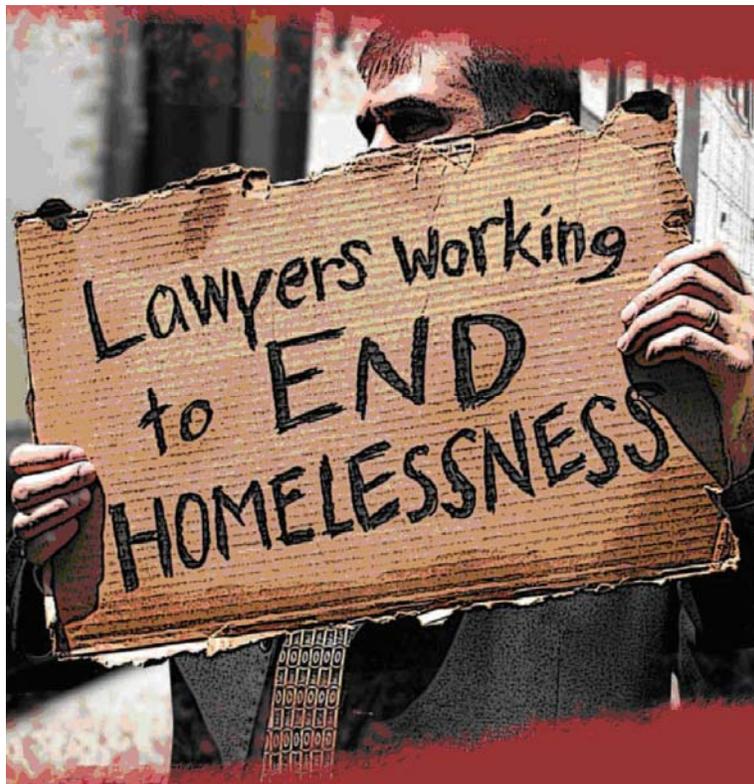


**ABA Law Student Division
2007 Work-A-Day Community Service Program**

**Law Students Fighting Homelessness:
Project H.E.L.P.
(Homeless Experience Legal Protection)**



ABA Law Student Division

**Work-A-Day Community Service Program
October 2007**



ABA Law Student Division Public Interest Committee Members

Paula Shapiro, Chair

11th Circuit Governor
Catholic University of America -
Columbus School of Law
(Washington, DC)
paula.shapiro@abanet.org

Heather R. Devan, Vice Chair

10th Circuit Governor
Oklahoma City University School of Law
(Oklahoma City, OK)
heather.devan@abanet.org

Nate Bernstein

Representative to the ABA Board of Governors
Seattle University School of Law
(Seattle, WA)
bernstn@seattleu.edu

Christian Dubuche

2nd Circuit Governor
Touro Law School
(New York, NY)
cdubuche@yahoo.com

Jacob Karczewski

12th Circuit Governor
Seattle University School of Law
(Seattle, WA)
karczewski@seattleu.edu

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Governors Pro Bono Committee for all their hard work and effort:
Patrick Boice, Chair; Nicholus Sikora; and Hannah Lee.**

**ABA Law Student Division
2007 Work-A-Day Community Service Program**

A Message from the Committee

Dear ABA Law Student Division Member,

This year the theme for Work-A-Day is **“Law Students Fighting Homelessness: Project H.E.L.P. (Homeless Experience Legal Protection).”** The Law Student Division is very excited about this year’s theme and we are eager to help law schools implement programs accordingly.

Together, we can address the legal issues of vulnerable individuals and families through education, assistance, and prevention. Work-A-Day is an event that encourages law students to get involved in their community and give back to the community in which they live. We selected homelessness this year because it involves issues that affect every community.

We have created a tool-kit to jump-start the development of your Work-A-Day programming. In the tool-kit you will find resources, statistics and sample program ideas to help you implement a program that fits your community’s needs.

If you have any questions or you would like to get more involved, please contact your circuit governor or any of the public interest committee members.

