



THE CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION
PRO BONO RESOLUTION

Updated and Reaffirmed by the CBA Board of Managers on October 23, 2014

WHEREAS, one of the most fundamental values of our country and our profession is equal access to justice, reflected by America’s founding fathers at the outset of the Preamble to the Constitution as well as in the Pledge of Allegiance’s familiar refrain of “liberty and justice for all.”

WHEREAS, about 700,000 low-income people in the Chicago area are expected to encounter a legal problem this year, yet less than half of them will be able to access legal help because there aren’t enough pro bono and legal aid resources to go around. A growing number of moderate-income people in our community also are unable to find affordable legal help, leaving many thousands more without the assistance they need to fairly and effectively resolve their legal problems.

WHEREAS, wherever we are in the legal community, lawyers are trustees of the justice system and it is our common cause to ensure the system is fair and accessible for all people regardless of their income or circumstances.

WHEREAS, Illinois Supreme Court Rule 756 (f) underscores that lawyers have a special professional obligation to ensure that our justice system is accessible to everyone through contributions of both time and money as well as through use of our influence; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago Bar Association is committed to increasing pro bono legal services, securing adequate funding for the pro bono and legal aid system, and advancing other efforts to make the justice system fair and accessible for everyone in our community through its charitable arm, The Chicago Bar Foundation; and

THEREFORE, it is resolved by The Chicago Bar Association that:

1. The CBA formally reaffirms its commitment and resources to ensuring the justice system is fair and accessible for everyone in our community through its charitable arm, The Chicago Bar Foundation; and
2. The CBA adopts a suggested standard for each of its members to advance this cause by taking the following actions:*

- a. Using your **time** to advance this cause by:
 - i. Providing at least 50 hours of pro bono services each year; and
 - ii. Striving to contribute your time in other ways, by serving in a leadership role or providing training to support pro bono and legal aid work, and volunteering in other law-related efforts.

 - b. Giving your **money** in an amount that is significant to you--making the cause of equal access to justice one of your top 3 charitable causes--to advance this cause through a mix of the following:
 - i. Contributing to the CBF, joining with thousands of your colleagues in the legal community to make a comprehensive impact none of us could on our own; and
 - ii. Donating to the annual Investing in Justice Campaign to support the pro bono and legal aid organizations serving the Chicago area with one gift; and
 - iii. Supporting the individual pro bono and legal aid organizations where you have a personal connection.

 - c. Using your **influence** to advance the cause in the following ways:
 - i. Reaching out to your elected officials when called upon to advocate for legislation and policies that promote a fair and accessible justice system;
 - ii. Being an ambassador for the cause by encouraging people in your business and personal networks to get involved; and
 - iii. Advocating for court policies that make the justice system more user-friendly and accessible for people in need, including seeking to direct *cy pres* awards to the CBF and the pro bono and legal aid organizations serving our community when possible.
3. The CBA will continue through The Chicago Bar Foundation (<http://chicagobarfoundation.org/>) to offer a Pro Bono Support Program and provide other resources to assist CBA members with questions about how to satisfy this resolution.

** The CBA recognizes that some members such as judges and lawyers in government agencies are prohibited from providing outside legal services, including pro bono services, and that some members also are limited in their ability to participate in legislative and policy advocacy. Members in these circumstances are exempt from those sections and encouraged to advance the cause through other actions called for by the Resolution. Members employed full-time in legal aid and public service positions also are exempt from Section 2(a)(i) of this resolution.*