

**Access to Justice Commission
12th Judicial District Local Pro Bono Committee
Annual Report for the Period
January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009**

I. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION REPRESENTED

12th Judicial District Pro Bono Committee

Chairperson: *The Hon. James W. Counts*
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II. HAS YOUR COMMITTEE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN DEVELOPING PROGRAMS THAT ENABLE ATTORNEYS TO ASSIST YOUR LOW-INCOME POPULATION?

We instituted a referral program from Legal Aid to local attorneys. Legal Aid pre-screens clients for low-income eligibility and then contacts attorneys to accept representation. During Pro Bono Week we enlisted the services of a number of attorneys to present educational programs of interest to low-income personas.

III. HAVE YOU FORMED A VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY POOL FROM A SURVEY OR OTHER TOOL? PLEASE LIST THE NAMES OF ATTORNEYS WHO HAVE PROVIDED PRO BONO SERVICES THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN ONE OF YOUR PROGRAMS.

a. Yes, we conducted a survey of attorneys at the Annual 12th Judicial District Bench and Bar meeting in August, 2009. Those attorneys that responded that they would be willing to provide services formed our Volunteer Attorney Pool.

b. List of attorneys who have taken referrals from Legal Aid:

Kirby Wills	Angie Schneider Cook	Freda McSwane
Miguel Garcia	Ellen Jessen	

c. List of attorneys who gave educational presentations:

William Brogan	JuliAnne Leonard	Ellen Jessen
Duncan Bradley	Adam Rafkin	Raymond Van Arnam
Freda McSwane	Kirby Wills	

IV. HAS YOUR COMMITTEE ATTEMPTED TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS THAT HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN ATTRACTING ASSISTANCE FROM PRO BONO ATTORNEYS?

The Legal Aid referral program has been of very limited success. Only three cases have been accepted by local attorneys in Otero County and five in Lincoln County.

V. PLEASE QUANTIFY THE NUMBER OF YOUR LOW-INCOME POPULATION WHO HAVE BENEFITTED FROM YOUR PROGRAMS.

a. The Legal Aid referral program:

Approximately 10 referrals have been accepted – 7 in Lincoln County and 3 in Otero County. Total persons helped – 24 people in Lincoln County and 10 people in Otero County.

b. The Educational Presentation program:

Approximately 25 people

VI. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST IMPEDIMENT TO SECURING PRO BONO ASSISTANCE FOR YOUR DISTRICT'S LOW INCOME PEOPLE?

The current economic environment is not conducive to attorneys risking involvement in a pro bono case they fear will be protracted and consume too many resources. Additional education of the bar may be necessary to overcome the reluctance to take on pro bono projects.

VII. DO YOU ANTICIPATE YOUR CURRENT PRO BONO PROGRAM TO MAINTAIN ITS CURRENT STATUS AND/OR GROW IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS?

The committee will strive to grow and expand the pro bono program in subsequent years. We are looking for other ways to provide legal services to low-income people. We are considering trying to present monthly educational programs on topics relevant to low-income people. Legal Aid continues to make calls seeking local attorneys to take on representation of low-income clients.

VIII. DID YOUR COMMITTEE PARTICIPATE IN NEW MEXICO PRO BONO WEEK AND IF SO, WERE THE PUBLIC FUNCTIONS SPONSORED THAT WEEK SUCCESSFUL? IF NOT, PLEASE DESCRIBE WHY THE PUBLIC FUNCTIONS WERE NOT SUCCESSFUL. DO YOU INTEND TO INCLUDE SIMILAR FUNCTIONS IN YOUR ON-GOING FUTURE PRO BONO PLANS?

- a. Our committee did participate in New Mexico Pro Bono Week. We organized and presented educational programs on topics relevant to low-income people. We organized a recognition dinner for the presenters and the Pro Bono Committee members.
- b. The public participation was limited.
- c. The Committee believes that we were unsuccessful in getting adequate publicity for the educational programs. We believe we will be able to get better attendance if we are more effective in our publicity efforts. If we have an ongoing series of monthly programs, we feel momentum will build for the educational programs.
- d. As noted above, we intend to pursue an ongoing series of educational programs, probably on a monthly basis.

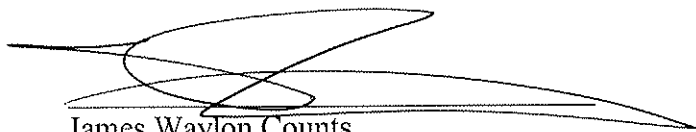
IX. NEW MEXICOPRO BONO WEEK WAS INITIATED AS PART OF THE NATIONAL/1ST ANNUAL CELEBRATE PRO BONO WEEK. WOULD YOU

SUPPORT PARTICIPATION IN ANOTHER NEW MEXICO PRO BONO WEEK?

