



The Chicago Bar Foundation: Your Foundation at Work in 2011

As the charitable arm of the CBA, The Chicago Bar Foundation (CBF) mobilizes our legal community around a cause that is distinctly important to us as a profession: working to ensure that everyone in the Chicago area has access to justice, particularly the low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans who are in most critical need of the protections of the legal system.

In 2011 the CBF awarded a new record of more than \$3.3 million in grants and played a lead role in a number of important access to justice projects and initiatives. All of this was made possible thanks to the generous support of thousands of lawyers and other legal professionals, more than 200 law firms and corporations, and many other dedicated partners. Highlights of our work over the past year and the longer-term systemic impact of our work follow below.

The CBF's Role in the Bar and the Community

While everyone in the legal community—lawyers and legal professionals, judges, law firms, corporations and other organizations—has the ability to make a real difference in this cause as individuals, the CBF remains the one place that Chicago's legal community can come together around this issue to collectively make a powerful impact that no one person or organization could make acting alone. The CBF's position at the intersection of the key institutional stakeholders in our justice system (the bar, the courts, pro bono and legal aid organizations, law firms, corporations, government, law schools, and the philanthropic community), along with the “bully pulpit” of our CBA charter, gives us a unique platform from which to effectively tackle this cause on a “macro” level and a heightened responsibility to use that platform as a force for good in challenging times.

Through grants, advocacy, pro bono and partnerships, the CBF takes a system-wide approach to improving access to justice and focuses on objectives we can best achieve by the legal community working together. More specifically, the CBF works to:

- Strengthen our community's pro bono and legal aid organizations;
- Enable dedicated lawyers to pursue careers in legal aid;
- Maximize opportunities for pro bono lawyers to most effectively supplement the work of their legal aid counterparts; and
- Make the courts and legal system more user-friendly and accessible for those in need.

Highlights of the CBF's FY 11 *(June 1, 2010 – May 31, 2011)*

- ❖ As detailed more later in this report, the CBF had one of its most impactful years ever, highlighted by a new record of \$3.3 million in grants that were made possible by thousands of generous individual donors, more than 200 law firm and corporate supporters, and many dedicated partners. Over the past ten years, the CBF has awarded more than \$15 million in grants to pro bono and legal aid organizations in the Chicago area.
- ❖ The CBF continued to play a lead role in the Circuit Court of Cook County's Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program, which provided thousands of people facing foreclosure

much greater access to free housing counseling and legal assistance and gave many others access to mediation to help these homeowners reach the best resolution for their particular cases.

- ❖ The 5th Annual *Investing in Justice Campaign* set new records across the board, raising more than \$1.3 million for our community's pro bono and legal aid system from more than 3,300 donors at 110 participating law firms, corporations and other organizations.
- ❖ The CBF played a leadership role in several innovative pro bono projects that have great potential to become models for other successful pro bono programs looking ahead.

Mobilizing Our Legal Community around this Cause

- The CBF's core work in mobilizing Chicago's legal community around the cause of access to justice—which makes all of our other work possible—yielded significant progress on a number of key fronts.
- The 5th Annual *Investing in Justice Campaign* raised a new record of more than \$1.3 million under the exemplary leadership of this year's Chair, Bill Von Hoene of Exelon. A total of 110 firms, corporations and other law-related organizations participated in the Campaign and more than 3,300 individuals made contributions, both easily new records. The CBF used 100% of the funds raised in the Campaign for grants to 37 pro bono and legal aid organizations serving the Chicago area.
- The CBF again received a number of significant *cy pres* awards that provided critical support for a range of innovative access to justice initiatives in the courts, highlighted by a \$450,000 residual fund award from a class action case in the Circuit Court of Cook County; that award was part of a larger *cy pres* award of more than \$3 million, all of which went to support legal aid in Illinois and throughout the country.
- We had a very successful and well-attended 6th annual CBA/CBF Pro Bono Week that again was held in conjunction with the ABA's national pro bono celebration (inspired in large part by our Pro Bono Week here); co-hosted another very successful CBA/CBF Pro Bono and Public Service Awards Luncheon; and worked with Navigant Consulting on a successful and well-attended program on pro bono for corporate counsel. In addition, the CBF held our 14th Annual CBF Fall Benefit, 11th Annual Fat Tuesday Challenge (co-hosted with the Association of Legal Administrators), and other successful CBF Young Professionals Board events. These events highlighted the legal community's strong commitment to pro bono and equal access to justice, raised significant funds, and engaged many more people in this cause.

