



## FACT SHEET

**Mission:** Probono.net is a nonprofit organization that uses information technology to increase the amount and quality of legal services provided to low-income individuals and communities by public interest and pro bono lawyers. Our mission is to empower legal aid organizations through the use of technology so that they can deliver more and higher quality services to their clients. In addition, our technology is built to promote collaboration. Our goal is for the statewide web sites to be a tool that helps each state build a more integrated justice community.

**Features:** Building on existing platforms probono.net and lawhelp.org, Pro Bono Net has created the new LawHelp template for statewide web sites, which will be used in over twenty states to create integrated statewide access to legal information for both the general public and legal aid advocates. The advocate tools include online libraries of training materials, model pleadings and links, a current news page, a training and events calendar, postings of new cases for volunteers, and member-driven listservs. Both the news and calendar pages allow all users to submit their own articles and events to the site. Public information systems include referrals to legal aid and public interest law offices, community legal education information, self-help information, court pro se materials and links to social service support. Administrative tools allow host organizations to input and update content without the need for a web master or significant technical staff. With tools that we are developing, each state administrator will also be able to create individual organizational web sites and virtual workspaces for task forces and other smaller groups of advocates.

The LawHelp Statewide Web Site Template, which employs Cold Fusion technology and a SQL database, is highly flexible and customizable, allowing for the easy addition of geographic areas, security levels, administrative responsibilities, substantive practice areas, and types of content.

**Usage:** In a little over two years, more than 10,000 lawyers and law students from dozens of major law firms and hundreds of public interest organizations have joined one of the password-protected practice areas on Pro Bono Net. Hundreds of other lawyers regularly access the public resources on the site, and the first public-oriented LawHelp site is in pilot use in New York. The sites now record nearly 20,000 visits by unique users per month. Over 100 individual staff from organizations across the country now serve as administrators and actively manage the content on the site.

**Organizational History:** Founded in 1998 and supported by a number of foundations, Pro Bono Net is a nonprofit organization based in New York City that works in close partnership with pro bono and legal service organizations to develop a set of web-based tools and services that can be used to support networks of legal advocates as well as the clients they serve.

The prototype of the *probono.net* site was launched in March 1999, with two practice areas in New York City. Today the site supports 13 practice areas and serves legal communities in New York, Minnesota, San Francisco, and Washington D.C, as well as supporting national practice areas. In 2000, the *lawhelp.org* site launched to serve the public's legal information needs in New York City.

**Staff and Board:** *Michael Hertz* is the co-founder and President of Pro Bono Net. Hertz began developing Pro Bono Net under an Individual Project Fellowship from the Open Society Institute, George Soros's foundation, in 1998. He is on an indefinite leave of absence from Latham & Watkins, where he is a litigation partner, the former co-chair of the New York office's litigation department, and a member of firm's national pro bono committee.

*Mark O'Brien* is the co-founder and Executive Vice President of Pro Bono Net. He serves as a pro bono consultant to the law firm of Davis Polk & Wardwell, where he worked as pro bono coordinator from 1992 to 1999. He has served on various state and city bar committees dealing with pro bono and legal services issues in New York, and is a member of advisory committee of the University of Pennsylvania Law School Public Service Program.

*Allison McDermott* recently joined Pro Bono Net as a Manager of Program and Evaluation. She will coordinate the implementation of the template by each state. Previously she worked for inMotion, Inc., a domestic violence legal organization in New York City, as an intake/pro bono coordinator as well as the manager of all technology projects. She holds a masters degree in Social Administration from Columbia University School of Social Work.

In addition to Hertz and O'Brien, the Board of Pro Bono Net includes: the chair, *Michael Cooper*, senior partner at Sullivan & Cromwell and former president of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York; *Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg*, author and lawyer; *Michael Mills*, senior technology manager at Davis Polk & Wardwell; *Tanya Neiman*, executive director of the Volunteer Legal Services Program of the San Francisco Bar Association; *Maria Imperial*, executive director of the City Bar Fund; *Red Burns*, founder of the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University; *Walter Callender* of Plural, an internet design and consulting firm; *Richard Gay*, Partner, Communications, Media & Technology Practice, Booz Allen & Hamilton; *Jack London*, partner at Morrison & Foerster and the outgoing Vice-Chair of the California Commission on Access to Justice; and *Bill Pollak*, CEO and Chair of American Lawyer Media Group.

