

Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project News & Updates

August 2009

With over 370 volunteer attorneys statewide, our project is well underway and moving forward with providing valuable assistance to homeowners.

Research Opportunity:

We are seeking the assistance of volunteer attorneys who are willing to conduct public records research on Westlaw or Lexis on a case by case basis. These attorneys would have the option of retaining the case for representation or helping only with research that would help the legal team assess the merits of the case. This is important work because some counties do not have deed of trust and property history information online. Interested? Please contact our legal team directly: lilis@nwjustice.org or colleen@nwjustice.org.

Fellowship Opportunity:

Northwest Justice Project has been awarded a one year Equal Justice Fellowship to focus on foreclosure issues. Application deadline is Aug. 30th – position must begin by September 28th. Contact Sue Encherman at the Northwest Justice Project at suee@nwjustice.org or (206) 464-1519 for an application.

Outreach:

We are working hard to get the message out to homeowners that we're here to help! Help us out by printing the attached flyer and posting it at your office, local community center, grocery store, place of worship, neighborhood school and anywhere else you think homeowners might see it!

Housekeeping:

Please Check Your Email Spam Filter!

Please make sure you are receiving email from the Home Foreclosure Project legal team; their emails are colleen@nwjustice.org and lilis@nwjustice.org and hflap@nwjustice.org. Almost all attorneys signed up before July 22 should have gotten a chance to accept at least one case. Anyone who has not received a request for case acceptance should contact Aline at alinec@wsba.org as soon as possible.

Really Eager to Get a Case?

Have you been really eager to get a case but feel like you haven't been quick enough on the draw when our legal team sends out volunteer opportunities? Have you been unable to handle a matter that's been offered but are still really interested in getting a case? If so, please email hflap@nwjustice.org and also let us know if you'd be willing to take matters in neighboring counties or statewide.

Too Busy Right Now to Take a Case?

If you are not currently able or believe that you will not be able to accept cases through the Home Foreclosure Project for the next six months, please take a moment to let us know so that we can remove you from our volunteer list. You can always rejoin us when your schedule opens up.

Tracking Your Volunteer Hours?

If you have accepted a case and started to represent a client, assisted at a foreclosure prevention workshop, are volunteering at a housing counseling agency, or are simply doing any kind of work to support our help to homeowners, please track your volunteer hours! We also need updates about

developments in the cases, such as filings and settlements. This is important for our reporting purposes. We will be checking with you individually, so be sure to keep good records.

Got Assigned a Case and Need a Retainer Agreement Form?

Attached, please find our project retainer for your use with any project client. Best practice is to always have a signed retainer agreement, including with pro bono clients.

Need MCLE credit?

Be sure to update your volunteer sign up page to indicate that you've completed the MCLE training videos! Go to <http://www.mywsba.org/> to get back to the volunteer sign up page and click on "Certify MCLE Credit."

We Need More Mentors!

Do you have several years of experience in non-judicial deed of trust foreclosures and restrain of sale, loan modifications and/or mortgage or lending abuse cases? If so, we'd like to hear from you! Please contact Aline at alinec@wsba.org or call (206) 727-8204.

Need to update your volunteer information?

If all you need to do is update name, address, email, or phone information, go to <http://www.mywsba.org/> to make changes. If you need to change specific volunteer related information please email Aline at alinec@wsba.org.

Foreclosure Prevention Training Opportunity:

National Consumer Law Conference: October 22-25, 2009 in Philadelphia, PA
http://www.consumerlaw.org/conference_training/index.shtml

Foreclosure prevention in the news:

Bank of America/Countrywide Settlement and Relief:

Money available for foreclosed Countrywide borrowers: Attorney general announces nearly 1,000 Washington residents eligible for relief payments:
<http://www.atg.wa.gov/pressrelease.aspx?&id=23454>

Lucrative Fees May Deter Efforts to Modify Loans:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/30/business/30services.html?pagewanted=1>

Homeowner and Investor May Lose, But the Bank Wins:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/30/business/30serviceside.html?scp=2&sq=foreclosure&st=cse>

Why the Foreclosure Crisis Isn't Improving:

<http://features.csmonitor.com/economyrebuild/2009/08/13/why-the-foreclosure-crisis-isnt-improving/>

New Foreclosure Prevention Legal Resources:

Updated Washington Foreclosure Process and Timelines: Newly compiled and drafted to reflect the recent changes to the state laws which provide additional opportunities for WA state homeowners to save their home (see attached PDF).

Reminder: How are cases assigned to volunteer attorneys?

The Northwest Justice Project (NJP) legal team screens all prospective cases that get referred to them by housing counselors statewide. They carefully review each case to make the best possible match with a volunteer attorney. The factors they take into consideration include (but are not limited to): specific types of legal issues involved, attorneys' experience and skill-level, estimated time commitment, and geographic location. Rest assured, the NJP legal team will make every effort to assign each volunteer attorney a case that is a good match for the attorney and the client and will contact the volunteer attorney soon as a case becomes available.

There are other ways for volunteer lawyers to get involved and help out. For example, we are starting to have some volunteer attorneys work directly with housing counseling agencies in their communities. Other attorneys are providing assistance at foreclosure prevention workshops. Finally, some attorneys experienced in this field have offered to mentor less experienced attorneys. If you're interested in these types of volunteer opportunities in your area, please let us know and we will inform you when new opportunities become available.

Questions, Comments and Feedback: We want to hear from you!

Please contact Aline at alinec@wsba.org or at (206) 727-8204.

Thanks again for doing your part to put an end the foreclosure crisis and helping Washington state homeowners !