Sincerely,

Paula Shapiro

Paula Shapiro
2007-2008 Chair
Public Interest Committee

**ABA Law Student Division
2007 Work-A-Day Community Service Program**

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ABA Law Student Division 2007 Work-A-Day Community Service Program

What Is Work-A-Day?

Each year, the ABA Law Student Division Public Interest Committee chooses a Work-A-Day initiative in which law students from across the country can work together to address an issue of public interest. This year the Committee has chosen **“Law Students Fighting Homelessness: Project H.E.L.P. (Homeless Experience Legal Protection)”** as the theme for all Work-A-Day programs.

Law schools and students are encouraged to create activities and events during the **month of October** to address the legal needs and education of youth. The Law Student Division provides this Tool Kit to help get you started, but please feel free to be creative in designing programs that target specific issues in your community.

This program is a meaningful way for **law students to give back** to the community and raise awareness about important issues in our society and the legal system. The Law Student Division encourages all students and schools to get involved by implementing a Work-A-Day initiative this October. Your community will be all the better for it.

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Getting Started

Create a Committee

- The first step in developing a successful Work-A-Day initiative is to create a planning committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and students which is charged by your school organization or administration with developing and implementing a plan for a successful “**Law Students Fighting Homelessness: Project H.E.L.P. (Homeless Experience Legal Protection)**” campaign.
- It is important that you put together a diverse team, council, or committee of the proper size. Some experts say that more than 10 or 15 members can be counterproductive. Remember that inclusion is better than exclusion. Find a way for willing individuals to participate. It is important to create a broad base of participation.

Determine the Objective

- The committee should define its overall objective. Do you want to reach out to the students in your school, the community, families in the community or a combination of all three? Consider whether your main objective is to disseminate information, fund-raising or hands-on contact through an organization. It could be a combination of all these things or something we haven’t even mentioned.
- Support for your public interest initiatives from all levels of the law school is important, but support from administration is critical. If you are interested in accomplishing multiple tasks, consider creating teams co-chaired by members of the administration. This allows the committee to have authority and legitimacy while serving as an advisory role for the administration.

For a public interest plan to be successful it must have two components: (1) it must be measurable and (2) there must be accountability. Committees help create accountability. The committee should develop a scorecard that helps track their progress and aids in reporting to school administrators. The committee might also want to consider the use of personnel evaluations to reflect and refine the school’s future short and long-term public interest goals.

An example of a reporting device or scorecard can be found on the ABA LSD website, www.abanet.org/lsd/work-a-day/.

Make a Plan

- If your goal is to incorporate public service at your law school on a long-term basis, the length of your committee's plan will be critical. Although it is important to develop a plan that will provide long-term sustainable change, it is also important to have some short-term accomplishment to create momentum. In this case, a plan could be designed for 12 to 18 months. You could then create quarterly checkpoints for consistent follow-up.
- If your objective is to create a campaign for only the short term, then your plan should include those goals that you decide are most important for Work-A-Day 2007. Again, developing a plan that will include achievable goals is important to entice momentum for future campaigns. Create a time line to include checkpoints for reviewing your progress throughout the planning process.
- Education is critical for the success of any initiative. The committee might want to develop a "At Risk for Homelessness Handbook" or PowerPoint presentation for faculty, staff, and students to review.
- For any Public Interest Committee to be successful, its champions must be recognized. Give out awards and show how serious the law school considers the furtherance of public interest within its walls and in the communities surrounding your institution.

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Tips for Success

When planning your event, here are some ideas to keep in mind that will help your hard work pay off and ensure that your attendees will leave the program appreciating a unique experience.

