

**INCREASING PRO BONO SERVICE --  
POTENTIAL IDEAS THAT MIGHT BE EXPLORED**

**SHORT TERM?**

1. **Convention Program Regarding Pro Bono.** This needs to be developed immediately, in order to meet a March 20 deadline. Could it be the kickoff for the intensive campaign described below? Jim Baillie suggests a theme such as “Stepping Into the Breach: Meeting the Crisis in Legal Services.”
2. **Intensive Publicity and Recruitment Campaign?** Should MSBA develop an intensive publicity campaign designed to persuade attorneys to increase both their pro bono services and their private donations to legal aid programs? If so, when would be the best time to launch the campaign (*e.g.*, immediately after the legislative session; at or after the MSBA convention)? What tasks need to be completed to meet that deadline? How much money would be available for the campaign? What existing resources could MSBA use to reduce the costs of the campaign (*e.g.*, large law firm marketing directors; focus group and “marketing” research already completed at the national/regional level; volunteers from advertising firms)? Should the campaign be multifaceted, *i.e.*, tailored to each the various “demographic” groups (*e.g.*, rural v. urban; large firm v. smaller firms; junior v. senior attorneys; students and paralegals v. practicing attorneys). Should the campaign have a finite number of strategies for marketing and “message” purposes (*e.g.*, Jim Baillie suggests a finite number like 10).
3. **Statewide Meetings With Managing Partners?** Should MSBA organize meetings with the managing partners of medium and/or large law firms around the state, to discuss the need to increase pro bono and private donations? If so, when should the meetings occur? Where should the meetings occur (*e.g.*, St. Cloud, Rochester, Austin, Mankato, Bemidji, Duluth, Twin Cities)? What should be the agenda (*e.g.*, law firm “best practices” for encouraging pro bono; community-wide pro bono challenge similar to the ABA Challenge)? Who should be involved in organizing and conducting the meeting (*e.g.*, local pro bono coordinators; local volunteer attorneys who are actively engaged in pro bono; influential judges and bar members)? Should the judges lead the meeting? Should the first meeting be at the MSBA convention?
4. **Take the Campaign to the District Bar Meetings?** Members of the MSBA Executive Committee try attend these 20-plus meetings, which mostly occur in May and June. Should the Executive Committee use this opportunity to convey a direct message?
5. **Lead Role By the Judiciary?** Can MSBA persuade the judiciary to take a lead role in encouraging and guiding pro bono in each district? Could the judges in each district meet with the district’s law firms and lawyers to encourage participation?
6. **Revamp Pro Bono Directory.** Update and expand the directory and distribute to each attorney with a letter urging participation. Could MJF assume administration of this project?

7. **Promote More Use of ProBono.Net.** Could this be done in conjunction with distribution of a revamped pro bono directory? Are there other ideas for persuading attorneys, paralegals and students to use the web site? Can the use of the web site be improved in specific ways? [NOTE: the site will be upgraded soon and will be called ProJusticeMN.org]
8. **Tap Twin Cities Resources for Outstate Pro Bono?** Evidently, attorneys in rural areas tend to volunteer more pro bono services than Twin Cities attorneys, but the unmet need for legal services in outstate Minnesota is nevertheless growing. Should MSBA develop a plan and program that would recruit Twin Cities attorneys to help with the unmet legal need in outstate areas? Are there outstate pro bono tasks that could be efficiently unbundled (*i.e.*, completed by a volunteer attorney without court appearances and with no/minimal client contact)?
9. **Develop an “Adopt-a-Legal-Aid-Office” Program?** Likewise, should MSBA develop a plan and program that would match each of the outstate legal aid programs with one or two large Twin Cities law firms? Should the “sponsoring” law firms be tapped for both time and money?
10. **Other Ideas?**

## **LONG TERM?**

1. **Increased Role for a VLN-Type Organization?** Should MSBA consider sponsoring a metro-wide or statewide organization similar to Volunteer Lawyers Network, for the purpose of recruiting and training volunteer attorneys, screening pro bono cases, matching cases with volunteers, and conducting community outreach? If so, could such an organization be funded and staffed as a joint venture of the Legal Aid Coalition, MSBA, and/or the metro-area County Bar Associations? Could the existing volunteer attorney coordinators in the Legal Aid Coalition programs be joined into such a joint-venture organization? Should and could the existing Volunteer Lawyers Network organization be expanded to meet such a role?
2. **Continue Developing the Business Pro Bono Program.** Development of this project is already underway, under the leadership of Jim Baillie and others.
3. **Develop More Non-Litigation or Litigation-Support (Unbundling) Opportunities?** Should MSBA develop more opportunities similar to Jim Baillie’s Business Law Pro Bono Program, to recruit more attorneys, paralegals and students who prefer to do non-litigation or litigation-support pro bono? If so, should and could such a program focus on directly addressing critical, subsistence-related legal problems, on an either individual or systemic basis? Could more non-litigation and litigation-support tasks be unbundled? Could attorney and paralegal volunteers be used efficiently for administrative and screening tasks?

4. **Reform and Restructure Family Law and Other Related Areas of Law?** Should MSBA form an expert committee to study any and all ways of restructuring Minnesota's family law system and laws, with a focus on reducing the backlog of low-income individuals who need legal representation? Should the committee's task be expanded to take a "holistic" approach, by analyzing related areas of law (*e.g.*, housing law) that may also need reform? Can the committee build on past or existing studies on these issues?
5. **Mandatory Poverty Law CLE During First Three Years?** Should MSBA try to persuade the Minnesota Supreme Court to require a substantial number of continuing legal education in poverty law (or solely family law) during the first three years of an attorney's licensure?<sup>1</sup> If so, should and could the CLE include a "practicum" course in which the attorney must handle a pro bono case? How would such a program be funded and administered? What existing resources could be used to reduce the costs of the CLE program?
6. **Family Law Training Institute?**
7. **CLE Credit for Doing Pro Bono?** Should MSBA persuade the Minnesota Supreme Court to allow attorneys to fulfill a certain amount of their CLE requirements by doing pro bono?
8. **Mandatory Pro Bono?** Should MSBA persuade the Minnesota Supreme Court to require each attorney to provide a certain number of hours of pro bono service each year, as a condition of licensure? Should the judiciary be advised of any legal authority allowing individual judges to mandate attorneys to represent indigent civil parties?
9. **Other Ideas?**

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<sup>1</sup> The goal of such a requirement would be: (a) to reach out to new lawyers immediately after law school -- a critical time in developing good habits; (b) to eliminate the "fear factor" in handling family law or other poverty law matters; and (c) to otherwise nurture the ethic of doing pro bono.