



Calling all Lawyers to Reignite our Court's Legal Assistance Program

By the Honorable Judge Catherine Peek McEwen

Perhaps you do not know about a pro bono program administrated by our Court. No, it's not the (very successful) courthouse clinics operated by the local bankruptcy bar associations in our divisions, which clinics provide on-the-spot limited legal advice. Our Court's program is called the Legal Assistance Program (LAP), which provides a longer-term commitment to an indigent client.

The LAP is described on our website here (scroll down past the clinic information): http://www.flmb.uscourts.gov/filing_without_attorney_1/legalAssistance.htm.

Referrals to the legal assistance program are made at the request of the Bankruptcy Judges to whom the bankruptcy case has been assigned or at the written request of the debtor or the spouse/former-spouse of the debtor. Attorneys who have volunteered their services under this program are then contacted for assignment to the adversary proceeding or contested matter.

Basically, we have invited lawyers to sign up to be on rotation to take on representation of indigent debtors in adversary proceedings involving objections and exceptions to discharge and contested matters involving objections to homestead exemptions. The program is also open for a debtor's indigent spouse/ex-spouse to obtain representation for an adversary proceeding involving a domestic support obligation. The indigent party applies for free representation using a form that elicits information about that party's financial condition. If the Clerk assesses the party as eligible for assistance, meaning that the party's income is 200 percent or less of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines, then the Clerk will call one of the lawyers who has signed up to accept pro bono assignments through the program.

Interested lawyers may indicate their willingness to be on rotation by filling in the form available here:

http://www.flmb.uscourts.gov/legal_assistance/volunteer_form.pdf. Once the form is completed, please email it to probono@flmb.uscourts.gov.

The Court thanks the lawyers who are currently on the rotation list:

Arkovich, Christie
Bachman, B. Michael, Jr.
Bair, Jacob
Barnett, Michael
Berman, Steve
Blain, Russell
Blanchard, Jake
Blanton, Laurie
Champeau, Gregory
Chazal, Amanda
Cole, R. John, II
Cole, Richard John, III
Fernandez, Lara
Ferrell-Anton, Becky
Fishman, Steven
Fogarty, Daniel
Freeman, Thaddeus
Glover-Pearcey, Deborah
Gomez, Alberto, Jr.
Hart, Barbara A.
Heptner, Dane
Hooi, Michael
Jenkins, Joryn
Johnston, Richard, Jr.
Keni Oguntebi
Ketchum, Elena
Knize, Peter
Lamoureux, John
Leslie, Stephen R.
Lesser, Carrie Beth
Lewis, Lauren
Lim, Angelina
Maglich, Jordan
Moore, Charles

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Nayee, Karen
Parwani, Rinky
Peterson, Edward J.
Petry, Kelley
Porto, Curran
Postler, Charles
Riedel, Harley
Semach, Jonathan
Sharp, Susan
Sherman, Lynn Welter
Sibley, Russell, Jr.
Sierra, Timothy
Sobotta, Jane
Stichter, Scott
Sumpter-Richard, Miriam
Tolentino, Jonathan
Vaughn, Robert
Villoch, Alfred
Waldman, Damian
Walk, Rochelle Friedman
Wendy DePaul
Wirth, Steven