono attorneys. The Pro Bono Project will review lawyer demographics in Georgia for 2009 and will share that data with GLSP PAI Coordinators and GLSP leadership.

Several GLSP offices will host volunteer recognition events in 2009, conduct recruitment efforts and design and implement local bar association projects. GLSP field offices will work to place 566 pro bono cases in 2009.

Lawyer Referral and Reduced Fee Programs

As a service to the private bar and to communities in which they are located, GLSP offices will continue to operate lawyer referrals services. The Lawyer Referral Programs provide a pool from which to draw pro bono and Judicare volunteers. These programs serve as the primary mechanism through which GLSP involves private attorneys in the representation of financially-eligible clients who have fee-generating cases, who need representation in Social Security and other matters in which fees can be obtained, and in matters which are not within GLSP's priorities. We will continue to maintain systems to refer ineligible persons to private attorneys through the appropriate bar association referral mechanism.

The Pro Bono Project will continue planning work with GLSP's Savannah Regional Office on specific efforts to revamp that office's lawyer referral service so as to take advantage of new Bar rules that allow referral programs to collect a percentage of the award from referred cases.

Recruitment and Retention

Ongoing recruitment and retention of private attorneys remains an essential element for the success of the GLSP PAI Program. GLSP will continue to recruit newly-admitted attorneys to the Georgia Bar, at swearing-in ceremonies, at major bar meetings and through solicitations made at local bar meetings and in publications. Information about GLSP's PAI program will be included in the State Bar's new attorney admission packets. GLSP's Pro Bono Director makes a presentation at every Transition into Practice CLE program for new lawyers (a mandatory program in Georgia for new lawyers).

GLSP's Board of Directors committee structure includes a PAI Committee. In 2009, the Board PAI Committee will work with the GLSP's State Bar Pro Bono Project to implement new initiatives in three voluntary bar associations in GLSP territory: Valdosta, Rome and Macon. GLSP's aim is to have each of these bar associations form a pro bono committee that will act as a liaison between the local GLSP field office and the local bar association membership.

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GLSP offices will continue to conduct their “Take Two” Pledge campaigns.

GLSP managing attorneys will identify 1-2 opportunities per attorney in their respective office for the non-lawyer PAI Coordinator to team up with that attorney to attend local bar meetings or calendar calls so that the coordinator may have personal interaction with the bar and with potential volunteers. Staff attorneys will have the opportunity or the motivation to engage private attorneys to discuss issues facing GLSP clients and learn about the concerns of the private bar about pro bono and client issues-- and the coordinator will have the opportunity to make the potential PAI relationship more than a faceless telephone call or e-mail contact.

Local GLSP PAI programs will, in 2009, choose 3 of 5 menu activities:

- Standard Legal Advice Clinic or Legal Information Clinics using volunteer lawyers (staged in different locations in service area, using volunteer lawyers and minimal GLSP staff to support the volunteers);
- Periodic Team Visits to Local Judges (the team consisting of a GLSP Attorney and PAI Coordinator) to provide an update on the field office’s work and legal resource needs and to receive feedback from the court. The court needs to know GLSP is making its best effort to support pro bono efforts, and the judges may be inclined to learn how they might support GLSP volunteer lawyers.
- Enhanced Volunteer Recognition Event -- a reception, open house, or local bar program dedicated to PAI, that includes volunteer recognition and awards, and which involves GLSP staff attorneys in the development and hosting of the event. The event may be held at a courthouse, coffee shop, or other interesting location, and local offices should consider approaching a law firm or local bar association to sponsor the event in some way.
- Younger Lawyers Division Program Involvement -- Assure that YLD-eligible attorneys in local GLSP offices join a YLD Committee and participate in Committee meetings and activity in-person or by phone or web. YLD Committees can be found at www.gabar.org.
- Local Bar Association Pro Bono Committee – GLSP will partner with local voluntary bars to create a pro bono committee. GLSP will host a bi-monthly lunch for the pro bono committee members to keep them up to date about local office activities and needs, to give them a chance to network for GLSP, to fundraise and to build a long-term, consistent relationship with the bar.

Partners in Pro Bono

GLSP will continue to work closely with the State Bar of Georgia, the State Bar Access to Justice Committee, the State Bar of Georgia Veterans and Military Pro Bono Committee, the

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Supreme Court Committee on Civil Justice, and local and specialty bar associations to develop and implement pro bono policies and initiatives.

GLSP operates its PAI programs with a variety of funds including funding from the State Bar of Georgia and the Georgia Bar Foundation.