1. When seeking presenters (faculty, staff or practitioners) for your educational programs, try to bring in individuals who represent different ethnic groups, gender, and lifestyles. This can help your school to make contact with people who represent diverse backgrounds.
2. When advertising your “**Law Students Fighting Homelessness: Project H.E.L.P. (Homeless Experience Legal Protection)**” initiatives, use creative, quality publicity. Try to use titles that students can easily understand and that specifically identify the topic of the program.
3. Use bulletin boards to demonstrate the legal issues associated with homelessness and poverty. While the issues you have selected are being highlighted on the board, offer programs or study breaks that highlight the messages you are attempting to convey.
4. When planning activities make a commitment not to “mask” the issues or bury your initial intent by focusing on entertaining attendees. Bring the issues to the forefront of your event.
5. There is a fine line between providing the facts and initiating a shock effect, which is something you want to avoid. Remember, your objective is to create a life-long passion for your cause not shocking your audience into short-term action.
6. Plan early. Promote your event in the law school and in the community in order to provide maximum attendance and create a link between the law school and the community it occupies.
7. When sponsoring a symposium or roundtable, provide time at the end for attendees to meet and mingle. Having the opportunity to speak casually with featured speakers is important to students.
8. Consider contacting local homeless shelters or other organizations that focus on the rights of homeless people. One way to institute a meaningful and sustainable project is to offer your school’s help to these organizations.

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Avoiding the Pitfalls

In constructing a Work-A-Day event, it is important to develop your programs in a way that makes everyone feel included. There are many common mistakes that student leaders inadvertently make which could hinder their hard work. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you plan your event.

1. Check the calendar to prevent scheduling your event to coincide with any religious observance that may exclude some members of your school or community.
2. Be sure to be inclusive. Provide means and accessibility to community members with disabilities. Include a diverse mixture of individuals as speakers and invited guests in your activities and publicity.
3. The scope and publicity of your event should convey an open invitation to all and entice interest in your cause. If you are planning a fund-raiser in the evening, consider a family event. If it is a luncheon in the afternoon to debate the issues, consider creating an atmosphere that will entice a lively forum instead of talking-heads.
4. Avoid mottos or program titles that may be misconstrued as insensitive.
5. In your publicity, you want to encourage interest. Don't guilt your audience into attending. While you want to bring your cause to the forefront of your event, you also want to generate genuine enthusiasm and give your audience a sense of being part of the solution. This can be accomplished whether you are having a community fair to raise money or a forum to debate the issues.
6. Attempt to have things donated by your local bar associations, community groups, law firms, businesses, etc. In addition to thank you letters, be sure to give them credit for their support of your event by acknowledging them in a program or with signs thanking them publicly for the amenities they have so graciously provided.
7. Don't be afraid to ask other organizations at your institution to participate even if they're not part of your law school.

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Issues Facing Homeless

The following is a sample of the obstacles that homeless face in their daily lives. This is not meant as an exhaustive list – some of these obstacles will be more or less relevant to your community. Feel free to use these issues or other issues you may come across in your homeless research in developing a specific Work-A-Day program that fits the needs of your community.

- The deprivation of rights, respect, dignity, and equal treatment for people who are homeless;
- The criminalization of people who are homeless, which includes sweeping them off the streets and burdening them with multiple citations for misdemeanors;
- The lack of available and adequate education, transportation, medical assistance, health insurance, child care, temporary housing, food, and clothing for people who are homeless;
- The impact of mental health issues and substance abuse problems on people who are homeless;
- The impact of domestic violence and physical, mental, and sexual abuse of people who are homeless;
- The inability to obtain identification for people who are homeless;
- Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY), zoning, permitting, and other land use restraints;
- The lack of available property locations;
- The marketplace economics related to developing and purchasing adequate permanent housing; and
- The absence of financing, tax assistance, and other forms of financial incentives for the creation of adequate permanent housing.

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Project Ideas for Your Campus

The Public Interest Committee is pleased to provide you with some suggestions and quick ideas for student leaders at law schools to organize on their campus. We encourage you to read more on our website (www.abanet.org/lsd/work-a-day/). These ideas are by no means all inclusive. If you or the students at your school have other thoughts for this theme we welcome you to share them with us.

