

# Administrative Office of the Courts

ACCESS TO JUSTICE DEPARTMENT  
2001 E/F COMMERCE PARK DRIVE  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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## Special Conditions for FY2017 Maryland Courts Self-Help Center Pro Bono Grants

The following additional conditions apply to FY2017 Maryland Courts Self-Help Center Pro Bono Grant(s).

### 1. FUNDING PERIOD **\*NEW\***

The grant period is for 11 months, from August 1, 2016 until June 30, 2017. Grantee(s) must reapply for grant funding for subsequent years.

### 2. SCOPE OF WORK

Grantee(s) shall recruit, train and supervise pro bono attorneys who will provide services, via phone and live chat, to self-represented litigants in collaboration with each other and the vendor who manages day-to-day operation of the Maryland Courts Self-Help Center (MCSHC). Pro bono lawyers will complement paid staff and provide additional capacity during peak demand times. Pro bono attorneys will assist self-represented litigants in the following case types, among others:

- Landlord/Tenant
- Small Claims
- Debtor/Creditor
- Replevin/Detinue
- Domestic Violence/Peace Orders
- Child Access /Visitation
- Child Support
- Child in Need of Assistance
- Custody
- Divorce
- Emergency Evaluations
- Expungements
- Foreclosure
- Guardianship
- Juvenile
- Mandamus
- Name Change
- Paternity
- Shielding /Sealing of Court Records
- Termination of Parental Rights
- Truancy

- **Recruiting:** Grantee(s) shall develop a recruitment plan, make ongoing efforts to engage new volunteers, and publicize incentives to volunteers via targeted messaging.

**\*NEW\*** Grantee(s) shall recruit pro bono lawyers to supplement existing staff attorneys during peak hours of 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday – Friday. Grantee(s) shall work with MCSHC vendor to determine if coverage is needed for additional shifts. Grantee(s) must state the number of hours for which they are willing to assume responsibility per week.

- **Training:** Training pro bono lawyers is essential to ensure consistency of services at the MCSHC. Volunteers must be knowledgeable in the areas of law that the MCSHC serves as well as non-substantive topics like collecting and reporting data and making referrals to social service organizations, county and local government agencies and organizations that provide free and low cost representation. Grantee(s) shall work together and collaborate with the vendor to ensure pro bono lawyers are suitably trained.

- **Supervision:**

- **Scheduling:** The MCSHC is open from 8:30am until 8pm weekdays, excluding court holidays. Grantee(s) shall coordinate with each other and the vendor to ensure pro bono coverage for days and times that staff lawyers cannot meet demand. This may be during peak times of day or if staff lawyers are unavailable.
- **Quality control:** Grantee(s) should monitor pro bono lawyers to make sure consistent and correct information is given to litigants and that referrals are made to appropriate entities.
- **Data Reporting:** Data collection is an integral part of this program. Grantee(s) must train pro bono lawyers on how to collect and report data from the self-represented litigants they serve. Grantee(s) must actively manage both collection and reporting and remit data to the AOC monthly by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the following month.
- **Malpractice insurance:** Grantee(s) shall ensure pro bono lawyers are covered by malpractice insurance.

### 3. GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantee(s) will report data, regarding the recruitment, training and supervision of pro bono lawyers, quarterly via forms and spreadsheets provided by the Access to Justice Department. Reports are due by email no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> day after the close of the quarter. Quarters end: September 30, December 30, March 30, and June 30.

Grantee(s) must also actively manage data collection and reporting of data that pro bono attorneys collect from self-represented litigants. This data must be remitted to the AOC monthly by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month using data collection methods already in place.

### 4. GEOGRAPHY

The Judiciary aims to engage pro bono lawyers from throughout the state. Grantee(s) shall specify from which geographical area of the state they will recruit. Multiple grants may be awarded.

### 5. DELIVERY METHOD

Pro bono lawyers may choose to provide services via phone or live chat. Grantee(s) will work with the Access to Justice Department to ensure routing telephone calls and chats to pro bono lawyers is seamless to MCSHC users.

### 6. COLLABORATION

Grantee must work with the vendor who manages day-to-day operation of the (MCSHC) to ensure consistency of service, training and scheduling. If multiple grants are awarded, grantees must work together, and with the vendor. Grantee(s) are encouraged to collaborate with the local bar and local pro bono committees.

**7. LANGUAGE ACCESS**

Grantee(s) must utilize telephonic interpretation services to assist individuals with limited English proficiency. Costs will be paid by the Judiciary.