

Pro Bono Committee, Business Law Section
Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2018, 8:30-9:30am
Florida Bar Annual Meeting
Hilton Bonnet Creek, Orlando, Florida

Meeting was called to order by John Macdonald, Committee Chair, at 8:31 a.m.

- I. Introductions of all Attendees and BLS Fellows**

- II. Reading of Mission Statement**
 - a. Mr. Macdonald read the Mission Statement of the Pro Bono Committee:
The mission of the Pro Bono Committee is to achieve 100% participation in pro bono service by Business Law Section members and attorneys in their firms.

- III. Old Business**
 - a. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held January 18, 2018, were unanimously approved.

- IV. Ongoing Projects**
 - a. **Report from Claud Nelson – Florida Bar Foundation**
 - i. Florida Pro Bono Matters Portal
 - 1. The website now includes 34 counties, 28 practice areas, and over 400 cases. 335 people have submitted interest forms through the Portal.
 - 2. Transactional type matters are the most in demand, like wills.
 - 3. The provider organization chooses which matters to post, and can upload from their own website/database.
 - 4. The Portal is adding advanced search options.
 - 5. The Portal also offers a “chatbot” – where attorneys input name, Bar number, geographic area, and types of cases of interest – then it will automatically text them when those cases become available; updated daily.
 - 6. The Florida Bar is working on marketing clips that will debut in October 2018; promotional campaign includes Instagram photos and video montage.
 - 7. Giacomo Bossa offers pros and cons based on his experience using Portal:
 - a. Pros: You get to see the cases that are out there, and see that some training is available in certain areas, like immigration. It also helps reduce the “cost” (time and effort) of initial involvement.
 - b. Cons: Feedback/response time from organizations once you submit an interest form. You don’t get an email record about what you signed up for and the response email, which could come well after you signed up, doesn’t necessarily say details about the case.
 - 8. Mr. Nelson reports that Florida Bar did a survey to get feedback on Portal, and the feedback/response time from providers was one of the issues that came out of the survey.

- a. It is suggested that the description block of the case could be added to the response email.
- ii. What can the Pro Bono Committee do to help the provider organizations?
 - 1. Karen Ladis of Dade County Legal Aid:
 - 1. She explains that on the provider end, they have to stop what they are doing to respond to someone who is interested. They are participating in the Portal but have their own program to run (the “Put Something Back” program).
 - 2. She notes that Put Something Back had to cut staff but still has to meet the same demands and monitor cases and screen them and etc., which negatively impact their response time.
 - ii. Group Suggestions:
 - 1. Providers could drop cases after 3 months, as a case’s lengthy time on the Portal may discourage someone from participating; Dade County tries to refresh every month (sunset-ing)
 - 2. Maybe limit the number of cases for each organization.
 - 3. Claud Nelson says each provider is different, the best approach is to call the program and ask about their needs and/or give feedback, and it may be better to come from the private Bar rather than the Foundation.
 - 4. Ultimately, the provider should view Portal as a marketing tool for the underlying programs.
 - 5. Mark Stein: Would it help to try to do some promotions via blast emails? We have good penetration throughout state via the BLS.
 - 6. We could also put together the organizations in each geographic area/county that members of this committee could volunteer to be liaisons (including pro bono coordinator in each area of the state) and find out how we can promote them.
 - 7. Karen Ladis: Dade County will add more business-related cases to the Portal since they are learning of that demand.
 - iii. Karen Ladis adds that the programs they have developed in Dade County are replicable in other areas.

Bar Leadership visits at 9:03am.

Announces Michael Chesal as incoming BLS Chair. Jay Brown is Chair-Elect.
 Israel will be the site of 2019 Executive Council Retreat.
 Wants suggestions for updating and refreshing the webpage.

b. Report from Florida Bar Standing Committee on Pro Bono by Judge Isicoff

- 1. Standing committee continues to look at different issues across the state; nothing specific to report.

c. Website Content / BLS Blasts

- i. Pro Bono blurbs for BLS blast e-mails to members
 - 1. How do we ensure that we’ve got the content?

- a. Content, in addition to updating the website, could provide information about different organizations local - little blurb about different “business type” opportunities, pointing out that attorneys can go on Florida Bar Foundation and find case opportunities; show a couple of examples or teasers.
 - b. Could set up a direct link to ask attorneys how to sign up for business opportunities?
2. Potential content for Blasts:
- a. Feature someone’s experience and a different programs each month
 - b. Provide one case opportunity in an email “Have you done your pro bono today?”
 - c. Give one opportunity in an email and link to others
 - d. Offer more prizes for contests.
 - e. Use tracking on email to collect data about how often they are opened or clicked on links.
 - i. The Foundation used “mail chimp” to track emails and link clicks; it is not difficult to set up.
 - f. Judge Isicoff could draft a letter to all members of the business law section and highlight all the new developments, like she did the letter for Florida Pro Bono Matters. We could ask federal and state court judge to co-write a letter that could be sent out to all members of the BLS.
 - g. Plan is to send out 1 BLS Blast a month and track data about who is opening the emails.
3. It is requested and recommended that everyone should take time to look at our website and provide feedback on improvements; how to best highlight the Portal link, highlight Florida Rules changes impacting pro bono, and highlight the Best Practices Policy.

V. New Business

a. First Annual BLS Embrace a Case Challenge

- 1. Email blast reminders have been sent, and another blast will be sent during Bar Convention.
- 2. So far only a couple of people have signed up for cases, but more people seem to be aware of the Portal.

b. Topics not discussed due to lack of time:

- i. Scheduling of Telephonic Meetings
- ii. Publicize and Promote Best Practices Guide for a Firm Pro Bono Policy
- iii. Use of Money in BLS Budget

Announcement for next meeting at the BLS Annual Retreat in Bonita Springs.

Mr. Macdonald adjourned the meeting at 9:33am.