- Work with local attorneys or law enforcement to sponsor talks on the legal system and how it effects homeless individuals
- Collect stuffed animals and other items to be given to comfort children arriving at homeless shelters
- Raise money or do a volunteer drive for a community assistance group or program
- Distribute informational materials to schools on legal issues and how to contact local programs
- Team up with a local legal aid center and ask how law students can contribute
- Hold a symposium on the unmet legal needs indigent defendants face by inviting local counsel specializing in low income legal matters
- Organize an auction for donated items and give proceeds to a legal aid organization, shelter or soup kitchen
- Plan a benefit party with all proceeds going to a welfare agency
- Hold a symposium on issues of indigent defendants in the legal system
- Conduct a skills building course on effective communication with economically challenged clients
- Invite a speaker to talk about domestic violence issues and how it effects families with regard to homelessness and poverty among women and children
- Contact your local bar association and assist in creating and organizing a CLE program on lawyers and students against homelessness
- Assist a local organization in recruiting professionals to serve as mentors to homeless children
- Begin a tutoring program with a local school for homeless children
- Create a public awareness campaign on concerns surrounding the homeless
- Author an article for your school newsletter on the concerns the poor in the legal system face
- Display articles written by faculty and students highlighting issues of homelessness and poverty in America
- Hold a writing contest on issues facing homeless children in the legal system
- Create and sponsor an award given to local attorneys striving to address the plight of the homeless and displaced
- Present a PowerPoint on legal issues involving homelessness and poverty to students of all ages
- Conduct a renters/conviction clinic for education and relief from convictions
- Assist the elderly at a high risk of being the victims of financial predators due to diminished capacity and slum lords
- Join forces with a bar association or other organization to find out how law students can assist in taking the law to the streets, the courts to shelters and bring the homeless back to society
- Work with local shelters in your community to create a procedure to be applied if a person does not have a certified copy of identification on file in the shelter and then help implement those ideas
- Provide legal consultation (if your state allows it) and notary services to the homeless

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Statistics

Below are statistics to demonstrate the status quo regarding homelessness and poverty in the United States. For a complete reference for such statistics, please visit the American Bar Association Division for Media Relations and Public Affairs.

- Over a five-year period, about 2-3 percent of the U.S. population (5-8 million people) will experience at least one night of homelessness.
- According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, 1.35 million U.S. children are homeless on any given night. (2000)
- Families are now the fastest growing segment of the homeless population, accounting for almost 39 percent of the nation's homeless. (2000)
- The average age of a homeless person in the U.S. is 9 years old.
- Forty-one percent of homeless children are under the age of five.
- Nearly 20 percent of homeless children lack a regular source of medical care.
- Fourteen percent of homeless children are diagnosed with learning disabilities - double the rate of other children.
- Twenty-one percent of homeless children repeat a grade because of frequent absence from school.
- Within a single school year, forty-one percent of homeless students attend two different schools, 28 percent attend three or more.
- For children and youth identified as homeless by State Departments of Education, 35% lived in shelters, 34 percent lived doubled up with family or friends and 23% lived in motels or other locations.
- Single men comprise 44 percent of the homeless, single women 13 percent, and unaccompanied minors seven percent.
- The homeless population is about 50 percent African-American, 35 percent white, 12 percent Hispanic, 2 percent Native American and 1 percent Asian.
- Twenty-one percent received income from family members or friends.
- Sixty-six percent of the homeless have problems with alcohol, drug abuse, or mental illness.
- Twenty-two percent of homeless have been physically assaulted.
- Seven percent of homeless have been sexually assaulted.
- Thirty-eight percent of homeless say someone stole money or things directly from them.
- Thirty percent of homeless have been homeless for more than two years.
- A federal incidence study on runaway children (1999 data) estimated that over 123,000 children annually run away or are forced out of their homes for between one and six months at a time. Within this statistic is an incalculable number of youth who are "thrown away" - that is, their parent(s) have asked or forced them to leave home and have not allowed them to return.
- Annually, approximately 165,000 (2000 data) children are the subject of juvenile court "status offender" petitions. These youth are brought before the court not because they have committed an act of delinquency, but because they are missing school, run away from home, are allegedly 'beyond the control' of their parents, etc.

