

# Public Service Connection

A Newsletter of the Washington State Bar Association



The WSBA should use existing programs, and should implement new programs, to improve our members' level of satisfaction with their lives and with the practice of law. In order to implement this goal, the WSBA will work to enhance the culture of service within the WSBA membership.

— From the WSBA 2011–13 Strategic Goals

## New Stuff

Congratulations to **King County Superior Court Judge Steven González**, appointed by Governor Gregoire to the Washington State Supreme Court. Judge González will fill the seat of Justice Gerry Alexander, who retires from the bench at the end of the year. <http://bit.ly/ttgVdR>

**“Our New Economic Reality: The Legal Profession’s Role”** is the theme of the 2012 Access to Justice/ Bar Leaders Conference, offered through a partnership between the Access to Justice Board and Washington State Bar Association. The conference will be held in Yakima June 8–10. The Conference Planning Committee is currently accepting workshop proposals. For additional information and a link to the workshop proposal form, visit <http://bit.ly/l1fya0>.

Congratulations to **Joanna Plichta Boisen**, the 2011 recipient of the Young Lawyers Division Thomas Neville Pro Bono Award! Read the [press release](#).

**The Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project will offer foreclosure mediation advocacy training on January 20** at the Firefighters Hall in Everett (2411 Hewitt Ave.). Registration details to follow soon!



## Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project

***The Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project is a partnership between WSBA and the Northwest Justice Project which provides pro bono legal assistance to Washington homeowners facing foreclosure. Interested in volunteering? Sign up at [www.myWSBA.org](http://www.myWSBA.org).***

Thanks to the 582 attorneys who have signed up to participate in the Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project, and special thanks to the approximately 120 private attorneys who have provided pro bono assistance in foreclosure-related cases! If you are a volunteer with the Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project, watch your email for case referrals and training opportunities.

### Success Stories

An elderly client was refused a meeting with the lender after receiving a Notice of Pre-Foreclosure Options. The client contacted the Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project for assistance and a staff attorney contacted the lender to explain Washington's new Foreclosure Fairness Act statute. The staff attorney then located pro bono counsel, who is prepared to assist the client with negotiations during a “meet and confer” session with the lender.

An elderly client who inadvertently received both retirement and unemployment benefits fell behind with mortgage payments while she repaid the unemployment. A staff attorney with the Home Foreclosure legal Aid Project referred the client to mediation, represented her during the mediation session, and ultimately secured an affordable loan modification on behalf of the client.

Special thanks to the staff and pro bono attorneys with the Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project for their commitment to assisting Washington homeowners!



## Moderate Means Program

*Formed through a partnership between WSBA and the law schools of Gonzaga, Seattle University, and the University of Washington, the Moderate Means Program is a statewide lawyer referral service that refers moderate-income clients to private attorneys who agree to offer representation at a reduced rate. Sign up at [www.myWSBA.org](http://www.myWSBA.org) today to receive free client referrals.*

Thanks to the 324 attorneys who have signed up for the Moderate Means panel. Where are they from? Check out this map for counties with the highest numbers of participants:



How experienced is the MMP attorney panel? The following table shows the number of attorney and their years in practice:

Years in Practice	Number of MMP Attorneys
< 1 year	11
1	69
2	34
3–5	53
6–10	41
11–15	26
16–20	2
21–30	27
31–40	10
41+	5

Law students at Seattle University and Gonzaga have been conducting intake and referring moderate-income clients to participating attorneys since June 6, 2011. Since June, MMP received the majority of its requests for service via Northwest Justice Project’s CLEAR line for callers with household incomes between 200-400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). MMP also received referrals from King County Bar Association’s Pro Bono Services and other legal services providers such as TeamChild, Legal Voice, volunteer lawyer programs, and law school clinics. MMP received a very few direct requests for assistance by word-of-mouth through current and former clients. The majority of prospective clients who were referred to MMP directly (not via CLEAR ) were determined to be under 200 percent of the FPL and were redirected to CLEAR for intake and referral to free legal assistance. MMP referred clients with family law cases beginning in June and expanded service to include referrals for consumer cases in August. MMP expects to refer clients with housing cases in early 2012.

Thank you to our law student volunteers for their dedication to the Moderate Means Program! In total, 20 Seattle University law students and 20 Gonzaga University law students volunteered with MMP during the first grant year (January–September 2011). Under the supervision of MMP Staff Attorney Clay Wilson at Seattle University and MMP Staff Attorney Laurie Powers at Gonzaga, the students received 266 requests for assistance, completed 178 intakes, and referred 111 cases to participating attorneys.

