



## The Chicago Bar Foundation: The Foundation at Work in 2008

As the charitable arm of The Chicago Bar Association, The Chicago Bar Foundation (CBF) brings our legal community together around a cause that is uniquely important to us as lawyers and legal professionals: working to ensure that everyone in the Chicago area has access to justice, particularly the low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans who most need the protections of our civil legal system.

In Chicago, a dedicated group of legal aid and pro bono attorneys provide vital legal services to many thousands of the most vulnerable residents in our community. However, due to a long-term underinvestment in our pro bono and legal aid system, there are only about 300 legal aid attorneys to serve the more than 1 million low-income residents of the Chicago area. As a result, the majority of low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans are unable to obtain legal assistance that is often critical to their safety and independence and are left to try to solve complex legal problems on their own.

Through grants, advocacy and other programs, the CBF takes a system-wide approach to improving access to justice and focuses on objectives we can best achieve by coming together as a community. More specifically, the CBF:

- Advances the work of our community's pro bono and legal aid organizations;
- Enables dedicated lawyers to pursue careers in legal aid and helps pro bono attorneys to most effectively supplement their efforts; and
- Makes the courts and legal system more user-friendly and accessible for all.

Thanks to the generous financial support of thousands of individuals, more than 150 law firms and corporations, and many other dedicated supporters, in 2008 the CBF awarded a new record of more than \$2 million in grants and spearheaded a number of innovative initiatives to improve access to justice. Over the past 10 years, the CBF has increased the amount of its annual grants tenfold, almost doubled its net assets, and has been a leader in a number of groundbreaking access to justice initiatives. Some of the major highlights of the CBF's FY 2008 included:

### ***The CBF Brings Our Legal Community Together Around the Cause***

- The CBF received record contributions in FY 2008 from individual lawyers, law firms and corporations along with several *cy pres* awards that collectively made it possible for the CBF to award record grants and to spearhead several innovative access to justice initiatives.
- Building on the success of our inaugural *Campaign* last year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *Investing in Justice Campaign* raised more than \$1 million with more individuals and firms participating this year.
- The CBF launched the groundbreaking Law Firm Leadership Circle, with more than 25 firms signing on as charter members to a statement of principles that embodies best practices for law firms on pro bono, firm giving and related issues involving access to justice.
- The CBF led a successful collaborative effort for a new pro bono rule that will allow Illinois attorneys on retired or inactive status or on limited corporate admission to do pro bono work.
- Co-hosted another record-breaking CBA/CBF Pro Bono and Public Service Awards Luncheon, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CBA/CBF Pro Bono Week (which featured the annual YLS Pro Bono and Community Service Fair), the 11th Annual CBF Fall Benefit, the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Fat Tuesday Challenge (co-hosted with the Association of Legal Administrators), and several other successful CBF Young

Professionals Board events that highlighted the legal community's strong commitment to equal access to justice and engaged many more people in the cause.

### ***The CBF Continues to Build the Capacity of the Pro Bono and Legal Aid System***

- The CBF awarded a new record of more than \$2 million in grants to more than 40 pro bono and legal aid organizations serving our community and related initiatives that enabled tens of thousands of low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans to get critical legal advice and assistance.
- In one reflection of the CBF's growing presence in the larger philanthropic community, the CBF partnered with The Chicago Community Trust and its Chicago Area Foundation for Legal Services (CAFLS) on an innovative joint grantmaking initiative to improve access to justice.
- The CBF led a successful advocacy effort that resulted in a new Illinois statute that will increase the number of *cy pres* awards to support legal aid and related initiatives.
- The CBF developed and hosted a comprehensive series of management and human resources trainings for the leadership of its grantee organizations.

### ***The CBF Steps Up Its Investment in the Attorneys Dedicating Their Careers to Legal Aid***

- Using the proceeds of last year's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual *Investing in Justice Campaign* and other funds, the CBF developed and executed a groundbreaking special grant cycle that funded across the board salary increases for poorly paid legal aid attorneys and also leveraged longer-term commitments from the CBF grantee organizations to bring their attorney salaries up to par with their peers in government service.
- Thanks to a major *cy pres* award last year, the CBF launched the new CBF Sun-Times Public Interest Law Fellowship program and awarded the first five \$50,000 fellowships. In addition, the CBF made it possible for several other dedicated attorneys and law students to pursue careers in legal aid through the CBF's Anderson Fellowship, the Moses and the Marovitz Public Interest Law Scholarships, and the CBF's annual sponsorship of two Equal Justice Works public interest law fellowships.
- The CBF was one of the leaders in a successful nationwide effort that culminated in Congress passing a new law that makes legal aid, public interest law and other public service careers more affordable for graduates with significant educational debt.
- The CBF again partnered with the CBA to fund a popular initiative for the approximately 300 legal aid attorneys working at its grantee organizations that allows these attorneys to receive free CBA memberships and free access to most CBA CLE programs.

### ***The CBF Plays a Lead Role in Bringing Together Key Stakeholders to Develop Systemic Initiatives to Improve Access to Justice***

- The CBF partnered with the City of Chicago and CARPLS to launch a pioneering new advice desk for the City's Department of Administrative Hearings.
- The CBF continued its leadership in making the court system more user-friendly and accessible for the public by increasing its consistent and longstanding support for a number of successful *pro se* advice desks in the state and federal courts.
- The CBF Young Professionals Board partnered with the CBA Young Lawyers Section, the Circuit Court and Illinois Legal Aid Online to produce online videos and associated resources to educate and assist the many thousands of Chicagoans facing mortgage foreclosures.

Thanks to our many dedicated supporters, the CBF has made real strides towards closing the justice gap in our community. Still, we have a long way to go to achieve our vision of equal access to justice for all Chicagoans. With several exciting new projects and initiatives on tap and the continued growth of our annual Investing in Justice Campaign and other CBF development efforts, we have even more ambitious plans for FY 2009. For more information about the CBF and how you can get involved, please visit [www.chicagobarfoundation.org](http://www.chicagobarfoundation.org) or call us at (312) 554-1204.