



**BEST PRACTICES MANUAL**  
*FOR*  
**LOCAL PRO BONO**  
**COMMITTEES**

**STANDING COMMITTEE**  
*of the*  
**COURT OF APPEALS OF MARYLAND**  
*on PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICE*

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# ***INTRODUCTION***

In 2002, the Court of Appeals of Maryland mandated the creation of a Local Pro Bono Committee in each county of the State to help address the enormous gap between the need for civil legal services and the availability of those services for Maryland's low-income residents. The Local Pro Bono Committees were charged with establishing goals and priorities for pro bono legal services in their counties and devising a Local Pro Bono Action Plan, tailored to the needs of their jurisdiction, which would increase the provision of pro bono legal services to the indigent. The level of activity of the local committees varies and a few have combined to serve a particular region. Since 2002, however, lawyers in Maryland have increased their contribution of pro bono legal services to the poor annually. Each year since 2004 Maryland lawyers have donated over one million hours of free legal services to the state's needy.

Despite this progress, the gap between the need for pro bono legal services and the availability of those services continues to expand. The national recession, the epidemic of mortgage foreclosures and the decline in economic growth in Maryland during the past several years have dramatically increased the need for pro bono legal services in this State. The growing number of attorneys willing to provide pro bono services despite the economic downturn affirms the commitment of Maryland's lawyers to social justice and their strong sense of responsibility for fulfilling their obligation of "*pro bono publico*," even in a time of financial hardship. Nevertheless, it is imperative that the number of Maryland attorneys performing pro bono legal services keep rising in order to address the increasing need.

To assist the Local Pro Bono Committees in their work, the Court of Appeals' Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service has prepared this *Best Practices Manual for Local Pro Bono Committees*. The *Best Practices Manual* is organized in two parts. Part I, *A Handbook for New Local Pro Bono Committee Members*, maps the history of organized pro bono in Maryland, tracing important events in the development of pro bono from the formation of the Maryland Legal Services Corporation in the 1980's to the current work of the Local Pro Bono Committees. Part I also examines the response to the present economic downturn and crisis in legal services funding and includes a "Maryland Pro Bono Basics" section in Q & A format that outlines the fundamentals of the rules and systems in place for the performance of pro bono service in Maryland.

Part II, *Best Practices for Local Pro Bono Committees*, is a compendium of the most successful methods that Local Pro Bono Committees have implemented to recruit, train, and recognize pro bono attorneys. It sets forth techniques for Local Pro Bono Committees to use to provide support and resources to volunteer attorneys, as well as to collaborate with the judiciary and legal services organizations. Part II addresses the importance of community outreach and includes a section on the special needs of rural counties. It also contains innovative pro bono projects that can be implemented statewide and addresses issues of Local Pro Bono Committee governance and performance.

This *Best Practices Manual* is intended as a resource for tools and techniques that will enhance the ability of Local Pro Bono Committees to encourage greater involvement of members of the bar, the judiciary, legal services organizations and the community-at-large in pro bono activities. The goal of this *Best Practices Manual* is to help Local Pro Bono Committees harness the positive energy of service among Maryland lawyers and work with them to ensure equal access to justice for all citizens of Maryland.

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# APPENDICES

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A.	<i>Statistics - Gap in Legal Services</i>
B.	Revised: <i>Maryland Pro Bono Rules</i> <a href="#">View Document - Maryland Code and Court Rules</a>
C.	<i>Standing Committee Survey of Legal Services Providers</i>
D.	<i>Standing Committee Survey of Human and Social Service Agencies</i>
E.	<i>Standing Committee Client Survey</i>
F.	Revised: <i>MLSC Legal Services Eligibility Guidelines</i> <a href="https://www.mlsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/2018-MLSC-Income-Guidelines-Final.pdf">https://www.mlsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/2018-MLSC-Income-Guidelines-Final.pdf</a>
G.	Revised: <i>Legal Aid Bureau Eligibility Guidelines</i> <a href="https://www.mlsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/2018-MLSC-Income-Guidelines-Final.pdf">https://www.mlsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/2018-MLSC-Income-Guidelines-Final.pdf</a>
H.	<i>Abbreviated Guide to Pro Bono Services in Maryland</i>
I.	<i>Short-Term Pro Bono Opportunities</i>
J.	Revised: <i>PBRC Litigation Fund Request Form</i> <a href="https://probonomd.org/for-lawyers/litigation-fund/">https://probonomd.org/for-lawyers/litigation-fund/</a>
K.	<i>Sample Maryland Lawyers Care Brochure</i>
L.	Revised: <i>Pro Bono Attorney Registration Form</i> <a href="#">Volunteer Lawyer Registration Form</a>
M.	REVISED: <i>Attorney Emeritus Rules Exceptions</i> <a href="https://www.courts.state.md.us/cpf">https://www.courts.state.md.us/cpf</a>
N.	<i>Model Pro Bono Policy for Government Attorneys</i>
O.	<i>Sample Pro Bono Policies for State's Attorney's and County Law Offices</i>
P.	<i>Howard County Local Pro Bono Committee Attorney Survey</i>
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R.	<i>Maryland Judicial Ethics Opinion #124</i>
S.	<i>Prince George's County Summit Documents</i>
T.	<i>Sample MIRC Flyer and Volunteer Registration</i>
U.	Revised: <i>Automatic Fee Waiver Memorandum</i> <a href="http://mdcourts.gov/courtforms/joint/ccdc088.pdf">http://mdcourts.gov/courtforms/joint/ccdc088.pdf</a>
V.	<i>Annual Report of Local Pro Bono Committee Form</i>