Here are some reflections from the law student volunteers about their participation with the MMP:

*On attorneys: “I’ve been humbled and pleased with the number of attorneys willing to compromise their traditional fees in order to provide assistance to lower-income clients. Several attorneys have volunteered free consultations regardless of the complexity of the client’s legal issue. Some attorneys have even set up payment plans for retainers.” On clients: “So many people and families are living hand-to-mouth today. The clients feel isolated and at odds in many cases, but still remain grateful for our help, even if it is limited. One client even chose to refrain from seeking legal assistance from a lawyer (following a consultation) due to a change in circumstances, but he emphatically thanked me for my help in referring him to an attorney that he will contact again if he needs any help. It seems like even being an outlet for these clients to discuss their problems serves a therapeutic purpose.” — Lindsay Brandon, Seattle University 3L*

*“The Moderate Means Program has been an incredible addition to my law school education. The skills that I have gained through my internship with the Moderate Means Program are relevant and valuable to all future attorneys. Through this program, I have developed skills to effectively interview clients and compassionately ask them the hard questions to get to the heart of their complex legal issues. The program has also provided me with comprehensive training on the underlying substantive law and court procedures. Upon making a referral to a participating Moderate Means attorney, the attorney will often provide feedback, which provides me with great insight into how I can improve and further hone my interviewing and legal analysis skills. In addition, the program offers a unique way for students and practitioners to create greater access to justice to*

individuals who previously could not afford representation. I am continually inspired by the various program participants and their commitment to providing each client equal justice. I am proud to be a part of the Moderate Means Program.” — Mikel Carlson, Seattle University 3L

“After a year spent solely in the classroom, it was a nice change of pace to begin working with clients. In dealing with clients, I started to see the bigger picture of the law I learned in the classroom. More importantly, though, the Moderate Means Program provided me the opportunity to aid a sector of the population that has repeatedly fallen through the cracks. This experience tangibly reminded me that it is both my duty and privilege to legally advocate for those in need, not just those who can afford it.” — Molly Rose Fehring, Gonzaga University 2L

“The client interviews allow for practical application of the principles being learned in all of my classes. Having real facts, emotions, timelines and clients has been more beneficial to my legal education than any hypothetical taught in a class. The Moderate Means Program has allowed me to experience the satisfaction of helping those who would not have been able to get legal assistance. Talking with clients and hearing how grateful they are for the program exemplifies the positive side of the legal profession that makes becoming a lawyer a noble cause.” — Douglas Dick, Gonzaga University 2L



## Pro Bono and Legal Aid Committee

**WSBA's Pro Bono and Legal Aid Committee (PBLAC) activities promote and encourage pro bono service and address the administration of justice as it affects indigent persons. Visit the WSBA website for more information about PBLAC.**

WSBA's committee year began in October 2011, and the Pro Bono and Legal Aid Committee welcomes our new members: Brian DeFoe, Andrew Krawczyk, Rory O'Sullivan, Esther Park, and PBLAC's new Board of Governors liaison, Dan Ford! PBLAC also thanks returning committee members Andrea Axel (co-chair), Joanna Otero (co-chair), Joanna Boisen, Michael Cressey, Reagan Dunn, Brian Flock, Rebecca Glasgow, Andrew Guy, Michael Kleps, Diana Singleton, Gail Smith, Randy Winn, Dan Young, and Lew Zieske.

Thank you for continuing to champion pro bono service in Washington state!

# WYLD

Washington State Bar Association  
YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

## Washington Young Lawyers Division

### **WYLD Public Service/Pro Bono Committee – a Call to Arms**

The WYLD Public Service/Pro Bono Committee needs you! The Committee's mission is to serve as an incubator for new pro bono service opportunities and to provide information and tools to help connect new lawyers with service opportunities. Committee meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Get involved and help to shape WYLD's involvement in pro bono and public service initiatives. Contact Committee Chair Ben Nivison or Chair-elect Alicia Levy for additional details. We would appreciate your assistance in helping us develop and implement project ideas that support our mission!

Get involved with a WYLD service opportunity! The Washington First Responder Will Clinic, Mock Trial Program Partnership, and Yakima Pre-Law Student Leadership Conference all need volunteers. Most committees hold open monthly meetings and include a conference call option so new and young lawyers throughout the state can participate.

Read about [WYLD programs](#) and [contact a chair](#) to learn about current projects and opportunities to volunteer.