Strengthening Our Community's Pro Bono and Legal Aid System

- The CBF awarded a new record of more than \$3.3 million in grants to our community's pro bono and legal aid organizations and related initiatives. These grants enabled tens of thousands of low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans to get critical legal advice and assistance, strengthened our community's pro bono and legal aid system, and made other longer-term systemic improvements in access to justice.
- The CBF's grantmaking partnership with The Chicago Community Trust continued to evolve, with the Trust dissolving its Chicago Area Foundation for Legal Services (CAFLS) and replacing it with a fund that will make an annual grant to the CBF to support area pro bono and legal aid organizations. The CBF also partnered with the Trust and other foundations on several other access to justice initiatives, and continued to take a leadership role in the larger philanthropic community through the Donors Forum and other initiatives. And through a generous gift from Pierce and Associates,

Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund Inc., Codilis & Associates, and the Law Bulletin Publishing Company, the CBF again was able to make special grants to several area legal aid organizations that are working to help the growing number of people facing foreclosures in Cook County.

- The CBF partnered with Cook County to fund several innovative court-based initiatives and worked with the CBA, ISBA, ABA and other organizations from throughout the country in advocacy efforts for government funding and support for legal aid at the federal, state and local levels. These advocacy efforts included a number of legislative visits at the state and federal levels to advocate for continued legal aid funding and targeted federal outreach to ensure continued FDIC insurance for IOLTA accounts (a major source of funding for legal aid).
- The CBF hosted convenings and trainings for the staff leadership of the CBF's grantee organizations on common issues such as management and evaluation.

Investing in the Attorneys Dedicating Their Careers to Legal Aid

- The CBF made it possible for 27 dedicated attorneys and law students to pursue careers in legal aid through the CBF's Sun-Times Fellowship, the Anderson Fellowship, and the Moses and the Marovitz Public Interest Law Scholarships.
- We continued to develop and expand the CBF Legal Aid Academy, an innovative pro bono program through which law firms, legal aid organizations, academic institutions, consultants and other professionals are collaborating to help meet the core training and professional development needs of our community's legal aid attorneys and staff. Over the past year, the Academy continued to develop popular management training programs and expanded the availability of a variety of other free training programs for legal aid lawyers and staff.
- The CBF also made additional progress in improving training and professional development opportunities for those in legal aid through our continued partnership with the CBA on free CLE memberships for more than 300 legal aid lawyers working at our grantee organizations; our staffing and support for the CBA Legal Aid Committee; and facilitating access to other programs for leaders and staff of our community's legal aid organizations.
- Over the past year, the CBF continued its advocacy efforts supporting the development and funding of federal legal aid repayment programs for lawyers working in the public interest. In particular, the CBF helped advocated for and served on the Illinois planning committee for the John R. Justice Public Interest Loan Repayment Program, which helped provide meaningful assistance for 57 public defenders and 48 prosecutors across the state.

Maximizing Pro Bono Impact

- The CBF played a lead role in developing two innovative and entrepreneurial new pro bono projects this year that are utilizing Illinois Legal Aid Online's pro bono website, www.IllinoisProBono.org, in new ways.
- One of those projects was the SSI Overpayment project, a pilot collaboration of several legal aid organizations and a large area firm to assist people with issues involving overpayment of social security benefits. Another project, the Municipal Court Pro Bono Project, is a collaboration of the CBA, the Circuit Court and two of the CBF's grantee organizations, CARPLS and the Chicago Legal Clinic. This project helps advance professional development interests of area law firms while helping the court and clients in need by providing pro bono lawyers to unrepresented people with meritorious jury cases in the municipal division of the Circuit Court.

- The CBF's Pro Bono Support Program and CBA/CBF Pro Bono Week helped scores of individual lawyers and a number of law firms and corporations most effectively get involved in pro bono work by providing information, resources, training and assistance to connect them with opportunities that are an appropriate fit for their interests, skills and availability.
- We continued to develop the CBF Legal Aid Academy (see above) and to promote other types of "non-traditional" pro bono support for legal aid organizations on issues such as advocacy, marketing, finance and administration through the Law Firm Leadership Circle and related efforts.

