



October 27, 2016

Re: 2017 St. Louis Pro Bono Challenge

To whom it may concern:

The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis (BAMSL) and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) are excited and proud to launch the St. Louis Pro Bono Challenge, a new program to encourage law firms to help expand the availability of pro bono legal services in the St. Louis area. Law firms that sign the St. Louis Pro Bono Challenge Pledge promise to make a commitment to the provision of pro bono legal services in the St. Louis area by actively seeking opportunities to provide pro bono services, setting specific goals for yearly pro bono work, and encouraging firm-wide participation in pro bono initiatives.

Did you know?

1. More than 80% of low-income litigants in the United States go it alone because they are priced out of the legal market.
2. Nearly 60% of small business owners who had a legal issue did not hire a lawyer for that problem.
3. People at all income levels often do not obtain effective legal assistance either because of insufficient financial resources or a lack of knowledge about when legal problems exist that require resolution through legal representation.
4. State courts are at “saturation level” of pro se litigants.

We need your help!

To help alleviate some of these problems, we are asking you to sign the St. Louis Pro Bono Challenge Pledge indicating that your firm will strive to perform an average of at least 10 hours of pro bono work per full-time attorney in 2017, and that you will give lawyers full billable credit for at least 50 hours of approved pro bono work each year. Firms will be asked to sign this pledge every year as a reminder of their commitment to providing pro bono legal services in the St. Louis area. A copy of the 2017 pledge is enclosed.

Each quarter, firms will report their pro bono hours to LSEM. To publicize the efforts and achievements of lawyers performing pro bono work in our community, BAMSL and LSEM will highlight in the *St. Louis Lawyer* magazine the firms who have signed the St. Louis Pro Bono

Challenge Pledge, and will report on the firms' progress toward their goals on a quarterly basis. BAMSL and LSEM will also recognize local lawyers who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to providing pro bono legal services by highlighting the St. Louis Pro Bono Challenge Volunteer of the Month in the *St. Louis Lawyer*. Nominations for Volunteer of the Month will also be submitted to LSEM, and a committee will select the volunteer to be recognized.

BAMSL and LSEM will host a kick-off luncheon in January 2017, where each participating firm will be highlighted and will officially sign the pledge. Members of the judiciary and other local leaders will attend the luncheon.

If your firm will step up to the plate and join the St. Louis Pro Bono Challenge or if you have questions, please contact one of our Pro Bono Task Force Chairs:

Patti Hageman at pahageman@lsem.org or 314-256-8707, or

Jenny Schwendemann at jennifer.schwendemann@huschblackwell.com or 314-480-1871.

Additional information regarding the kick-off luncheon will follow after we receive your firm's commitment to the St. Louis Pro Bono Challenge.

Thank you for your anticipated participation in this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Eric Kukowski
President



Patti Hageman
Pro Bono Coordinator