## News and Resources

*Note: The WSBA does not promote, sponsor, or otherwise endorse the trainings or programs listed herein. This list is intended for informational purposes only.*

**“Massachusetts Sues 5 Major Banks Over Foreclosure Practices,”** by Gretchen Morgenson. Citing extensive abuses of troubled borrowers across Massachusetts, the state’s attorney general sued the nation’s five largest mortgage lenders on Thursday, seeking relief for consumers hurt by what she called unfair and deceptive business practices. <http://nyti.ms/uQn8K6>

**“A Banker Speaks, With Regret,”** by Nicholas D. Kristof. If you want to understand why the Occupy movement has found such traction, it helps to listen to a former banker like James Theckston. He fully acknowledges that he and other bankers are mostly responsible for the country’s housing mess. <http://nyti.ms/uZtjz>

**The National Consumer Law Center** offers consumer-related information, programs, and resources at [www.nclc.org](http://www.nclc.org). Highlights include:

- New rules and forms for bankruptcy and mortgage attorneys responding to mortgage claim documentation issues are included in a special six-page NCLC report at [www.nclc.org/form10](http://www.nclc.org/form10).
- NCLC’s Bankruptcy Mortgage Project ([www.bankruptcymortgageproject.org](http://www.bankruptcymortgageproject.org)) organizes and provides access to more than 500 local rules, forms, general orders, and court opinions on mortgage issues in consumer bankruptcy cases across the United States.
- Fair Debt Collection Practices Training Conference is in New Orleans, Feb. 23–24. Registration will open mid-December at [www.nclc.org/conferences-training/fair-debt-collection-practices-conference.html](http://www.nclc.org/conferences-training/fair-debt-collection-practices-conference.html). Get up to speed on your first debt collection abuse cases and proceed to more in-depth sessions on developing fair debt collection cases and a fair debt collection law practice. Faculty includes the top Fair Debt Collections lawyers from across the country. CLE credit.

### **The National Community Tax Coalition**

NCTC is a membership organization for community-based organizations offering free tax and financial services to low-income working families. The NCTC Online University has added additional courses and will be available for free this tax season — starting right now! For the upcoming tax season, the NCTC Online University will offer six volunteer training courses, including:

- Credit Report Educator 2.0
- Budget Planner 2.0
- FAFSA Coach 2.0
- Savings
- Saver’s Credit at Tax
- Volunteering in the VITA

All courses are available on the NCTC website at <http://tax-coalition.org>. If you have questions about using the Online University, please contact Rebecca Riha at [rriha@tax-coalition.org](mailto:rriha@tax-coalition.org) or 312-252-0280, ext. 266.

**Bank of America offers free webinars:** In response to the ongoing challenges facing the nonprofit sector as they navigate the current economic environment, Bank of America has developed the Nonprofit Impact Series. This series is designed to use technology to meet the needs of community and rural markets, as well as assist the broader nonprofit community in improving their organizational effectiveness and enhancing their leadership skills. Each webinar will be aimed at addressing the critical issues affecting nonprofit organizations today, such as: Attracting High Net Worth Donors, Best Practices of Highly Effective Organizations, Financial Literacy, and Skills-Based Volunteerism. For more information, please contact Michael Dotson at [michael.j.dotson@bankofamerica.com](mailto:michael.j.dotson@bankofamerica.com).

### **Foreclosure Fairness Act**

The Foreclosure Fairness Act (FFA) was enacted in Washington state in April 2011. Implementation of FFA's provisions related to mediation began on July 22, 2011. For information about the Foreclosure Fairness Act Mediation Program, visit [www.commerce.wa.gov/foreclosures](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/foreclosures) or view "[Facing Foreclosure? Don't Wait Until It's Too Late.](#)"

### **Foreclosure Prevention**

Learn about the foreclosure process, foreclosure alternatives, and how to avoid foreclosure scams at [www.homeownership.law.gov](http://www.homeownership.law.gov). Visit the [WSBA website](#) for additional foreclosure prevention resource and training materials.

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## **Contact Us**

**News, please!** Do you have success stories, newsworthy items, or additional information for the next Public Service Connection? Tell us how we can make it better! Please send items or ideas to the WSBA at [publicservice@wsba.org](mailto:publicservice@wsba.org).

For more information about the WSBA's public service projects, please visit [www.wsba.org](http://www.wsba.org) or contact Public Service Program Manager [Catherine Brown](#) at 206-733-5905.

A special thanks to our volunteers! We appreciate your dedication to service, and we value your partnership as we expand the menu of public-service opportunities throughout the Washington state legal community.