

Recruiting and Training Pro Bono Attorneys

Best practices from the DC Bar Pro Bono Center



“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Lindsay Miles-Hare
Managing Attorney
D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center
lmileshare@dcbar.org

- Co-manager of the Advocacy and Justice Clinic
- Managing Attorney of the Immigration Legal Advice and Referral Clinic and Health Care Access Project
- Housing and public benefit specialist

In 2015, the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center Delivered Equal Access to Justice with a wide range of legal services

HOW WE HELP

The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center improves lives by delivering pro bono legal assistance where and when the community most needs our help. The generous support of our individual and law firm contributors, along with more than 1,000 dedicated volunteers, allows us to operate award-winning clinics and resource centers. During life's most critical moments we are making a difference one client at a time.



FULL REPRESENTATION CLINICS

Pro bono attorneys help individuals and families avoid eviction and homelessness; ensure safe, affordable housing; file for bankruptcy protection; make end-of-life plans; defend against personal injury claims and debt collection; preserve parent-child relationships and access vital public benefits and medical care.

387 CLIENTS SERVED



SATURDAY NEIGHBORHOOD CLINICS

Providing individuals the opportunity to meet with a volunteer lawyer for free legal information, brief advice and referral on any civil legal matter governed by D.C. or federal law in Shaw, Anacostia and Columbia Heights.

1,432 SERVED



D.C. SUPERIOR COURT RESOURCE CENTERS & CLINICS

Helping pro se litigants navigate the courts on-site to avoid eviction, stop harassment from debt collectors, protect assets through probate, save family homes from tax sale foreclosures, and achieve equitable divorce and custody arrangements for their children.

6,134 SERVED



NONPROFITS & SMALL BUSINESSES

Protecting and strengthening the District's social safety net by supporting community-based nonprofits and small businesses. We train nonprofits and small businesses in legal topics and operate brief advice clinics for small businesses that serve low-income neighborhoods and create jobs. We provided 145 nonprofits with one-on-one legal assistance, trained 1,916 nonprofit managers and small businesses, and 459 entrepreneurs visited our small business clinics.

2,520 SERVED



TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Providing free legal information to the public online at LawHelp.org/DC and on the phone via the Legal Information Help Line. This year, LawHelp received 419,669 hits and the Help Line answered 6,125 calls.

425,794 INQUIRIES



The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center is supported entirely by **voluntary contributions**, not D.C. Bar membership dues.



4-Star Charity Navigator rating

GET INVOLVED! Visit www.dcb.org/pro-bono
click to VOLUNTEER or click to DONATE

Thank You!

DC BAR
PRO BONO CENTER

Recruiting Pro Bono Attorneys - The First Few Questions

- ▶ Who can help?
- ▶ What can they do?
- ▶ How do we get them?
- ▶ How do we train them?
- ▶ What if _____?

Who Can Help?

- ▶ Attorneys
- ▶ Think of firms, non-profit legal service providers, in-house counsel, and government agencies as sources for volunteers. Do not exclude unemployed or unaffiliated attorneys either.
- ▶ Do not rule out volunteers with little or no experience. Consider the training required and your ability to provide it.
- ▶ Look for attorneys with special language skills and know the ethical considerations





"IS THAT YOUR PLEA ... TO ERR IS HUMAN?"



Important:

Consider local & federal requirements for the practice of law. Check every volunteer's bar admission status and know the rules. Ex: Rule 49 in D.C.

What can they do?

- ▶ Offer brief advice in walk-in clinic setting
- ▶ Take cases for full representation
- ▶ Co-counsel with other attorneys for complex cases or those involving more than one venue
- ▶ Draft or review outreach materials
- ▶ Lend expertise as volunteer mentors
- ▶ Serve as volunteer interpreters in specific situations



How do we get them?

Pro Bono Volunteers

- ▶ Be nice and act natural
- ▶ Explain your passion for your cause
- ▶ Consider appealing to large groups like firms and voluntary bar associations
- ▶ Make a video
- ▶ Attend networking events
- ▶ Offer support: trainings, mentorship, sample pleadings, manuals



