ABA and LAMP Programs and Resources for Military Families

ABA Military Pro Bono Project

- Managed by the ABA Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP)
- Coordinates connection between military and civilian attorneys in a centralized location. It provides:
  - A resource for military legal assistance attorneys
  - An opportunity for civilian attorneys to assist military families
ABA Military Pro Bono Project

www.MilitaryProBono.org

- Military legal assistance attorneys and volunteer attorneys register on the website to participate.
- The Project accepts case referrals from military attorneys on behalf of junior-enlisted (E-6 and below), active-duty military personnel and their families with civil legal problems.
- After screened and approved, it places these cases with pro bono attorneys where the help is needed.

ABA Military Pro Bono Project

Qualified Case Types

- Consumer law
- Landlord/Tenant
- Probate
- Trusts and Estates
- Guardianship
- Employment
- Expungements
- Tax Law
- Family Law
  1. Deployed outside of the U.S.
  2. Opposing party has counsel
  3. SCRA is implicated
  4. Physical custody of child is at issue
  5. Domestic violence victim
ABA Military Pro Bono Project

- Secures pro bono assistance for about 200 military members each year, which represents over $1 million in donated billable hours.

- About ½ of the referred cases are successfully connected with volunteer attorneys.
  - In FY2016, 68% of cases approved in the screening process were connected with volunteer attorneys.

Operation Stand-By

- Attorneys can also volunteer with the Project’s Operation Stand-By.

- Attorney-to-Attorney Advice:
  - Military attorneys may contact civilian attorneys with legal questions relating to their geographic areas and substantive areas of expertise for attorney-to-attorney advice.

- Purpose: Provide guidance that will help military attorneys further assist their clients.
ABA Home Front

- Complimentary website: Provides easy-to-use educational materials for military families and nationwide directory of legal programs.

www.ABAHomeFront.org

ABA Veterans’ Claims Assistance Network

- A Demonstration Pilot run by LAMP under an MOU between ABA and VA
- Goal: Connect unrepresented vets with pro bono attorneys to assist with completion of VA disability compensation claims
ABA Veterans’ Claims Assistance Network

- 3,381 unrepresented vets from 3 VA ROs were contacted by mail about VCAN between August 2014 and April 2015
- 330 of those contacted submitted initial intakes to ABA VCAN:
  - 69 from Chicago
  - 119 from Roanoke
  - 142 from St. Pete
- 152 total cases placed with volunteer attorneys

aba veterans’ claims assistance network

OUTCOMES:

- 37% of intakes (and 27% of placed cases) were canceled due to failure of vet to follow up
- 28% of cases were canceled because claim was wrong type and/or lacked essential VA records
- Only 8% of cases were closed due to lack of volunteer resources
- Average length of volunteer commitment: 35 hours
- Average donated value of a case: $9,888
ABA Veterans’ Claims Assistance Network

- Current Status: A new agreement between ABA and VA has been completed to relaunch VCAN nationwide. Relaunch pending receipt of funding to staff the project. Fundraising ongoing.

ABA Veterans Legal Services Initiative

- ABA President Linda Klein has launched a major initiative during her 2016-17 presidential term to mobilize lawyers to serve the critical need for enhanced legal services for our nation’s veterans.
ABA Veterans Legal Services Initiative

Co-chaired by Dwight Smith, an Oklahoma attorney who has served in a number of ABA leadership positions over the years, and VADM (ret.) Nan DeRenzi, the former Judge Advocate General of the Navy.

Work of the Initiative is undertaken by a twenty-member Commission, the members of which represent the wide range of legal practices that intersect with all areas of law affecting veterans.

ABA Veterans Legal Services Initiative

The primary objectives of the Initiative and the goals of the Commission include:

- Employing medical-legal partnerships that pair VA facilities with lawyers to solve clients’ legal problems.
- Promoting veterans treatment courts and possible expansion to areas such as debt collection and domestic relations.
- Engaging law schools and bar associations to promote incubators and pro bono assistance.
- Promoting legal check-ups for veterans and their families and caregivers because many do not know the problem they have is a legal one.
ABA Veterans Legal Services Initiative

The primary objectives of the Initiative and the goals of the Commission include:

- Addressing unique needs of female veterans and homeless veterans, and exploring why the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population is women veterans.
- Creating a certification of law specialty on veterans’ legal issues.
- Promoting unbundled legal services in the veterans’ context by encouraging replication of programs such as Starbucks’ Military Mondays.
- Assisting in the creation of legal incubator programs, particularly in rural areas, to bring services to veterans while providing valuable training for new and underemployed lawyers.

ABA Veterans Legal Services Initiative

The primary objectives of the Initiative and the goals of the Commission include:

- Sponsoring two National Pro Bono Celebrations to help veterans. One currently taking place during the traditional pro bono week that bar associations and others conduct every year at the end of October — and this year extended a few weeks to Veterans Day. A new national pro bono week will be held 6 months later around Memorial Day.
- At ABA Midyear and Annual Meetings, presenting policies for consideration and adoption by the House of Delegates to promote legal rights and access to justice for veterans, as well as educational programming for the membership on legal matters affecting veterans.
Contact Information

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