Making the Courts and Legal System More User-Friendly and Accessible for Those in Need

- The CBF continued to play a lead role in the Circuit Court of Cook County's Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program as the Program became fully operational over the past year. The Program provided thousands of people facing foreclosure much greater access to free housing counseling and legal assistance, and in appropriate matters, access to free mediation to help these homeowners reach the best resolution for their particular cases.
- We continued our leadership and support for 10 advice desks in the state and federal courts and in the City's Department of Administrative Hearings as well as several innovative court-based pro bono projects. The CBF continued to play a leadership role in coordinating the work of these various initiatives that now collectively are serving more than 50,000 people a year with the recent expansion of the advice desk program serving people facing mortgage foreclosure.
- The CBF developed a pilot "Illinois Justice Corps" program for students to assist people without lawyers in the courts, with almost 50 law school students assisting the court and the various Program partners to help unrepresented people in the Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program.
- The CBF Young Professionals Board partnered with the CBA Young Lawyers Section and Illinois Legal Aid Online to produce online videos and associated resources to educate the public and pro bono attorneys about basic court procedure issues like the summons, appearance and notice of motion.

Strengthening the CBF for the future

- The CBF engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process this year that resulted in the development of a series of strategic frameworks that will guide the CBF's work for the next several years and give us a better baseline to evaluate progress in achieving our mission
- The CBF and The Chicago Community Trust released a comprehensive report on the state of the pro bono and legal aid system in the Chicago area that gave the community an updated assessment of the need for legal aid, current service capacity, and sources of funding for this work. The report provides a baseline as of 2009 for where the overall system stands as well as a roadmap for tracking progress going forward.
- Through the CBF Lincoln Circle and Life Fellows programs, an increasing number of lawyers and legal professionals made significant longer-term financial commitments to support the CBF's systemic efforts.

The CBF's Longer-Term Systemic Impact

While our accomplishments over the past year are noteworthy and helped many thousands of people in need get critical legal help, it is the longer-term systemic impact of the CBF's access to justice efforts that represents our defining niche. Working with our many dedicated partners, the CBF's leadership and consistently strong support has been critical in bringing about the following long-term systemic improvements in access to justice over the past 12 years:

- ❖ Chicago's legal community is more engaged and more comprehensively involved in this work--the engine for all of the other advances noted above--with individuals, law firms, corporate legal departments and other entities contributing much more financially towards this cause; doing more pro bono work in a greater variety of ways; and more effectively using their influence in making the case for equal access to justice in the courts and in government at all levels.
- ❖ Our community's court system is much more accessible for people without lawyers thanks to a growing network of legal advice desks in the federal and state courts that serve more than 50,000 people each year, and the user-friendly online legal resources that are increasingly available on www.IllinoisLegalAid.org, Illinois Legal Aid Online's website for the public that now receives more than 1 million visits a year.
- ❖ Chicago's pro bono and legal aid organizations are stronger, with greater and more diverse sources of funding (through federal, state and local government; the legal community; *cy pres* awards; and other foundations), a better coordinated delivery system, and more resources available to support and advance their work.
- ❖ Dedicated lawyers are better able to pursue and remain in careers in legal aid thanks to improved legal aid salaries, significant new loan repayment assistance programs and expanded training and professional development opportunities.
- ❖ Lawyers interested in pro bono have significantly increased and more varied pro bono opportunities available to them and have much better resources to help them most effectively get involved.

Looking Ahead—A Solid Platform for the Future, and Much More Work to Do

As we close out another very successful year at the CBF, we face an improved but still challenging environment. While the legal community has started to recover from the recent economic downturn and has stepped up its support for this cause, Chicago's already overburdened pro bono and legal aid system continues to face rising demands for help from increasingly desperate people in need, while almost all of the major sources of funding for this work are declining or under severe stress. As a result, even with all of the impact we have made in recent years, our profession's leadership role in access to justice efforts--and the CBF's role in mobilizing our legal community around this cause--remain more important than ever right now.

While we still have a long way to go to achieve our vision of equal access to justice for all Chicagoans, we have built up a solid infrastructure to continue to build on our recent success and are well positioned to help our community be as effective as possible in moving this agenda forward. More information about the CBF and our work, and how people can get involved, is available at www.chicagobarfoundation.org or by calling us at (312) 554-1204.