Our committee would support participation in Pro Bono Week.

- X. ATTACHED ARE FLYERS AND PRESS RELEASES FROM OUR EFFORTS IN 2009.**

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Waylon Counts', written over a horizontal line.

James Waylon Counts
Chief Judge, 12th Judicial District Court
Chair, 12th Judicial District Pro Bono Committee

Where are we?

New Mexico Legal Aid has general services offices in Albuquerque—301 Gold SW; 243-7871

Clovis—400 Pile, Ste 401; 769-2326/(866) 416-1921

Gallup—211 W Mesa;

722-4417/(800) 524-4417

Las Cruces—600 E Montana; 541-4800/(866) 515-7667

Las Vegas—932 Gallinas; 425-3514/(866) 416-1932

Roswell—200 W 1st, Ste 200; 623-9669/(866) 416-1920

Santa Fe—901 W Alameda; 982-9886/(866) 416-1934

Silver City—301 W College; 388-0091/(866) 224-5097

Socorro—406 N Sixth; (575) 322-7100

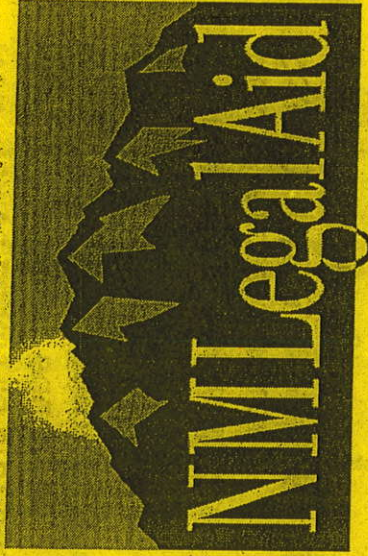
Taos—214C Kit Carson; 758-2218/(800) 294-1823

Native American Program
(505) 867-3391
(866) 505-2371

Migrant Worker Unit—(575) 541-4800/(866) 515-7667

Other resources for those who need legal assistance or information

- www.lawhelpnewmexico.org
- www.nmlegalaid.org
- Law Access New Mexico—free telephone assistance to low-income persons in civil cases (800) 340-9771; (505) 998-4529 Albuquerque www.lawhelp.org
- State Bar of New Mexico LREP (Lawyer Referral for the Elderly Program)—free phone advice for those age 55-59 in Albuquerque area, (505) 797-6005; 55 or older outside Albuquerque area, (800) 876-6657
- Senior Citizens Law Office—free assistance, Albuquerque area for persons 60 and over, (505) 265-2300



www.nmlegalaid.org

New Mexico Legal Aid

**Free legal services
in civil cases for
low-income persons
in New Mexico**



What do we do?

New Mexico Legal Aid provides outreach, training, education, and free legal representation in some kinds of civil cases to low-income persons and communities throughout New Mexico (except San Juan County). NMLA services focus on health, housing, family safety, and the protection of civil rights.

Why do we do it?

It is the mission of New Mexico Legal Aid to advocate for low-income people seeking justice, particularly in securing the necessities of life, preserving their unique cultural heritage, and improving their lives and those of their children. NMLA is dedicated to opening the door to equal access to justice to all New Mexicans throughout the state.

What kinds of cases do we handle?

Here are some examples:

New Mexico Legal Aid gives advice, brief service, and representation to persons with problems obtaining health care, public assistance, and obtaining and keeping safe and affordable housing. It helps people resist unlawful evictions and assists people who have been cheated out of fair wages. NMLA works with people who have been victimized by unlawful trade and collection practices. NMLA works to protect families from domestic violence, helping survivors obtain court orders of protection and child support. NMLA helps protect water and property rights of low-income

New Mexicans who have no other resources.

NMLA represents tribal members on Indian law matters and in tribal courts.

NMLA works with migrant farm workers to protect their safety and their right to fair wages.

NMLA cannot handle traffic or other criminal matters, or cases that private attorneys are willing to take on.

How do you apply for help from NMLA?

To qualify for help, you must have a low income and few assets. Because NMLA's staff is small, it cannot take every case. NOTE: In some types of cases, NMLA can serve only legal U.S. residents. See next page for local offices; call or visit to find out what kind of help is available.