



## **The Chicago Bar Foundation: Your Foundation at Work in 2013** *(July, 2013)*

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.

The CBF pursues a two-pronged strategy as we work to ensure equal access to justice in our community: investing in what we know works (i.e., the many outstanding people and organizations who anchor our community's pro bono and legal aid system), and at the same time investing in innovative initiatives that address gaps and emerging issues and make longer-term systemic improvements in access to justice.

In 2013 the CBF awarded a new record of more than \$4.6 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 CBA members 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.

### **Major Highlights of the CBF's FY 13** *(June 1, 2012 – May 31, 2013)*

- ❖ The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual *Investing in Justice Campaign* raised a new record of more than \$1.8 million under the exemplary leadership of this year's Chair, Dan Reidy of Jones Day. A total of 137 firms, corporations and other law-related organizations participated in the Campaign and more than 4,000 individuals made contributions, both new records.
- ❖ The CBF launched the groundbreaking Justice Entrepreneurs Project (JEP), an incubator program for recent law school graduates to start socially conscious law practices. JEP aims to expand the availability of affordable legal services for low and moderate income people by providing training, resources and support to help entrepreneurial and public interest-minded recent law graduates to establish law practices serving low and moderate-income clients.
- ❖ The CBF played a lead role in the proposal to the Supreme Court to create the new Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice that was launched in June, 2012, and provided the primary staffing for the Commission's impressive initial work.
- ❖ The CBF obtained Americorps funding from the Serve Illinois Commission and partnered with the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice to expand Illinois JusticeCorps, an innovative program through which students serve as guides to make courts across Illinois more welcoming and less intimidating for people without lawyers.

## **Background on the CBF's Role in the Bar and the Community**

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:

- Mobilize the legal community to use their time, money and influence to advance this cause;
- 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 and public service counterparts; and
- Make the courts and legal system more user-friendly and accessible for those in need.

Many thousands of people in need are helped by the CBF's efforts, including women and children victimized by domestic violence; veterans being denied the benefits our country promised them; people facing wrongful eviction from their homes due to predatory lending and other consumer fraud; and many other low-income and disadvantaged people in our community who face legal problems that often impact their safety and independence.

### **I. 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. Highlights include:

- The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual *Investing in Justice Campaign* raised a new record of more than \$1.8 million under the exemplary leadership of this year's Chair, Dan Reidy of Jones Day. A total of 137 firms, corporations and other law-related organizations participated in the Campaign and more than 4,000 individuals made contributions, both new records. The CBF used 100% of the funds raised in the Campaign for grants to 40 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, with multiple awards over the course of the year contributing more than \$1.1 million towards the CBF's efforts. Over \$1.6 million more in *cy pres* awards went directly to several pro bono and legal aid organizations serving the Chicago area.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> annual CBA/CBF Pro Bono Week again was well-attended and successful and the annual CBA/CBF Pro Bono and Public Service Awards Luncheon set new records. In addition, the CBF held our 16<sup>th</sup> Annual CBF Fall Benefit and the annual Young Professionals Board *Casino Legale* event. 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.

### **II. Investing in Proven Solutions**

#### ***Strengthening Our Community's Pro Bono and Legal Aid Organizations***

- The CBF awarded a new record of more than \$4.6 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 possible other longer-term systemic improvements in access to justice.

- The CBF's record grant funding primarily was made possible by the success of the Investing in Justice Campaign and the ongoing support from *cy pres* awards to the CBF.
- The funds from the Campaign and *cy pres* awards were critical in leveraging significantly more funding from our partnerships with The Chicago Community Trust and Cook County as well as additional funding from the City of Chicago and other local foundations from outside the legal community.
- The CBF again hosted several trainings for the staff leadership of the CBF's grantee organizations on common issues such as management, fundraising, pro bono and evaluation, all of which received enthusiastically positive reviews from participants.
- The CBF worked with the CBA to pass legislation that will streamline the process for clients represented by legal aid organizations or pro bono programs to have their court filing fees waived.

### ***Investing in the Attorneys Dedicating Their Careers to Legal Aid***

- The CBF made it possible for 30 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 Marovitz Scholarships, and also funded several public interest internships for law students through PILI.
- We continued to expand training and professional development opportunities for legal aid lawyers through the CBF Legal Aid Academy. The Academy is 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.
- 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 350 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.

