The Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project (the “Project”) is pleased to announce the award of $50,000 to programs and projects working to bring people together to develop pro bono child representation programs in private custody cases.

Seven programs from around the country will share the awards as follows:

**Center for Children, Law & Policy, Houston, TX - $3,000**

The Center for Children, Law & Policy will use the grant to convene a series of meetings and surveys to identify the perceived barriers to providing pro bono representation of children in custody and adoption cases and to create and disseminate a “game-plan” report to coordinate the activities of the groups and resources in the community. The primary purpose of the project will be to focus on delineating the willingness and ability of the Houston legal community to provide pro bono services to children in these cases.

**Children’s Law Center, Inc., Covington, KY - $9,800**

Children’s Law Center, Inc. will use the grant to respond to the need that judges identified in a survey conducted by its program for more information on establishing child custody representation models in their jurisdictions by (a) providing the opportunity for training through Kentucky’s Judicial College on the need for child custody representation in certain cases; (b) identifying specific family and circuit courts in Kentucky that wish to initiate and/or expand upon existing pro bono panels for child custody representation; and (c) providing technical assistance to local family and circuit courts who wish to create and/or expand upon existing pro bono panels for child custody representation.

Additionally, the grant will be used to provide a one day training for attorneys and judges on child custody representation based upon the ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project’s training curriculum as well as other identified needs; and creating and disseminating to family courts a model local rule regarding the appointment of counsel for children in custody, parentage/unmarried parentage and domestic violence cases.

**Georgia Legal Services Program, Atlanta, GA - $7,200**

Georgia Legal Services Program will use the grant to develop a complimentary parenting plan form to be suggested, or required, by the courts when family violence is found in divorce and custody cases; to make it readily available to pro bono attorneys; and to provide training to pro bono attorneys representing children in custody cases. Georgia Legal Services Program will work with the Council of Superior Court Judges Family Violence Benchbook Project and the State Bar of Georgia Pro Bono Project to develop
this form and make it available through the Benchbook, websites and collaborative training. The Safety Focused Parenting Plan will be developed specifically for private attorneys who provide pro bono representation for children in custody cases and who have been referred custody cases from Georgia Legal Services Program or the Georgia Bar Pro Bono Project.

Additionally, Georgia Legal Services Program will provide two full-day CLE trainings for private attorneys in their service area on the special needs of children in violent homes in custody cases, specifically regarding safety parenting plans, resources, and referrals for these children.

**Kids First Law Center, Cedar Rapids, IA - $9,400**

Kids First Law Center will use the grant to expand pro bono child representation across Iowa while improving the quality of the representation by drafting and pushing for adoption of best practices standards in Iowa; establishing training requirements and offering training for attorneys to be qualified to represent children in custody cases; and implementing procedures to ensure compliance with the ABA Standards by pro bono attorneys. To do this, Kids First will engage in collaborative discussions with private attorneys, the local and state bar associations, local and statewide judges, and other organizations serving children.

**Lake Superior Court, Gary, IN - $6,000**

Lake Superior Court will use the grant to conduct one or more guardian ad litem training seminars and to develop a “pro bono GAL pool” from which to provide qualified representation for children in private custody cases in the Lake and Porter County Indiana area. The Judges and Magistrates of Lake County, will present the program in cooperation with Indiana First Judicial Pro Bono Committee, Inc., the Indiana University-Bloomington Law School and the Lake County Bar Association.

**MidPenn Legal Services, Harrisburg, PA - $7,500**

MidPenn Legal Services will use the grant to host a series of meetings with members of the Bench, private family law attorneys, bar association leaders, MidPenn Legal Services staff attorneys, pro bono attorneys, courthouse staff, and Widener Law School and Dickinson Law School legal aid clinics to brainstorm methods to develop programs which will provide pro bono representation to children in private custody cases. As a result of these meetings, facts sheets, brochures and other communications will be developed and disseminated with the broader community. If support exists, the strength and resources of the Pro Bono Program and the support of the broader community will be used to launch a pilot project and measure its effectiveness.
St. Louis County Family Court - $7,100

St. Louis County Family Court will use the grant to train and then utilize attorneys in civil order of protection dockets as pro bono guardians ad litem. The St. Louis University School of Law Legal Clinic, in conjunction with the Catholic Legal Assistance Ministry will provide GAL training at no cost to the participants. The ABA Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Children in Custody Cases will be the focus of part of the training.

General Information:

All grants are for the period from December, 2007 through May, 2008. Since a major goal of the Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project is to identify successful projects that can be replicated by other groups, all grant recipients will provide the Project with an extensive report and relevant materials at the end of the grant period.

This is the final year of mini grants by the Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project. The Project is jointly sponsored by the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service and the ABA Family Law Section, and administered by and housed at the ABA Center for Pro Bono. It was established in February 2001 through a grant from Bill and Melita Grunow, in memory of their niece, Ann Liechty, a dedicated child law advocate. The mission of the Project is to design and implement programs and policies that foster children’s well-being, development, and safety during custody matters, including in divorce, guardianship, adoption, parentage, and civil protective order cases.

The funds for these grants were made possible through the ABA Child Custody Grant Advocate Program.

For further information about ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project, visit our website at www.abachildcustodyproject.org.