GLSP participates in the ProBono.net community, a national network of pro bono advocate support websites. Additionally, GLSP PAI efforts take advantage of pro bono-related resources and trainings offered by the American Bar Association Center for Pro Bono, the national Access to Justice Support Center, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, the LSC Resource Information website, and the LSC Technology Initiative Grants program.

PAI Operations

GLSP's PAI Program is detailed in a 90-plus page manual available to all staff online at <http://wiki.glspl.org>. The manual covers all facets of GLSP's PAI program. The full manual is also available to GLSP volunteer lawyers on our statewide volunteer lawyer support website, www.GeorgiaAdvocates.org/GOJC.

PAI operations are monitored by GLSP's State Bar Pro Bono Project. The staff of the Pro Bono Project consists of: a lawyer/director, administrative assistant/pro bono support manager, and a pro bono support web librarian/content manager.

The Pro Bono Project provides a central clearinghouse of support materials, information and training on PAI issues; directs the public to local GLSP offices; oversees compliance with PAI policies and procedures; assists in the development of local PAI events, trainings and meetings; and creates special message materials for the public and private bar about pro bono and justice issues.

PAI Staff Training

GLSP connects its Pro Bono State Support office and PAI staff with Microsoft LiveCommunicator and webcams that enhance communication and support. GLSP's State Bar Pro Bono Project provides training to PAI and other staff in-person and online through a mix of regular meetings and online trainings.

GLSP's State Bar Pro Bono Project maintains a GLSP PAI Manual that covers GLSP and LSC PAI policy and procedures. The manual is available program-wide through a wiki (an online board) maintained by GLSP's pro bono project.

GLSP PAI staff receive regular training and reminders on GLSP and LSC policies and compliance. GLSP's Pro Bono Director monitors staff training needs on compliance and conducts visits to local field offices throughout the year to train staff, review policy, conduct case reviews, and participate in local bar activities with local GLSP staff.

PAI Case Management

GLSP employs a statewide case management system that includes PAI cases. The CMS includes the following data:

- PAI cases
- PAI attorneys by panel(s) (Pro Bono, Judicare, General Lawyer Referral)

The CMS ensures LSC CSR compliance for PAI cases.

The CMS allows PAI staff to identify appropriate volunteer or referral lawyers for clients based on county and legal problem code. The assigned attorney is then linked to each PAI case. CMS case profiles and CMS reports provide management with the necessary data to supervise program performance, including the ability to monitor cases for case status, status inquiries to, and communications with, the assigned volunteer, and timeliness of closing.

GLSP provide standard and suggested PAI forms, letters and manuals within each case view in the CMS system to enhance quality and efficiency.

Special Goals and Projects

The Pro Bono Project will work with a GLSP Board Pro Bono Committee to continue implementing recommendations from the ABA Peer Review report prepared for GLSP.

The Pro Bono Project will provide more frequent opportunities for pro bono coordinators and managing attorneys to discuss pro bono issues; downplay annual pro bono conference for coordinators in favor of bar leadership training event(s); provide more local support to recruitment and retention efforts; work with local managers on support for coordinator activities; increase GLSP Board participation in pro bono; work more closely with GLSP Development Director on pro bono messaging and events.

GLSP closed PAI case history indicates that approximately 40% of closed PAI cases are “brief service” cases. The Pro Bono Project will work to see that these brief services are provided in more efficient clinic or advice settings involving volunteer lawyers.

The Pro Bono Project will work to continue enhancements of our popular statewide volunteer lawyer site, GeorgiaAdvocates.org, by heavy recruitment of 1) State Bar of Georgia Younger Lawyers Division members and 2) large law firm associates; provide training to local coordinators on posting of available cases for placement with volunteers and follow-up marketing of available cases; and will continue creating and posting webcast trainings for volunteers under our webcast program. The Project will work with local offices to identify HotDocs providers to create forms and pleadings for volunteers.

The Pro Bono Project hired a technology/web librarian coordinator in 2008 to expand web and technology support for pro bono recruitment and support. The new staff person will expand

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resources such as webcasts, web conferencing, technology training for pro bono coordinators and volunteers, and assist in the development of technology structure for a statewide advocate training center.

The Pro Bono Project will host a web-based bi-weekly Pro Bono training in 2009 for GLSP volunteer lawyers and staff; webcast a minimum of 10 legal or community education programs, launch podcasting for advocates; continue regular web conferences for pro bono coordinators; develop pro bono RSS news feeds; and continue work in launching a web-based tool to link GLSP volunteers and staff with law students. Additionally, in 2009, GLSP will continue its special project to offer local voluntary bar associations with free listservs and listserv support in an effort to build bridges with these local bar associations.