### ***Maximizing Pro Bono Impact***

- The CBF prepared and published a comprehensive update to its very popular Pro Bono Opportunities Guide.
- The CBF worked closely with the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice to develop and pass new amendments to the Illinois Supreme Court Rules that will make it easier for corporate counsel, retired and inactive lawyers, lawyers from out of state, and law students to do pro bono work.
- The CBF continued regular convening of staff from legal aid organizations working on pro bono programs to share best practices and tackle collective challenges, and the CBF's comprehensive new checklist for pro bono programs is now available on the CBF website.
- 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.

### **III. Addressing Gaps and Emerging Issues, Investing in Innovative Systemic Improvements**

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

- The CBF continued our leadership and support for 12 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, highlighted by the CBF's continued leadership role in the Circuit Court of Cook County's Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program. These various initiatives collectively are now serving more than 50,000 people a year.
- The CBF obtained Amercorps funding from the Serve Illinois Commission and partnered with the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice to expand Illinois JusticeCorps, an innovative program through which students serve as guides to make courts across Illinois more welcoming and less intimidating for people without lawyers. Illinois JusticeCorps recruits, trains and provides the necessary support for college and law students to provide this procedural and navigational assistance.
- The CBF Young Professionals Board partnered with the CBA Young Lawyers Section (YLS) and Illinois Legal Aid Online to produce online videos and an associated brochure about when, where and how to find a lawyer.

#### ***The Justice Entrepreneurs Project (JEP)***

- The CBF launched the groundbreaking JEP project this year, an incubator program for recent law school graduates to start socially conscious law practices. JEP aims to expand the availability of affordable legal services for low and moderate income people by helping entrepreneurial and public interest-minded recent law graduates establish law practices serving low and moderate-income clients.
- By developing innovative and replicable delivery models, the JEP and its participants will expand access to justice for a segment of the population that is largely underserved in the current market while enabling these newer attorneys to pursue sustainable legal careers.
- The JEP's first group of 10 participants began in June 2013.

#### ***Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice***

- The CBF played a lead role in the proposal to the Supreme Court to create the new Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice that was launched in June, 2012, and provided the primary staffing for the Commission's impressive initial work.
- Among the Commission's many early accomplishments that will significantly improve access to justice were the development and adoption of a new Supreme Court Rule and associated process for creating standardized court forms in Illinois and a new plan for improving access to the courts for people with limited English proficiency.
- Danielle Hirsch, the CBF's Director of Advocacy since 2008, provided much of the early staffing for the Commission in her CBF role and recently was selected to be the Commission's first full-time executive director effective April 1, 2013. Justice Mary K. Rochford has served admirably as one of the 11 Commissioners as the CBF's appointee. Former CBF President Jeff Colman has provided exemplary leadership from the start as the Chair of the Commission.

### ***DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) Initiative***

- The CBF played a lead role in building pro bono and legal aid capacity to assist young immigrants in the Chicago area who are eligible for temporary legal relief under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) announced by the Obama Administration in June, 2012. A temporary status program, DACA will allow eligible immigrants to pursue their education and work legally in the U.S. for up to two years, and approximately 65,000 immigrants in Illinois may be eligible and in need of assistance.
- The CBF played a lead role along with the Polk Bros. Foundation and The Chicago Community Trust in establishing a collaborative effort of Chicago area funders pool resources to support area pro bono, legal aid and immigrant service organizations helping young people eligible for this temporary legal status.
- These efforts helped leverage hundreds of thousands of additional matching funding from national foundations to support this work in the Chicago area. Thousands of young people already have been assisted through these efforts, highlighted by a successful series of pro bono clinics set up by the National Immigrant Justice Center to assist people with the application process.

### **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, 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 60,000 people each year, and the user-friendly online legal resources that are increasingly available on [www.IllinoisLegalAid.org](http://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 more diverse sources of funding (through the legal community; *cy pres* awards; and partnerships with government 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 have a solid platform and some great momentum going forward, but still much more work to do given the large gap in access that continues.

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 where 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 systemic level.

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 successes 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](http://www.chicagobarfoundation.org) or by calling us at (312) 554-1204.