

Litigation Assistance Partnership Project (LAPP)

The ABA Section of Litigation created the Litigation Assistance Partnership Project (LAPP) in 1989, to link pro bono resources of private firms with legal service and public interest programs across the country. LAPP's core function is to identify and place significant pro bono litigation with private law firms nationwide. These are major, complex and often time-consuming cases that require resources unavailable to public interest programs. LAPP works with programs and issues that involve subject areas not handled by other national public interest programs and clearinghouses. LAPP also serves rural programs without local pro bono resources for major litigation and finds out-of-state attorneys when necessary because of local limitations. LAPP is meant to complement, not replace, other pro bono resources. LAPP is a project of the Section's Pro Bono and Public Interest Practice Litigation Committee.

CASE ACCEPTANCE GUIDELINES:

1. LAPP accepts cases that:
 - a. satisfy ABA Model Rule 6.1, "Voluntary Pro Bono Publico Service." The rule defines pro bono as the delivery of legal services to:

persons of limited means or charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means; and . . . to individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights, or charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters in furtherance of their organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's resources or would be otherwise inappropriate . . .

and
 - b. involve broad, systemic issues, rather than individual claims. However, LAPP clients may be individuals where the claims raised impact a large population.
2. LAPP accepts cases only on behalf of identified clients, which may include existing clients of the referring organization and/or clients to be identified by the referring organization. LAPP does not seek out clients, nor does LAPP accept cases in which it is contemplated that the ABA, the Section of Litigation, or any related entity, will be a party. Requests for amicus curiae briefs on behalf of the ABA should be directed to the ABA Standing Committee on Amicus Curiae Briefs.

3. A LAPP screening committee reviews all referrals to assess whether cases are meritorious and comport with the LAPP Case Acceptance Guidelines. Decisions of the LAPP screening committee are final.
4. After accepting a case, LAPP uses its best efforts to place the case with pro bono counsel in accordance with its Case Placement Guidelines. LAPP does not represent clients, nor does LAPP become the attorney of record in any matter referred to it.

CASE PLACEMENT GUIDELINES:

1. LAPP cases may be placed with any member of the ABA Section of Litigation, or, upon request of a Section member, with the member's colleagues within the member's firm. If a case cannot be placed with a Section member after reasonable efforts to do so, LAPP may seek to place the case outside of the Section.
2. In some cases, the organization referring the case may choose to establish a co-counsel relationship with the attorney accepting the referral. In other cases, the attorney accepting the referral will have the sole responsibility for the matter. LAPP may assist in facilitating the relationship between the referring organization and the pro bono attorney(s) if requested.
3. Attorneys accepting LAPP referrals are expected to provide updates of the case status to the LAPP Director on a quarterly basis, or more frequently when major developments occur.

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