

**Programs Applying for a Pro Bono Allocation Using Test C  
As Reported by Programs, Updated 07/25/18**

**~~1) Alameda County Bar Volunteer Legal Services~~**

**~~2) Bet Tzedek Legal Services~~**

**3) Casa Cornelia Law Center**

Casa Cornelia's pro bono legal services delivery model consists of in-house legal staff supported by various Volunteer Attorneys, law clerks, interns, administrative volunteers, Volunteer Interpreters and Translators, and other volunteers. The expertise of core in-house legal staff is maximized by having them serve as mentors to Volunteer Attorneys who may not specialize in immigration law, but are able to do the legal work needed to successfully represent Casa Cornelia's clients. Casa Cornelia's direct legal services are supported by the Pro Bono Program, which consists of recruiting, training, and mentoring Volunteer Attorneys from the Private Bar. The Volunteer Interpreters and Translators (VIT) Program falls under the Pro Bono Program and consists of recruiting, training, and mentoring members of the community with foreign language skills to serve as interpreters and translators for Casa Cornelia's diverse client base.

The following statistics demonstrate the impact of Volunteer Attorneys and other volunteers on Casa Cornelia's capacity to provide legal services. In 2017, Casa Cornelia had 516 active volunteer attorneys, law clerks, paralegals, interpreters, and translators – and this group of committed volunteers generated 19,377 hours of service cumulatively. Significantly, the value of contributed services in 2017 surpassed half-million dollars for the first time: \$522,469. After careful examination, it was determined that the number of Volunteer Attorneys assigned to more than one case has also been steadily increasing, demonstrating deeper engagement. Casa Cornelia staff tracked the trend since 2015, when 65 Volunteer Attorneys participated in Casa Cornelia's work. In 2016 that number increased to 88 and in 2017, there were 96 attorneys. Casa Cornelia staff firmly believes that the growth in hours generated by volunteers can be attributed to those volunteer attorneys who volunteer to work on more than one case.

The Volunteer Attorneys not only assisted in cases, but also helped Casa Cornelia conduct legal clinics. In 2017, the Children's Program conducted three legal clinics while Victims of Crime conducted six legal clinics. Legal clinics are an invaluable service to the immigrant community because they offer the community access to advice and counsel, representation and a source to other types of services. Many immigrants have other barriers besides cost when accessing legal services, including limited information on their rights and available forms of relief under the law. With the help of Volunteer Attorneys, Casa Cornelia is able to duplicate its efforts and offer not only critical immigration information and services, but guidance on dealing with other challenges.

The VIT program is critical to the success of the Pro Bono Program and of Casa Cornelia. Ninety-one (91) Volunteer Interpreters and Translators generated 3,065 hours that greatly contributed towards our legal services, but due to the testing table including only attorneys, paralegals and law students, Casa Cornelia's entire legal services hours from our volunteers assisting in legal work are not accurately captured. Clearly, without the volunteer interpreter and translations collaboration with each attorney, the legal services of any attorneys would be completely ineffective, and in fact in some instances impossible. The great majority of the population we serve has limited to no English skills and all legal services provide require translation of documents.

To ensure the sustainability and growth of the Pro Bono Program, the PBP Director collaborated with the Director of Philanthropy in hosting four "Volunteer Appreciation" events. The events were hosted on March 23rd, September 20th, October 24th, and November 30th, 2017. The events had an average of 20 volunteer attendees and were conducted in central San Diego and North County. These engagement opportunities ranged from networking events to informational sessions on rapidly changing immigration law and policy led by Casa Cornelia's executive staff. Social engagement is but a part of cultivating the Pro Bono Program. The PBP Director has been careful to assess the interests, experience, language skills, communication style and comfort level of the Volunteer Attorneys to match them with the appropriate case and client. Correctly assessing hard and soft skills is a great accomplishment by the PBP Director and shows how invested she is in the long-term success of the program and welfare of the client. Similarly, the Volunteer Interpreter and Translator Coordinator trains, mentors and assigns interpreters and translators according to each client and attorney needs. Though the process requires a time investment in the beginning, it serves to reduce the likelihood of VA's dropping cases before the cases are adjudicated. Importantly, it also assigns a well-trained volunteer interpreter and translator to assist in the preparation of each case and client. Fortunately, the PBP assistant, the PBP Director and the VIT Coordinator, are able to dedicate time to this critical piece of the delivery of quality legal services.

