



Legal Aid of North West Texas

Equal Justice Volunteer Program

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With offices in Abilene, Amarillo, Brownwood, Dallas, Denton, Fort Worth, Lubbock, McKinney, Midland, Odessa, Plainview, San Angelo,

Waxahachie, Wichita Falls and Weatherford - www.lanwt.org

2009 EJVP PROGRAM-WIDE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Media Committee** consisting of EJVP Coordinators published a quarterly electronic “Pro Bono Saves Lives” Newsletter that spotlighted volunteers, law firms, law schools, corporations, and government agencies working together donating their time and talent to represent people pro bono in civil matters. The PBSL publication was distributed on the local, state, and national level listserv and key stakeholders. Susan Charlton-Special Counsel in the Law Firm of Covington and Burlington, LLC, based in Washington, D.C. and a Cartoonist approved re-print of “Lawtoons” in our quarterly publication. A link was placed on Attorney Charlton’s web site at www.lawtoons.com. Go to “Link” for access to lanwt.org.
- The State Bar of Texas Family Law Section hosted a Family Law Essentials Seminar in Erath County that resulted in 23 attorneys committed to accept 51 family law cases and volunteer 30 clinic hours.
- In support of the **American Bar Association (ABA) National Pro Bono Celebration Week** initiative (October 25-31, 2009), each of the 13 branch office EJVP Programs and the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program implemented an initiative honoring volunteer attorneys. All of the activities were posted on the ABA’s web site to use as models to demonstrate what other pro bono programs could do recognize volunteer pro bono work.
- Several of the Branch Office Coordinators and the Director of Pro Bono & Bar Relations served as presenters at the SBOT Texas Lawyers Care Retreat. The Director of Pro Bono & Bar Relations served as a panelist at the 2009 ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference, and participated as a member of the Legal Services Corporation PAI Committee.
- 7,609 (35.48%) attorneys were enrolled in Legal Aid of NW TX’s EJVP. Of the attorneys enrolled 1,674 (22%) actively participated by accepting case referrals, staffing our clinics, presenters at community education workshops, trainers at CLE seminars designed for attorney recruitment, served on our local pro bono advisory boards and performed other pro bono services in support of Legal Aid of NW TX Equal Justice Volunteer Attorney Program.
- Currently, there are **47 local majority and specialty Bar Associations** that co-sponsor our legal clinics, substantive law CLE seminars, provide time on their meeting agenda for recruitment appeals, utilize bar publications to announce pro bono events, and assist with volunteer attorney recruitment efforts. By involving key stakeholders on the local levels, creates a continuous forum for input and feedback to promote program growth. Our Bar partners provide an opportunity to recruit new and seasoned attorneys willing to share their expertise and resources for the public good.

- By December 31, 2009, the Abilene, Amarillo, Denton, Fort Worth, Lubbock, McKinney, Midland, Odessa, Plainview, San Angelo, Waxahachie, and Wichita Falls pro bono programs collectively opened 2,979 cases and closed 4,610 cases.
- Pro Bono Attorneys contributed **27,792.43 hours at \$150/hr valued at \$4,168,864.50** and lay volunteers contributed **13,218.87 hours at \$20/hr valued at \$265,377.40**. In 2009, the **total value** of volunteer participation was **\$4,433,241.90**.
- EJVP (not including DVAP) had 9,784.35 attorney hours @ \$150/per hour valued at \$1,467,652.50 and the lay volunteer hours were 5,956.70 @ \$20/per hour valued at \$119,134.00.
- DVAP had 18,008.10 attorney hours @ \$150/per hour valued at \$2,701,215.00 and 7,262.17 lay volunteer hours @ \$20/per hour valued at \$145,243.40.
- Other EJVP and the DVAP accomplishments are listed in the 2010 PAI Plan located at www.lanwt.org under the "news tab."
- The 2009 Campaign for Equal Access to Justice in Dallas raised **\$556,000** (including \$120,000 from the car raffle). Of this amount, Legal Aid of NW TX received **\$270,297** to support its portion of the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program (DVAP). In addition to this revenue, the DBA pays the salaries for full time staff placed at DVAP, which includes the Managing Attorney, a Recruiter, five Paralegals, and a Data Entry Clerk. The **2010 Campaign** raised **\$595,986.01** (including \$92,000 from the car raffle) in cash and pledges as of March 15, 2010.
- As of September 30, 2009, our EJVP **conducted 63** community legal education outreach workshops that had over **3,573 attendees**. The community workshops were used as a vehicle to distribute materials regarding legal services provided by Legal Aid of NW TX and its EJVP. Additionally, we networked with public service providers to participate in Community Information Fairs that will enable us to reach a broad range of potential clients who might not be aware of civil legal services offered by Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas. Our legal education workshops and outreach activities provided a continuing forum to inform low-income people of their legal rights in substantive law matters and build a support network of key community organizations willing to share resources to help eligible clients access the justice system.
- In 2009, corporate attorneys provided pro bono services in the Dallas, Fort Worth, and McKinney EJVP branch offices.
 - Dallas – Affiliated** Computer Services (ACS) staffs the Garland Clinic. In 2009, ACS helped staff the East Clinic and took cases. American Airlines staffs the West Clinic and takes cases. Citibank accepts cases from DVAP. IBM staffs the Garland Clinic, and provides a probate mentor who assists other volunteer attorneys who need guidance. JP Morgan Chase staffs the East Clinic and takes cases.
 - Fort Worth** – In 2009, five attorneys from American Airlines' Legal Department volunteered at our Tarrant County Legal Clinic and took cases.
 - McKinney** – Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas will continue its partnership with the JC Penney Corporate Legal Department, which staffs the Plano monthly legal clinic; the Electronic Data System (EDS) Corporate Legal Department, which staffs the Allen legal clinic every other month; and the Frito Lay Corporate Legal Department, which co-sponsors the Plano Collin County clinic located at the Salvation Army. Both Legal Departments send attorneys and non-attorneys to staff the clinics.

