

The Pro Bono Resource Center (PBRC) is the pro bono affiliate of the Maryland State Bar Association, and is proudly sponsored by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, and the Administrative Office of the Courts. PBRC recruits, trains, mentors, and supports pro bono lawyers, connecting hundreds of volunteers with meaningful legal services opportunities, in addition to serving as the resource and technical assistance program for public interest organizations. Over the years we have also focused resources on specific areas of **acute legal need to positively impact at-risk individuals and economically distressed neighborhoods**. Each project offers direct legal services to the community and balances the inequities of the justice system.

📌 COURTROOM ADVOCACY PROJECT

- ☑ Receive training on third-party debt collection cases, tenant advocacy, rent escrow and more.
- ☑ Provide limited scope legal assistance to *pro se* defendants at District Court legal clinics in Baltimore City (tenants or consumers) and Prince George's County (consumers).
- ☑ Help *pro se* litigants navigate District Court, understand defenses, and exercise their rights.
- ☑ Gain client counseling skills and civil litigation practice.
- ☑ Accept cases for direct representation (pro bono and low bono opportunities).

Consumer Protection Project (CPP): District courts across the state continue to enter affidavit judgments against low-income consumers in thousands of cases where improper debt collection and consumer debt buying tactics occur. Volunteer attorneys can provide critical legal help to Maryland consumers by participating in weekly **Wednesday courthouse clinics** in Baltimore City (or Tuesday with MVLS) or on the first, second, and third Fridays of the month in Upper Marlboro. Volunteers may also accept cases from either clinic for full representation. **With the assistance of a volunteer, on average consumers have a 95% success rate in avoiding a money judgment.** *This project is supported by a grant from the Maryland Judiciary's Access to Justice Department.*

Tenant Volunteer Lawyer of the Day Program (TVLD): PBRC engages volunteer attorneys to provide limited scope, day-of-court pro bono representation to Baltimore City tenants being sued for nonpayment of rent. Volunteer attorneys **counsel tenants summoned to court that day and appear with them at their hearings**. There are opportunities to volunteer at clinics four mornings a week (Tues. – Fri.) as well as to provide representation to tenants with rent escrow proceedings. In virtually **every instance, pro bono attorneys gain favorable outcomes for the tenants**. *The TVLD Program is supported by MLSC and a grant from the Maryland Judiciary's Access to Justice Department in partnership with University of Baltimore School of Law, and in cooperation with Public Justice Center and Homeless Persons Representation Project.*

To obtain training, volunteer for a CPP or TVLD clinic, or learn about case referrals, contact Katie Davis at kdavis@probonomd.org.

📌 MARYLAND IMMIGRANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

- ☑ Screen unaccompanied children and families who are at risk of deportation at **legal clinics held at Baltimore Immigration Court and in the community** and counsel them on their eligibility for various kinds of relief such as Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), asylum, and more.
- ☑ **Handle pro bono cases** to assist unaccompanied children and other immigrants who fled their home countries in Central America and now face immigration court proceedings, family court proceedings, or both.

To obtain training, volunteer for a clinic, or learn about case referrals, contact Cate Scenna at cscenna@probonomd.org.

Training and volunteer opportunities are also available for non-attorneys with Spanish language skills.

PBRC facilitates coordination among Maryland's many immigration providers, and project partners include Department of Human Resources, Governor's Office for Children, Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Catholic Charities (Baltimore and D.C.), HIAS, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), Tahirih Justice Center, CAIR Coalition, and the various regional pro bono referral agencies operating around the state. This project is supported by a grant from the Maryland Judiciary's Family and Juvenile Services Department.

🏠 HOME PRESERVATION PROJECT

- ☑ Preventing mortgage foreclosure.
- ☑ Stopping the loss of homes through tax sales.
- ☑ Enabling seniors to age in place by providing legal help and advice with utility bill issues, simple wills, POAs, and advance directives through estate planning and other clinics.

Tax Sale Prevention: To address the rising number of low-income homeowners in at risk of losing their homes due to modest amounts of back property taxes, water bills, or environmental citations, tax sale clinics were established with MVLS. Last year, **49% of those attending the clinics were able to be removed from the tax sale** list immediately, with others referred for longer-term representation. PBRC operates legal clinics in Prince George's County and Baltimore City.

Foreclosure Prevention: PBRC has engaged over 1,400 pro bono lawyers, resulting in direct legal help for over 2,800 homeowners facing foreclosure with one-on-one legal consultations through legal clinics and workshops, facilitated pro bono representation and mediation for over 1,600 homeowners. Despite our progress, the need continues.

Project Household: A collaboration of PBRC, MVLS, Maryland Legal Aid, and Senior Legal Services to stabilize housing for seniors in Baltimore City, Project Household provides legal clinics and representation on a wide range of issues including foreclosure, debt collection, utilities shutoffs, and estate planning. It also connects seniors with a variety of non-legal resources to assist in their ability to maintain their homes.

Wills on Wheels: A partnership of PBRC and Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, this project brings free estate planning clinics and services to low-income seniors throughout Prince George's County.

To obtain training, volunteer, or learn about upcoming clinics or case referrals, contact Allison Harris at aharris@probonomd.org.

🏠 VETERANS' LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- ☑ Assist Maryland veterans with their claims for disability benefits or to secure discharge upgrades by taking on a case through Homeless Persons Representation Project.
- ☑ Attend the annual Veterans' Legal Assistance Conference & Training, which features free trainings and panel sessions.
- ☑ Training is available via webcast.

To obtain training or for more information about volunteering, contact Annie Speedie at aspeedie@probonomd.org.

🏠 MARYLAND FREE LEGAL ANSWERS

As part of an American Bar Association initiative, Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland coordinates Maryland's *Free* legal Answers website which allows low-income Marylanders to submit civil legal questions online, and volunteer attorneys can select questions they wish to answer.

Interested in getting involved? Visit Maryland.FreeLegalAnswers.org to sign up. Questions? Contact Dave Pantzer at dpantzer@probonomd.org.

For More Pro Bono Opportunities and Trainings:

PBRC matches attorneys with pro bono opportunities through a network of programs across Maryland. For more information about available pro bono opportunities, visit www.probonomd.org/volunteer. To learn more about upcoming trainings or online webcasts, visit www.probonomd.org/training.

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