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Helpful Websites and Resources

ABA Commission on Homelessness and Poverty - <http://www.abanet.org/homeless>

Charged with: (1) Educating members of the bar and the public about legal and other problems of poor and homeless people and ways in which lawyers can assist in solving or ameliorating them; (2) training lawyers in areas needed to provide pro bono legal assistance to homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless; (3) working with all ABA entities on issues arising in their jurisdiction that affect poor and homeless people; and (4) engaging in such further activities necessary and proper for the fulfillment of these responsibilities, including working with state and federal executive branches and legislative bodies concerning matters relating to the poor and homeless.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - <http://www.hud.gov/homeless>

HUD funds programs to help the homeless and provides a range of services, including shelter, food, counseling, and job skills programs. Provides information for homeless, homeless veterans, Homeless Assistance Providers, and other resources for individuals interested in getting involved with homelessness.

National Coalition for Homelessness - <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>

National network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to ending homelessness by creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to prevent and end homelessness. Works to meet the immediate needs of those currently or at risk of becoming homeless.

NCH Fact Sheet: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts.html>

National Alliance to End Homelessness - <http://www.endhomelessness.org/>

Nonpartisan, mission-driven organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States as a leading voice on the issue of homelessness. Analyzes policy and develops pragmatic, cost-effective policy solutions. Works collaboratively with public, private, and nonprofit sectors to build state and local capacity, leading to stronger programs and policies to help communities achieve their goal of ending homelessness. Provide data and research to policymakers and elected officials to inform policy debates and educate the public and opinion leaders nationwide.

United Way - <http://national.unitedway.org/211/index.cfm>

The 2-1-1 System connects people with needed human services through an easy to remember three-digit phone number, the web and a variety of community interactions. When someone connects with 2-1-1, specially trained information and referral specialists analyze what services are needed and provide the appropriate resource and related information. Currently more than 65% of the U.S. population has access to 2-1-1, with more systems going live each month.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Disaster Preparedness

<http://www.ready.gov/america/npm07/index.html>

During September, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Preparedness Month Coalition will urge all Americans to take some simple steps to make themselves and their families better prepared for emergencies.

Just Neighbors - <http://www.justneighbors.net/toolkit/index.html>

Designed to raise awareness of the root causes of poverty and homelessness. Brings to its participants a deep understanding of the reality of poverty and a deep empathy for people living in poverty. Congregations, nonprofit organizations, colleges, universities, and high schools are using the program to change attitudes, to recruit volunteers, and to empower them as advocates for their neighbors in need.

Stand Up for Kids - <http://www.standupforkids.org/>

Assists homeless and street kids in cities across America through volunteers who go to the streets in order to find, stabilize and otherwise help homeless and street kids improve their lives.

National Center for Homeless Education - www.nationalhomeless.org

Provides a listing for local homeless coalitions.

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (Lawyers Working to End Homelessness) - <http://www.nlchp.org/>

Attempts to prevent and end homelessness by serving as the legal arm of the nationwide movement to end homelessness by pursuing three main strategies: (1) impact litigation, (2) policy advocacy, and (3) public education.

RESULTS - <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=275>

Grassroots volunteers and dedicated individuals committed to accomplishing an end to persistent hunger and the devastating impact of poverty. Volunteers work in groups across the U.S. to change public policy through phone calls, letters, and face-to-face meetings with public officials. Take action by educating the public and elected officials about the issues of hunger and poverty in order to make them a national and international priority. About half of the grassroots groups work on domestic issues and half work global hunger and poverty issues.