- The **SMU Dedman School of Law in Dallas, Texas Wesleyan University School of Law in Fort Worth, and Texas Tech University School of Law in Lubbock** are key supporters in promoting and encouraging law student pro bono participation at Legal Aid of NW TX. Law students gain valuable experience in building client interviewing skills, compiling case notes, conducting research, and case development under the supervision of volunteer attorneys. Legal Aid of NW TX' relationship with the law schools give students an opportunity to work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Legal Aid of NW TX' PAI Program has a combined total of **288 collaborative partnerships** with crisis centers, social service agencies, law enforcement, community groups, housing crisis centers, government agencies, churches and a host of other organizations. Our partnerships facilitate the sharing of resources to help low-income people. In 2010, all of our branch offices will continue to utilize our partners as a vehicle to continuously market legal services available through Legal Aid of NW TX.
- As of December 31, 2009, **113 organizations and businesses** provided in-kind donations valued at \$91,644. This included free space, office furniture, equipment, supplies, news media publications, and other donated services to house our 63 community clinics. In 2010, the branch office Coordinators will continue to foster the supportive relationship with our partners in an effort to offset some operational expenses. We will continue to seek in-kind donations to sponsor pro bono activities and awards recognition events.

Utilization of pro bono attorneys:

Private Attorneys and Corporate Counsels staff our 63 monthly and quarterly legal clinics, accept pro bono civil law cases, act as mentors, presenters at CLE substantive law training events and client-centered community legal education workshops, trainers for pro se classes, act as co-counselors, and serve on our branch office pro bono advisory boards.

Administrative Law Judges, District Judges, Municipal Judges, County Court Judges, and Justices of the Peace are presenters at CLE substantive law seminars designed to recruit attorneys to do pro bono work. They also serve on training design teams to help develop curriculum designed for attorney recruitment, act as keynote speakers at pro bono awards events and other sponsored activities, write articles regarding the significance of pro bono work, and participate on local branch office pro bono advisory boards and special project committees.

2009 Recruitment and Retention Efforts:

To attract lawyers and other professionals to volunteer with Legal Aid of NW TX, our program offers a variety of pro bono opportunities that give volunteers a choice of participation levels, which enhances a long-term commitment to participate actively in Legal Aid of NW TX staff and private attorney involvement programs. Our recruitment and retention efforts include but not limited to:

- Using a combination of pro bono panels and reduced fee contracts in rural areas.
- Utilizing the TexasLawyersHelp.org website to post pro bono case opportunities. This website has links to the State Bar of Texas Family Law Section (sbotfam.org), the Texas Academy of Family Law Specialist (tafls.org) and the Texas Young Lawyers Association (tyla.org) that provides an opportunity for attorney recruitment. LANWT is listed on the Texas Legal Service Center Pro Bono Coordinator's link where attorney interested in doing pro bono work are referred to our program.
- Publicizing Texas Lawyers Care "Pro Bono Perks" designed to attract attorneys to the State Bar of Texas Pro Bono College for attorneys who contribute a minimum of 75 hours of pro bono work annually. Distributing "free" tuition scholarships to seminars sponsored by the State Bar CLE

Department for attorneys willing to accept two pro bono cases. A Mentor/Mentee Program where attorneys can earn up to 5 CLE participatory credit hours to the less experienced attorneys willing to do pro bono work; and access to the State Bar websites for bar publication, practice manuals, and training materials to assist attorneys who do pro bono work.