## EXISTING PRO BONO NET PRACTICE AREAS FOR ADVOCATES

### Nationwide Practice Areas ([www.probono.net](http://www.probono.net)):

- **Asylum Law** – co-hosted by Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, MN Advocates for Human Rights and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of San Francisco. *Matched with Davis Polk & Wardwell.*
- **Death Penalty** – hosted by the ABA Death Penalty Representation Project. *Matched with Shearman & Sterling.*
- **Civil Rights** – hosted by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Washington, D.C. *Matched with Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom.*

### New York Practice Areas ([www.probono.net/ny](http://www.probono.net/ny)):

- **Community Development & Nonprofit Law** – hosted by Lawyers Alliance for New York. *Matched with Sullivan and Cromwell.*
- **Criminal Appeals** – hosted by The Legal Aid Society of New York. *Matched with Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison.*
- **Disability Rights** – hosted by New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. *Matched with Schulte Roth & Zabel.*
- **Family Justice/Domestic Violence** – hosted by the New York Legal Assistance Group, Safe Horizon, Sanctuary for Families, and inMotion, Inc. *Matched with Latham & Watkins.*
- **Housing** – hosted by The Legal Aid Society of New York and Legal Services for New York.
- **Rochester** – hosted by Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County. *Matched with Harris, Beech & Wilcox.*
- **September 11<sup>th</sup>** – co-hosted by the Association of the Bar of the City of New York.

### Minnesota Practice Areas ([www.probono.net/mn](http://www.probono.net/mn)):

- **Civil Law** – hosted by the Minnesota State Bar Association and the Minnesota Legal Service Coalition. *Matched with Dorsey & Whitney.*
- **Minnesota Justice Foundation** – hosted by the Minnesota Justice Foundation. *Matched with Dorsey & Whitney.*

### San Francisco Practice Areas ([www.probono.net/sf](http://www.probono.net/sf)):

- **Business Law** – hosted by the Volunteer Legal Services Program of the Bar Association of San Francisco (VLSP/SFBA). *Matched with Silk, Adler & Colvin.*
- **Family Justice** – hosted by VLSP/SFBA. *Matched with Morrison & Foerster*
- **Homeless Advocacy** – hosted by VLSP/SFBA.
- **Housing** – hosted by VLSP/SFBA. *Matched with Morrison & Foerster*

### Washington, DC Advocate Practice Areas (launching in Summer 2002):

- **Community Economic Development** – hosted by the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program. *Matched with Latham & Watkins.*
- **Employment** – hosted by the Employment Justice Center. *Matched with Crowell & Moring.*
- **Family Justice/Domestic Violence** – hosted by the Children's Law Center. *Matched with Piper Marbury Rudnick & Wolfe.*

- **Housing/Homelessness** – hosted by the D.C. Law Students in Court, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, and The Legal Aid Society of Washington, D.C. *Matched with Hogan & Hartson.*
- **Government Benefits** – hosted by Legal Counsel for the Elderly, the Whitman-Walker Clinic, and the Welfare Advocacy Group. *Matched with Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering.*

## LAWHELP CLIENT RESOURCES

### New York City:

- **www.lawhelp.org** – co-hosted by Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Volunteers of Legal Service, Legal Services for New York, and The Legal Aid Society of New York.

### Minnesota:

- **www.lawhelp.org/mn** -- co-hosted by the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition and the Minnesota State Bar Association.

## PRO BONO NET: COMING IN 2002

### Nationwide Advocate Practice Areas:

- **Bankruptcy** – hosted by the ABA Business Law Section and the Consumer Bankruptcy Advocacy Project, Philadelphia, PA.

### States That Received LSC Grants to Implement the LawHelp Template:

- **Alaska** – awarded to Alaska Legal Services Corporation
- **Arizona** – awarded to Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Inc.
- **California** – awarded to California Indian Legal Services
- **Colorado** – awarded to Colorado Legal Services
- **Florida** – awarded to Legal Services of North Florida
- **Georgia** – awarded to Georgia Legal Services Program
- **Hawaii** – awarded to Legal Aid Services of Hawaii (TIG 2000)
- **Illinois** – awarded to Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation
- **Indiana** – awarded to Indiana Legal Services, Inc.
- **Iowa** – awarded to Legal Services Corporation of Iowa
- **Louisiana** – awarded to New Orleans Legal Assistance
- **Michigan** – awarded to Legal Services of Southern Michigan
- **Minnesota** – awarded to Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (TIG 2000)
- **Mississippi** – awarded to North Mississippi Rural Legal Services
- **Montana** – awarded to Montana Legal Services Association
- **Nebraska** – awarded to Nebraska Legal Services
- **New York** – awarded to Legal Services for New York City (TIG 2000)
- **North Carolina** – awarded to Legal Services of North Carolina
- **Oklahoma** – awarded to Legal Aid of Western Oklahoma, Inc.
- **Oregon** – awarded to Oregon Legal Aid Services of Oregon
- **South Carolina** – awarded to Legal Services Agency of Western Carolina
- **Texas** – awarded to Legal Services of North Texas

- **Virginia** – awarded to Blue Ridge Legal Services, Inc.
- **Virgin Islands** – awarded to Legal Services of the Virgin Islands
- **Washington** – awarded to Northwest Justice Project