



Pro Bono Toolkit

A Judicial Guide to Supporting
Pro Bono Service



2026


Louisiana State
Bar Association

Access to Justice

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With the privilege of law practice comes the obligation to ensure that our legal system is accessible to the most vulnerable among us. Judges occupy a uniquely influential position in cultivating a culture of pro bono service.

The Purpose:

This guide is designed to assist members of the judiciary in championing pro bono legal services throughout Louisiana. It outlines practical strategies for encouraging attorney participation, connecting litigants with available resources, supporting training efforts, and promoting access to justice across the state.

I. Encourage Pro Bono Service from the Bench

Judges are uniquely positioned to shape the professional culture of the legal community. The following actions can meaningfully encourage attorneys to engage in pro bono work:

Set the Tone

- Make positive, public comments about pro bono service and the importance of volunteering. When the opportunity arises, thank attorneys for their commitment from the bench.
- Acknowledge the work of pro bono attorneys at bar functions and professional gatherings, where judicial words carry particular weight.
- Attend pro bono award and recognition ceremonies held by pro bono organizations to demonstrate that the judiciary values this work.
- Nominate deserving attorneys for the Louisiana State Bar Association's Pro Bono Publico Award — one of the most direct ways to honor exceptional service.
- Give special acknowledgment to attorneys who take on cases outside their regular practice area, recognizing the greater personal and professional risk that commitment entails.



Formally Recognize Pro Bono Contributions

- Include a statement in the court's annual report acknowledging attorneys who have handled cases on a pro bono basis, creating a lasting institutional record of appreciation.
- Designate a Pro Bono Liaison Judge for the court - a judge who represents the bench in interactions with external entities on matters involving pro bono representation and who meets regularly with pro bono and legal services providers.

Facilitate Pro Bono Practice

- Provide special calendar arrangements and priority scheduling for attorneys appearing on a pro bono basis when requested or when notified. The time commitment required of an attorney is among the most significant barriers to pro bono participation, and scheduling flexibility can meaningfully lower that barrier.
- Allow attorneys to withdraw after completing limited-scope representation, provided the litigant has been fully informed of the limited scope of service and counsel has notified the court accordingly.
- Allow for bifurcated hearings where appropriate, enabling pro bono attorneys to use their time more effectively across multiple matters.

II. Refer Litigants to Pro Bono Resources

Judges regularly encounter litigants who are unaware of available legal assistance. When appropriate, inform litigants that they may be eligible for assistance from a legal aid or pro bono program, or direct them to a court self-help center or the **Louisiana Legal Navigator**, which is an online tool that helps individuals identify and access legal resources tailored to their situation and parish. For a full directory of services available throughout the state, visit the **Louisiana State Bar Association's Find Legal Help page** at www.lsba.org/public/findlegalhelp.

III. Support Training & Pro Bono Resources

Judicial participation in pro bono training efforts signals institutional support and directly strengthens the pipeline of volunteer attorneys. Judges are encouraged to:

- Volunteer to assist with or attend trainings produced by pro bono organizations, particularly those designed for new pro bono attorneys or focused on high-need practice areas — most commonly family law and landlord-tenant matters — where subject matter may be unfamiliar to volunteers.
- Spread awareness of the resources available to pro bono volunteers. Many of Louisiana's pro bono programs provide volunteers with CLE trainings, practice forms, procedural guides, mentorship, and malpractice insurance coverage at no cost to the volunteer.

A comprehensive library of volunteer resources—including recorded CLE trainings, volunteer manuals, and a calendar of upcoming events—is available at: www.probono.net/la.

IV. Promote Pro Bono Work Publicly

Judges bring unique credibility to conversations about pro bono service. The following outreach efforts, undertaken individually or in coordination with bar associations and pro bono organizations, can amplify that influence:

Speaking and Writing

- Speak at law schools and bar events about the importance of pro bono service. Judges carry particular authority with newer attorneys who are still forming their professional values and sense of obligation.



- Co-author articles in local bar journals with members of pro bono and public interest law firms.
- Pen letters to the editor or op-ed pieces for local publications highlighting the legal needs gap in Louisiana and recognizing the work of attorneys and organizations working to meet those needs.
- Issue a letter from the court for direct distribution or publication through local bar publications thanking attorneys who perform pro bono services.