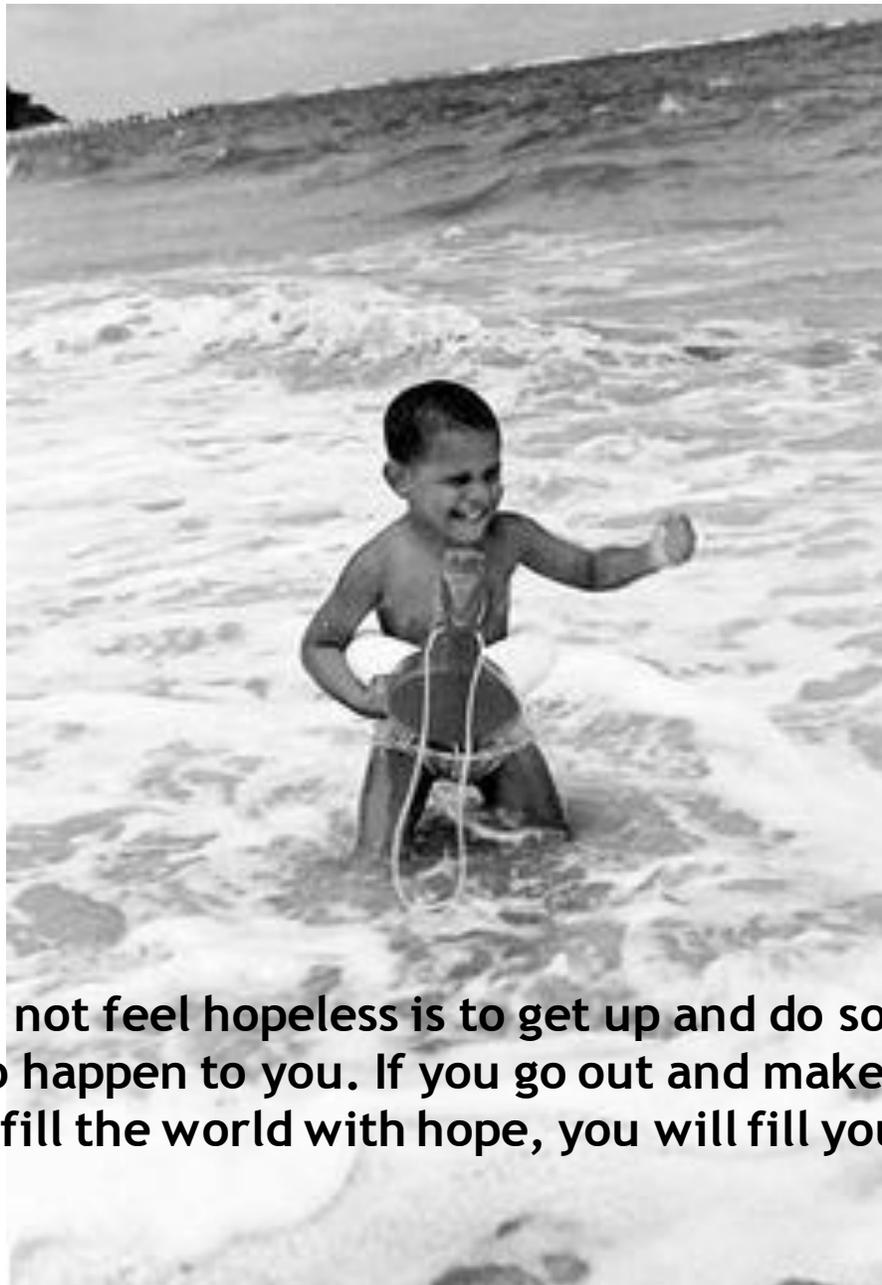
How do we train them?



- ▶ Offer in person trainings for new volunteers as a chance to get to know them
- ▶ Record your live trainings when possible for later use
- ▶ Develop manuals that will last
- ▶ Share resources online
- ▶ Collaborate with other providers/firms/organizations
- ▶ Supplement training materials with mentorship
- ▶ What does this photo even mean?

What if _____?

- ▶ A volunteer doesn't want to keep a case? Try to talk them into it, or find someone else. You have a duty to your client.
- ▶ A volunteer speaks a foreign language? Great! But get an interpreter for hearings, settlement discussions, and potentially difficult meetings at the least.
- ▶ The client has a legal issue we can't address? Refer it. Develop a referral manual. Lawhelp.org is a good first step. Empower volunteers to take a holistic approach.
- ▶ The law changes? Update all online materials; send out new information by e-mail; develop a handout in advance of the next clinic.
- ▶ I missed the first shameless plug for lawhelp.org? Here is it again. <http://www.lawhelp.org/dc>
- ▶ I have a question about an earlier slide? You can ask in 3...2...1



**“The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don’t wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope.”
— Barack Obama**