
Pro Bono Opportunities

The Pro Bono Initiative (PBI) is responsible for encouraging and coordinating the delivery of pro bono legal services. The PBI also helps the State Bar of Michigan play a constructive role in promoting policies and mechanisms to support lawyers in their effort to fulfill their ethical responsibility to assist in the provision of civil legal services to the poor.

To carry out its mission, the PBI supports numerous projects, including:

- A Lawyer Helps Program
- Circle of Excellence
- Documenting the Justice Gap in Michigan Report
- Homelessness Workgroup
- John W. Cumiskey Pro Bono Award
- Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Program (MI-LAPP)
 - Patent Pro Bono Program
 - Pro Bono Malpractice Insurance Coverage Program
 - Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) Pro Bono Program
 - Tax Pro Bono Program
- Pro Bono Menu of Opportunities
- Pro Bono Month
- Pro Bono Reference Manual
- Spring Pro Bono Workshop
- Statewide Pro Bono Assessment
- Veterans Resources Workgroup

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STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

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www.michbar.org

Divorce Case?

Need a QDRO Prepared?

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
PROVIDES QUALIFIED DRAFTERS

MI-LAPP—Michigan Litigation
Assistance Partnership Program

QDRO—Qualified Domestic
Relations Order Referral Program

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What Is a QDRO?

A Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) is a court order which dictates how retirement benefits are divided and paid to respective spouses in a divorce.

Because of strict filing requirements by federal law guidelines, Michigan domestic relations laws, differing plan requirements, and many other issues, drafting a QDRO is a difficult, time-consuming, and potentially frustrating process. In most cases, a highly trained professional must be retained for the proper drafting of a QDRO.

How We Can Help...

While legal service provider (LSP) attorneys spend their time helping other clients with other priority cases, the Program can help with preparation of QDROs, saving the LSP time and resources.

Through a panel of QDRO professionals, the Program is able to refer QDROs to volunteer drafters for completion. Without the Program, many low-income individuals would be unable to obtain a QDRO, possibly preventing them from receiving retirement benefits (money) that they are legally entitled to receive. The benefits received can be used to pay for housing, food, medical care, and many other basic living expenses.

Purpose Of The Program

The Program was created to meet the needs of low-income clients requiring a QDRO and to attract willing and experienced volunteer drafters to assist them. Clients' needs are at the heart of our efforts. State Bar staff appreciates and values the time donated by volunteer drafters and strives to reduce the administrative work for volunteers, making it as simple as possible to participate in the Program. LSPs are considered partners of the Program and are consulted regularly to ensure quality and ease of use.

The Referral Process

In general, domestic relation order drafting assignments referred by participating LSPs are assigned to volunteer drafters. A drafter prepares a proposed QDRO for review and final approval of the LSP. The LSP who utilizes the QDRO referral process remains responsible for providing legal services to his/her clients throughout the referral and drafting process.

Referring a QDRO case to the Program is simple. The LSP initiates contact with State Bar staff after having gathered information regarding his/her client's retirement plan(s). The LSP fully completes the MI-LAPP referral form, located on the State Bar of Michigan's website. The LSP then sends the completed referral form along with other required

information to the State Bar. The preferred referral method is by e-mail with documents attached to rmathis@mail.michbar.org. However, the information can also be sent by mail to:

Attention:

Robert Mathis

State Bar of Michigan, Pro Bono Initiative
306 Townsend Street

Lansing, MI 48933

or by fax to (517) 316-0401.

If you have any questions regarding the referral of a QDRO to the Program, do not hesitate to contact Robert Mathis at (517) 346-6412.

Questions or for More Information

For more information about MI-LAPP and the Program, contact

Robert Mathis

State Bar of Michigan

(517) 346-6412

rmathis@mail.michbar.org

www.michbar.org.