Engagement with the Legal Community

- Encourage local and specialty bar associations to pass resolutions in support of Louisiana's aspirational pro bono rule, which calls on all attorneys to donate at least 50 hours per year to indigent individuals, and to publicize those resolutions through their membership.
- Encourage local government attorneys, including District Attorneys and Public Defenders, to promote pro bono service among their staff attorneys.
- Make presentations to law firms, corporate legal departments, government offices, and law schools about the need for volunteer attorneys, encouraging engagement with local pro bono and public interest organizations.
- Meet regularly with local pro bono and public interest organization leadership to better understand their services and offer guidance. Judges serving on pro bono program boards can play a meaningful role in shaping program development.
- Attend fundraising events organized by local pro bono and public interest legal organizations, including the annual LSBA Pro Bono Publico & Children's Law Awards ceremony.

V. Support Limited-Scope (Unbundled) Representation

Not every attorney is able to take on a full pro bono case. Encouraging limited-scope, or "unbundled," legal representation allows attorneys to contribute in meaningful ways within realistic constraints — and can make a significant difference for clients who would otherwise go entirely unrepresented.

Limited-scope representation can be the difference between a litigant obtaining any legal assistance at all and going completely unrepresented.

Why Limited-Scope Matters

- It allows clients to retain an attorney for a discrete portion of their case, such as drafting documents or appearing at a single hearing, rather than requiring full representation.
- It expands access to legal services for individuals who do not qualify for free legal aid (either because their income exceeds eligibility limits or because legal aid is unavailable for their type of case), yet who cannot afford traditional market-rate legal services.

How Judges Can Support It

- Direct attorneys to the [Louisiana State Bar Association's Limited Scope Representation \(LSR\) Toolkit](#), which covers the applicable rules, frequently asked questions, best practices, forms, and sample engagement and disengagement letters.
- Hold training sessions for judicial officers and encourage local bar associations to conduct similar trainings on limited-scope representation practices.
- Allow attorneys to withdraw following the completion of limited representation, provided the litigant is fully informed and counsel has notified the court that representation was limited in scope.



VI. The Case for Pro Bono — Talking Points

The following data points and framing may be useful when speaking publicly about the importance of pro bono service and access to justice in Louisiana.

The Need in Louisiana

- Louisiana consistently ranks among the states with the highest poverty rates. Approximately 18% of the state's households live below the Federal Poverty Guidelines, and an additional 33% are classified as ALICE households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed) meaning they earn above the poverty line but cannot afford basic necessities.
- The Justice Gap Report estimates that 74% of low-income households face at least one civil legal problem per year, yet 92% of those households do not receive the professional legal help they need.
- Louisiana legal aid agencies are currently forced to turn away more than 50% of eligible prospective clients each year due to insufficient capacity. Many who do receive assistance are limited to brief advice and counsel rather than full representation.

The Return on Investment

- A 2023–2024 Economic Impact Study found that for every \$1 invested in Louisiana's civil legal aid services, those programs deliver \$13.28 in immediate and long-term financial benefits — making investment in civil legal aid among the most cost-effective interventions available to the state.
- Pro bono legal services help prevent homelessness, enable survivors of domestic violence to find safety, facilitate adoptions by foster parents, and provide pathways to financial stability for low-income individuals and families throughout Louisiana.
- Pro bono work also promotes the peaceful resolution of disputes by expanding access to the legal system and reducing the likelihood of self-help remedies.

Talking Points

Benefits to the Bar

- Pro bono representation allows the courts to operate more efficiently and fairly by reducing the number of self-represented litigants navigating complex proceedings without assistance.
- New attorneys gain practical skills, courtroom experience, and exposure to new areas of law.
- Experienced and retired attorneys can mentor new volunteers while continuing to apply their expertise in practice areas they may not otherwise explore.
- Pro bono volunteers may receive free CLE credit through trainings on public interest law topics offered by pro bono programs.
- Pro bono programs provide malpractice insurance coverage for their volunteers at no cost.
- Pro bono work enhances the public's perception of the legal profession and reinforces attorneys' sense of professional identity and purpose.