Homeless Court Program (HCP)

Endorsed by the ABA House of Delegates, this program is designed to assist a homeless individual's transition from the streets to self-sufficiency by removing legal barriers (like outstanding warrants) and providing essential services such as housing, treatment and public benefits.

Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP) - www.altrue.net/site/hprp

A non-profit legal service provider has created special projects such as providing legal help to homeless workers trapped in the temporary worker industry.

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Existing Programs and Models

Street Youth Legal Advocates of Washington (SYLAW) - www.sylaw.org

This organization provides legal assistance to as many as 2,000 street youth in the greater Seattle area, ranging from the ages of 12 to 24. The group was started by a group of law students at the University of Washington School of Law. The project allows law student volunteers to provide legal information and referrals to the homeless youth. SYLAW partners with existing resources to provide outreach and legal education. For example, twice a month, students ride along with Streelinks, an outreach van that provided basic services to street youth in Seattle.

H.E.L.P. (Homeless Experience Legal Protection) - Contact Judge Zainey to receive a copy of the HELP manual. jay_zainey@laed.uscourts.gov

This program offers legal consultation services and notary services to the homeless. H.E.L.P works with law students, law schools, practitioners, judges and other community members to help obtain new I.D.'s for the homeless, obtain birth certificates when a person has no identification, and help with obtaining Social Security benefits for the homeless.

Seattle Housing and Resource Effort and the Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League (SHARE/WHEEL)

This group formed to advocate for the rights of Seattle's homeless population. Their work includes: challenging the city for implementing anti-homeless sidewalk sitting ordinance and taking on the United States Postal Service for its unfair treatment of people who are homeless.

El Centro de la Raza - www.elcentrodelaraza.com

Provides services in a culturally competent manner to Latino and other low-income families and individuals of all ages so that they may develop self-sustainability and may more fully participate in society. Assists the homeless by setting up tents on the organization's grounds in order for the homeless to have a place to sleep. This organization has evolved into Tent Cities, where the tents are moved around the city and even around the country serving the homeless' needs.

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) - www.naehcy.org

Organization of educators dedicated to supporting the school enrollment and success of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The members of this organization are attempting to end homelessness and the cycle of poverty, one student at a time.

Note: The organizations listed above are not endorsed by the ABA Law Student Division, but merely provided as a resource for students for their Work-A-Day activities.

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Sources of Funding

In addition to your law school and affiliated organizations, there are sources within the ABA that can provide funding for your program or a fellowship dealing with homelessness.

ABA John J. Curtin, Jr. Fellowship Fund Fellowship Program-

www.abanet.org/homeless/curtin.html

The John J. Curtin, Jr. Justice Fund, a permanent endowment in the American Bar Association Fund for Justice and Education. The ABA Board of Governors approved the use of the income from the Justice Fund to provide stipends to law students working to help homeless and indigent people. The Curtin Justice Fund Legal Internship Program is managed jointly by the ABA Commission on Homelessness and Poverty and the Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants. The Program will pay a \$2,500 stipend to students who spend the summer months working for a bar association or legal services program designed to prevent homelessness or assist homeless or indigent clients or their advocates. The Legal Internship Program will provide much-needed legal assistance to organizations serving the under-represented and give students direct experience in a public interest forum. Through this, it aims both to help homeless clients and to encourage careers in the law which further the goals of social justice

ABA Law Student Division Grant Program- www.abanet.org/lsd/grant

The ABA Law Student Division, through its Grant Program, provides financial and program support to student organizations of ABA-approved law schools to establish programs and other activities that emphasize diversity, ethics, professionalism training and public interest/service activities. The Grant program is designed to assist law school groups that implement new programs. The Grant Fund is not intended to support fundraisers, to be used as a source for donating to charitable organizations or to be a source for funding student travel. Any entity or individual at an ABA-approved law school is eligible to submit a grant application. A school may submit more than one application a year. Due to the limited resources of the Grant Program, the maximum possible award is \$500. However, the amount requested is not necessarily the amount granted by the review committee.