- Conducting weekly and monthly Continuing Legal Education (CLE) “live” and video trainings as a method to recruit and retain attorneys. The CLE substantive law seminars are accredited by the State Bar of Texas for participatory and ethics hours.
- Implementing 47 general clinics, 11 specialized clinics, and 5 pro se clinics as an avenue for attorneys and lay advocates to do pro bono work.
- Using our Virtual Case Referral listserv known as “Project VCR” is a listing of attorneys willing to accept referrals through the e-mail. This referral method gives attorneys a choice to select cases of interest. This referral technique also reduces the time spent by the Coordinators having to contact attorneys by telephone to refer a case.
- Offering attorneys willing to accept pro bono cases various support services including: malpractice insurance at no cost; volunteer law students and paralegals to provide technical support; reimbursement of litigation and out-of-pocket expenses; case maintenance and time record to track donated hours; and use of Legal Aid of NW TX resources such as Lexis Nexis, and equipment to help offset costs related to pro bono representation.
- Continuing to foster a strong partnership with key stakeholders who serve on our local pro bono advisory boards to help market and promote the need for pro bono participation to enhance client services. Local Pro Bono Advisory Boards have also been active in co-sponsoring annual recognition events that honor volunteers for their pro bono services in addressing the unmet legal needs of the client community.
- Using local bar publications, Texas Lawyers Care LegalFront, and the news media to spotlight volunteer attorneys and law firms that do outstanding pro bono work representing our clients.

2009 Level of pro bono case acceptance compared to 2008:

Program-wide, the Equal Justice Volunteer Program had a **9% increase in 2009** of pro bono case acceptances compared to 2008.

EJVP BRANCH OFFICES	OPEN CASES January 1-December 31, 2009	OPEN CASES January 1-December 31, 2008
Abilene	52	72
Amarillo	124	116
Denton	32	44
Fort Worth	679	534
Lubbock	391	368
McKinney	975	863
Midland	87	65
Odessa	17	15
Plainview	06	20
San Angelo	101	80
Waxahachie	90	103
Wichita Falls	79	98
Others (*)	346	359
TOTALS	2,979	2,737

(*) The “Others” category reflect EJVP cases that were not coded to a specific branch office program.

Factors for INCREASE in client services:

The **increase** of case acceptances in Amarillo, Fort Worth, Lubbock, McKinney, Midland, Odessa, and San Angelo service areas were primarily contributed to:

- building strong relationships that the branch office Coordinators have developed with local Bar Associations by giving presentations at meetings and using bar publications for recruitment;
- offering a variety of pro bono opportunities to attorneys who were willing to do pro bono work pursuant to their specific interest and their time to volunteer their services;
- the SBOT Family Law section selecting rural counties in our service area to host seminars designed for attorney recruitment and the two pro bono case requirement for free CLE credits;
- live seminars and monthly CLE video trainings accredited by the SBOT that were held in rural counties for recruitment and retention whereby attorneys obtain “free” CLE participatory/ethics credit in exchange of accepting pro bono cases, and
- active participation from local pro bono advisory board members to help market the need for pro bono participation.

Factors for DECREASE in client services:

The **decrease** of pro bono case acceptances in Abilene, Denton, Plainview, Waxahachie, and Wichita Falls was contributed to:

- the Brownwood clinic in the Abilene area was closed for the last quarter in 2009 due the new branch office location opening in that area;
- intakes were limited in Denton due to decrease of staff;
- focus was placed on pro bono referrals opposed to referring reduced fee cases to engage more attorneys to do pro bono work in Plainview;
- the branch office managing attorney and coordinator in Waxahachie were selective in referring cases due to most solo practitioners were reluctant in accepting pro bono referrals, and
- limited number of pro bono case referrals were made in Wichita Falls.