



First National
Pro Bono
Conference

Building Bridges to Justice

NOVEMBER 16–17, 2006

METROPOLITAN HOTEL

TORONTO

PROGRAM

WORKSHOP DETAILS

November 16, 2006

Concurrent Workshops 1: 11:45 am – 1:00 pm

1A. Using Technology to Address Rural/Regional Needs

Addressing unmet legal needs in remote and rural communities presents unique challenges for pro bono programs. There are difficult barriers to overcome such as the lack of available pro bono lawyers in hard-to-reach communities, populations that are spread over a wide geographic area, and a general lack of service delivery infrastructure. In this session, presenters discuss a variety of urban-to-rural pro bono projects and the role that technology can play in improving access to justice in rural and regional communities.

1B. Court-Based Pro Bono Models

Court based pro bono projects create a win-win situation for law firms and low-income unrepresented litigants alike. These litigation projects provide unique and often rare opportunities for junior lawyers to gain valuable court-room experience without necessarily carrying whole pro bono files. Low-income litigants, in turn, benefit tremendously from the access to advice and brief services. Panelists will discuss the court-based pro bono projects with which they are involved and focus on the nuts and bolts of starting and administering them.

1C. Engaging Corporate Lawyers for the Public Good: Models for a Business Law Practice

Contrary to what most people may think, pro bono is not just for litigators. Business law pro bono projects can take surprising shapes and forms from providing one-off services to local charities, to supporting the arts, to engaging in major community-economic development projects in partnership with in-house counsel of corporate clients. Panelists will discuss the business law pro bono projects at their firms and will focus on the logistics of starting and administering these projects.

1D. Global Pro Bono Opportunities

If there is one thing this conference demonstrates it is that pro bono does not have to be local. This session provides an introduction to international pro bono for Canadian law firms. Speakers will focus on successful models for litigation and corporate law practices, existing opportunities and nuts-and-bolts issues to get firms started.

Concurrent Workshops 2: 2:15 pm – 3:30 pm

2A. Pro Bono Policy Development and Best Practices for Large and Mid-Sized Firms

Often one of the greatest challenges for large and mid-size firms is moving from wanting to engage in pro bono activities to actually providing pro bono legal services to those in need. Panelists will discuss some best practices that will help large and mid-sized firms implement effective pro bono programs that make the best use of their time and resources. Topics will include developing a pro bono policy (and why every firm should have one); dos and don'ts for pro bono projects, and ways that firms can find the right groups to partner with.

2B. Discrete Service Pro Bono Programs

Developing limited pro bono services such as court room duty counsel programs or summary advice clinics and hotlines can be an effective way to address unmet legal needs while taking into consideration many lawyers' legitimate concerns about the time and resources required to participate in pro bono activities. This session will focus on a variety of discreet service pro bono programs. Panelists will discuss how they utilize pro bono lawyers, including sole practitioners, and what makes their respective projects successful.

2C. Pro Bono Children's Projects

Pro bono projects aimed at addressing the unmet legal needs of children can provide some of the most effective and rewarding opportunities for law firms. In this session, speakers representing law firms, public service organizations, and pro bono coordinators will discuss some of the pro bono opportunities available to law firms and ways to implement signature pro bono projects that serve children and youth.

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Concurrent Workshops 3: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

3A. Government Pro Bono: Opportunities and Best Practices

Government lawyers are some of the most civically minded members of the legal profession. In addition, they are knowledgeable on a wide variety of areas of law making them well suited to address the myriad unmet legal needs of low income and disadvantaged Canadians. Panelists will discuss the need for more government agencies to get involved in pro bono, the steps required to organize a government agency pro bono project, and the surprising array of pro bono opportunities available to this section of the profession.

3B. Law Association Partnerships with Legal Clinics and Community Groups

Community groups and legal clinics are ideal partners for law firms and law associations looking to get involved in pro bono activities. They are already positioned to identify unmet need, reach out to the community, and provide a screening and referral mechanism. In this session panelists discuss ways that law firms can get connected with these groups and improve the variety and quality of services that these important organizations can offer their clients.

3C. Law Student Pro Bono

Pro bono programs in Canada's law schools are helping create some of the future's best lawyers. Panelists discuss law school pro bono programs and focus on the variety of opportunities and ways that law firms and law associations can support these programs and leverage their commitment to pro bono during recruitment season.