



2020-2021 VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT PLAN¹

“Lawyers have a license to practice law, a monopoly on certain services. But for that privilege and status, lawyers have an obligation to provide legal services to those without the wherewithal to pay, to respond to needs outside themselves, to help repair tears in their communities.”

– Associate U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

“We educated, privileged lawyers have a professional and moral duty to represent the under-represented in our society, to ensure that justice exists for all, both legal and economic justice.”

– Associate U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

Introducing Prairie State Legal Services: Working to Close the Justice Gap in our Communities

Prairie State Legal Services, Inc. is a non-profit law firm that provides free civil legal aid to low-income persons and seniors who have important legal problems affecting their basic human needs. Prairie State serves clients in 36 counties in northern and central Illinois, outside of Cook County, from 10 regional offices and several special projects. We represent survivors of domestic violence in orders of protection, divorce and other family cases; people with disabilities who are wrongfully denied benefits; tenants who are being unlawfully evicted from their homes; families who are facing utility shut-offs or mortgage foreclosures; seniors who are facing improper discharge from nursing homes or are victims of elder abuse; veterans who need help securing SNAP (Food Stamp) benefits to which they are entitled; and many others with urgent legal problems. Our assistance can make the difference between continuing physical abuse and safety for a family; between homelessness and a decent place to live; between the danger of transfer trauma for a disabled elderly adult and stability at home or in a nursing facility; between access to basic medical care and progression of disease or exacerbation of symptoms; and between hunger and having enough to eat. During the COVID pandemic, our services are

An 80 year old senior is able to meet her needs thanks to the work of two volunteers and Prairie State staff. The client came to us because her monthly Social Security was being garnished by the USDA for a mortgage on a home that she was no longer living in. We prevailed on USDA to accept a short sale; a volunteer attorney represented the client in the closing. Despite its approval of the short sale, USDA continued to garnish the client’s Social Security, leaving her without enough income to meet her needs. The volunteer attorney prevailed upon a colleague to represent the client in a bankruptcy; this eliminated the debt and protected the client’s Social Security income.

more important than ever. More information about Prairie State can be found at www.pslegal.org.

¹ As a recipient of federal funds from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), Prairie State must follow federal regulations promulgated by LSC in the operation of its program and services. These regulations require grantees to prepare an annual Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) Plan (45 CFR Part 1614), to operate a PAI program, and to report to LSC annually regarding its PAI services. This document is Prairie State’s PAI Plan for the year 2020-2021.

Prairie State is the only provider of free civil legal aid in most of the 36 counties we serve. The need for legal assistance far outstrips the capacity of Prairie State’s paid staff of just over 170 attorneys, paralegals, intake specialists, *pro bono* coordinators, and support staff – many of whom are part-time employees – to provide advice and representation to eligible clients:

- Prior to COVID-19, Prairie State’s 36 county service area was home to over 435,000 persons with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level and hundreds of thousands more who have incomes below 200% of the poverty level. In 2018, 1.5 million Illinoisans were in poverty—a rate of 12.1%. This rate was above the national poverty rate of 11.8%. Between 2000 and 2018, the percent of the Chicago region’s poor who were living in the suburbs rose from 34% to 49%. In short, the number of residents potentially eligible for Prairie State’s help continues to grow. (Census data; September 2019 Illinois and Chicago Region: Poverty, Income, and Health Insurance Fact Sheet, Heartland Alliance)
- The outbreak of COVID-19 has only increased the need throughout Prairie State’s 36 county service area. As of June 2020, the unemployment rate in Illinois was 14.6%, compared with 11.1% for the United States. (Illinois Department of Employment Security). By comparison, in February 2020 the unemployment rate in Illinois was only 3.4%.
- In 2017, the Legal Services Corporation, a not for profit corporation which distributes the Congressional allocation for legal aid programs, issued its [Justice Gap Report](#). That report concluded that “71% of low-income households experienced at least one civil legal problem in the year preceding the study. Many of these households have had to deal with several issues. Indeed, more than half (54%) faced at least two civil legal problems and about one in four (24%) has faced six or more in the past year alone. The civil legal problems these Americans face are most often related to basic needs like getting access to health care, staying in their homes, and securing safe living conditions for their families.”
- The Justice Gap Report found that over 70% of those low-income people who seek help from a civil legal aid program like Prairie State will not get all of the assistance they need. For example they might receive legal advice rather than representation. In large part, this is because the legal aid program has insufficient staff or other resources to handle the matter.
- In 2019, Prairie State opened over 15,000 cases for services ranging from individualized legal advice over the phone to representation in court. During that same period, however, there were more than 31,500 calls to our centralized intake service. We use a triage system to sort these calls; we were unable to talk to many callers who had important legal problems which did not fall into the most urgent categories. In 2019, because of lack of staff or volunteers to handle the cases, Prairie State closed almost 3100 cases with advice or other assistance short of full representation even though the matter was of significant importance to the client’s basic needs.