Opportunities Available

- Pro bono opportunities exist across all areas of civil law and are available to litigators, transactional attorneys, and mediators at all experience levels.
- Options range from full case representation to limited-scope assistance, virtual service, clinic participation, hotlines, and community education accommodating a wide range of schedules and practice backgrounds.
- Attorneys approaching retirement may wish to consider the LSBA's Pro Bono Emeritus status, which allows attorneys to maintain their license at a discounted rate in exchange for providing pro bono legal representation.



VII. Pro Bono Programs

Acadiana Legal Service Corporation

Offices in Alexandria, Franklin, Lafayette,
Lake Charles, Monroe, Natchitoches, &
Shreveport

Main Office:

1020 Surrey Street
Lafayette, LA 70501
(866) 275-2572

Gregory Hopkins, Unit Managing Attorney -
ghopkins@la-law.org
www.la-law.org

Baton Rouge Bar Foundation Pro Bono Project

544 Main Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
(225) 344-4803

Robin Kay, Pro Bono Coordinator -
robin@brba.org

R. Lynn Haynes, Pro Bono Coordinator -
lynn@brba.org
www.brba.org

Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project, Inc.

610 Murray Street
Alexandria, LA 71301
(318) 449-9778

Lizz Moreau White, Executive Director -
probonopro.lizz@yahoo.com
www.clppb.net

CrescentCare Legal Services

1631 Elysian Fields Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70117
(504) 323-2642

Jesse Lind, Staff Attorney -
jesse.lind@crescentcare.org
www.crescentcare.org

Justice & Accountability Center of Louisiana

4640 S. Carrollton Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70119
(337) 322-4050

Lauren Kirickow - lauren@jaclouisiana.org
www.jaclouisiana.org/volunteer

Lafayette Bar Foundation/Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers

2607 Johnston Street
Lafayette, LA 70503
(337) 237-4700

Marilyn Lopez, Director of Pro Bono Services -
marilyn@lafayettebar.org
www.lafayettebar.org/volunteer

Louisiana Appleseed

935 Gravier St #2155
New Orleans, LA 70112
(504) 910-1767

Adrienne Wheeler, Executive Director -
awheeler@louisianaappleseed.org
www.louisianaappleseed.org

Louisiana State Bar Association - Lawyers in Libraries

601 St. Charles Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70130
(504) 619-0106

Stephanie Beaugh, Access to Justice Projects
Counsel - stephanie.beaugh@lsba.org
www.LouisianaLawyersinLibraries.org

Pro Bono Programs (cont'd)

Northeast Louisiana Bar Foundation

1800 Hudson Lane, Suite 200
Monroe, LA 71202
(318) 582-5094

Juanita Gooding, Executive Director

Juanita@nelabarfoundation.org

www.nelabarfoundation.org

Shreveport Bar Foundation

625 Texas St.
Shreveport, LA 71101
(318) 221-8104

Lucy Espree, Pro Bono Coordinator -

lespree@shreveportbar.com

www.shreveportbarfoundation.org

Southeast Louisiana Legal Services

Offices in Baton Rouge, Covington, Gretna,
Hammond, Houma, New Orleans, & St.
Charles

Main Office:

1340 Poydras St., Suite 600
New Orleans, LA 70112
(504) 529-1000

Douglas F. Carey, Director Pro Bono programs

- dcarey@slls.org

www.slls.org

Southeast Louisiana Legal Services - North Shore Pro Bono Project

195 Greenbriar Blvd., Suite 201
Covington, LA 70433

(985) 893-0076, ext. 519

Cynthia Bordonaro, North Shore Pro Bono

Coordinator - cbordonaro@slls.org

www.slls.org

Southwest Louisiana Bar Foundation

P.O. Box 1139
Lake Charles, LA 70602
(337) 244-5657

Corlissa Hoffoss - choffoss@gmail.com

<https://swlabf.org>

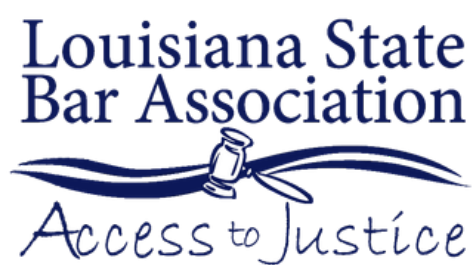
The Pro Bono Project

Main Office:

935 Gravier Street, Ste. 1340
New Orleans, LA 70112
(504) 581-4043

C.C. Kahr, Executive Director - cckahr@probono-no.org

www.probono-no.org



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