In 2007 and 2008, the Pro Bono Project received a small increase in funding to lay the foundation for a pro bono training center. Those funds were used to continue web-based training development and tools. In 2009, the Pro Bono Project will seek funding to launch a staffed training center for civil pro bono advocates. The training center will coordinate, host or co-sponsor advocacy and skills trainings, advocate technology training and program supervision training on a statewide basis.

In 2009, GLSP's Pro Bono Project and the State Bar of Georgia plan to launch a statewide Veterans and Servicemembers Pro Bono and Lawyer Referral Program. The State Bar of Georgia will provide special funding for staffing this initiative.

In addition to the above work, the Pro Bono Project will continue work to integrate technology that supports the delivery of quality PAI services. In 2009, GLSP will be actively engaged in the use of the following tools:

GeorgiaAdvocates.org – GLSP manages the statewide volunteer lawyer support website. The website received over 135,000 visits, provided 227,800 page views, 5,066 *webcast* training views, and nearly 27,330 pro bono document downloads.

XML Project – Integrates GLSP Advocate and Volunteer website content within GLSP's LegalServer case management; and

Webcasting - GLSP broadcasts live video content for volunteer lawyers.

Webinars – GLSP hosts monthly webinars on PAI matters for volunteers.

Wikis – GLSP has implemented advocacy and management wikis that include PAI and volunteer management and support pages (<http://wiki.glsp.org> and <http://staffwiki.glsp.org>).

Survey Tools- GLSP uses survey tools to create PAI surveys online and to capture and share information about PAI from volunteers and web resource users.

HotDocs – This document assembly resource on GeorgiaAdvocates.org provides over 65 resources for GLSP volunteer lawyers.

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LiveHelp -- GLSP was the first LSC program to implement LiveChat and co-browsing to support volunteer lawyers. GLSP PAI staff chat online with volunteer lawyers on GeorgiaAdvocates.org.

LSNTAP – GLSP PAI staff use and promote [www.LSNTAP](http://www.LSNTAP.org) (an LSC-funded technology support center) for Online Training that supports relevant GLSP PAI initiatives.

Twitter - GLSP's Pro Bono Director uses Twitter (an online social network) to disseminate news and updates on GLSP and state pro bono issues (http://twitter.com/ProBono_GA).

Social Bookmarking – GLSP's Pro Bono Director uses social bookmarking to highlight hundreds of pro bono and justice-related web resources for staff, partners and volunteers (<http://del.icio.us/probonoga>).

We plan to continue using technology to serve our PAI delivery system by improving the flow of information to our volunteers, improving web-assisted training of volunteers, and creating efficient systems for participation.

In addition to technology, the GLSP PAI program will continue to prepare and distribute manuals, pro bono primers, brochures and other media that send a consistent, strong message to the volunteer lawyer community.

Project Affiliations

In 2009, as in other years, we expect GLSP's PAI activities to thrive through affiliations with many organizations. The State Bar of Georgia, its leaders, Executive Director, the Access to Justice Committee, the Director of Bar Communications, and Bar staff continue to offer support and ideas. The Institute for Continuing Legal Education will continue its partnership with GLSP's Pro Bono Project in 2009 by providing \$60,000 worth of vouchers as well as CLE scholarships for our volunteer lawyers.

GLSP will continue its successful partnership with the State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division, a partnership that covers Disaster Legal Services, CLE programs and other special projects.

GLSP will continue working with the Atlanta Legal Aid Society and other providers in our statewide efforts to create useful pro bono policies, stage meetings and trainings, and develop web content for the benefit of volunteer lawyers.

Awards and Recognition

All private attorneys who participated in GLSP PAI efforts in 2008 will be listed in an Honor Roll publication in the State Bar Journal in 2009. GLSP volunteer lawyers who handle 3 or more PAI cases will receive a \$150 ICLE voucher. GLSP volunteers will be nominated for the State

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Bar of Georgia Pro Bono Awards and local voluntary bar association awards. Additionally, volunteer efforts will be recognized on our GLSP websites.

GLSP will submit a minimum of 10 news and recognition messages about its volunteer lawyers and pro bono programs to the media and to GLSP partners.

Summary

The Pro Bono Project is grateful to the State Bar of Georgia and the Georgia Bar Foundation for their continuing financial support. We also look forward to new collaborations with the State Bar YLD and the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia. The investment of these organizations is crucial to the development of a strong statewide message addressing the legal needs of the poor and to the creation and maintenance of policies and programs to serve poor Georgians in crisis.

About Georgia Legal Services Program

The mission of the Georgia Legal Services Program is to provide access to justice and opportunities out of poverty for Georgians with low-incomes.

Our lawyers and paralegals provide the help that reflects your community's values of fairness, equality, and responsibility to assist others in need.