#### **~~4) LACBA Counsel for Justice~~**

#### **5) Legal Aid of Sonoma County**

LASC's model is still heavily dependent on volunteers to deliver all of our core services. For example, volunteers do all of our initial client triage. Half of our housing clients receive at least some assistance from volunteer attorneys and law students. This program represents nearly one third of our total client population. Nearly 100% of our guardianship clients are helped ONLY by a volunteer. Volunteers assist nearly EVERY one of our clients in some part of their case.

Our ideal model is still to have core staff anchoring each program and supervising volunteers, but we cannot do this responsibly without increasing our staffing. As an example, we created a staff position to anchor our client intake. But this position is not designed to replace our intake volunteers. Instead, this position now oversees and supervises them, enabling our law students and undergraduates to perform at a higher level and assist clients more effectively. We ask that that Bar not penalize us for attempting to improve the level of supervision we give our volunteers, and the resulting quality of service we provide our clients.

Urban Bias: The ratios the Bar developed are more suited to a program in an urban area. In urban centers there are far more attorneys, and there are many more large law firms. In rural areas, most attorneys are in very small firms or solo practice. This makes it very difficult for them to do pro bono work. In large firms, pro bono is often supported by the firm, even financially. We saw this dichotomy play out yet again when the fires hit our area. Even working directly with a special disaster subcommittee of our local bar association, we found it very difficult to recruit the sustained pro bono assistance we needed to run our disaster clinics. Most of our clinic volunteers came from the urban SF Bay Area and from very large firms.

We believe the ratios favor urban centers and that the Bar should consider adjusting them depending upon the size and composition of the bars in rural areas. A scaled ratio would be more equitable.

Include all program volunteers: The type of hours that count towards the pro bono ratio are overly restrictive. LASC only has one very small law school to draw upon during the academic year, and no large law firms to draw upon, so we use other types of students and community members broadly in our program. Bilingual, bicultural undergraduates, exploring a career in law, are a staple of our intake system; many have gone on to become attorneys because of their experience. Again, the Bar's measurement tool seems to favor urban centers where there are multiple law schools and many firms. We expect our total volunteer hours during the next reporting period to top 6,000 hours. If the Bar considered ALL volunteer hours used to provide client services, LASC would likely qualify.

Increasing diversity in the profession: This is one of the Bar's central goals, especially today. If recruitment and development of a more diverse bar is the goal, we need to start working with students before they get to law school. We would have more impact, by focusing on bilingual bicultural undergraduates who need support, and encouragement, to finish school and pursue legal careers. One key strategy is recruiting them to volunteer or intern as undergraduates. LASC has seen multiple first generation students intern with us, and as a result, go on to law school (several are now working with their communities as lawyers). This is possible because we use these bilingual students as part of our volunteer model. If the Bar allowed rural programs like ours to include bilingual undergraduates in the ratio, we would support diversity in the profession, as well as honoring the important role these students play in helping clients in programs like ours.

**~~6) Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino~~**

**~~7) San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program~~**

**8) San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation**

\*Note, program did not pass threshold requirements but did pass Test B.

With 1.5 FTE paid attorneys last year (one of whom primarily does executive and management functions), the organization was able to deliver 2,151 hours in legal services hours, the majority of which were provided by 16 volunteers operating under the supervision of the paid staff. In 2017, the value of donated civil legal services was \$200,000 which is just slightly less than our entire annual budget.

We are the only organization in this County providing coordinated pro bono services to indigent residents. Volunteer interest is growing; however, we do not have the capacity to take on more volunteers without additional funding to provide the necessary support, training and supervision for our valued volunteers.