The justice gap – the wide gulf between the critical legal needs of low-income members of our community and the ability of Prairie State to meet those needs – is the reason that *pro bono* work by hundreds of dedicated volunteers is so critical, and why it is essential for us to continue to build cost effective *pro bono* projects which address our clients’ most critical needs. We need your help in these efforts.

Pro Bono volunteers help instill confidence in the justice system and strengthen faith in our democracy.

Prairie State's Volunteer Programs

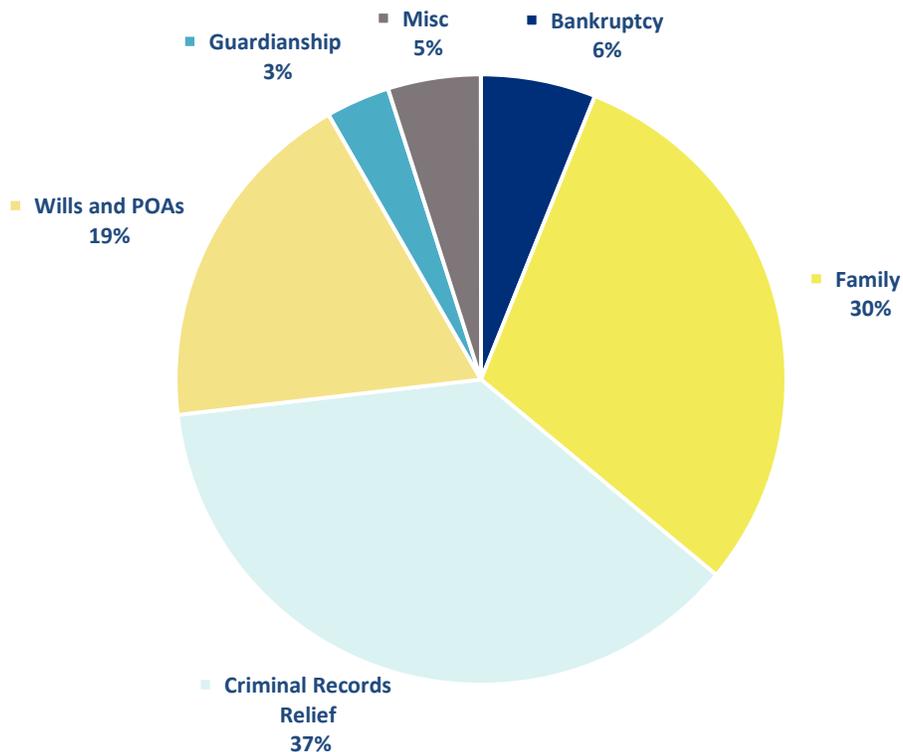
The work of volunteer attorneys, paralegals, law students, undergraduates, intake specialists, support staff, and others across the Prairie State service area provides a critical supplement to the work of Prairie State's paid staff. In addition to enabling Prairie State to help more of northern and central Illinois' most vulnerable residents and making immeasurable improvements in the lives of those clients and their families, volunteers make a larger contribution to the public good. A number of recent studies have uncovered alarmingly low rates of confidence in our justice system. Volunteers support the justice system and the public's faith in that system by increasing the ability of the public to access the courts and helping ensure the fair administration of justice.

Prairie State administers 10 local *pro bono* projects from its regional offices. These local projects operate with strong support from the local bar and courts, and focus primarily on referring individual cases to local attorneys for extended representation, for example in court, in negotiations, or before administrative agencies. Several of these local projects also include advice clinics or courthouse help desks. Prairie State also operates a program-wide *Pro Bono* Telephone Counseling/Intake Project. Additionally, dozens of volunteers work in our offices each year in a variety of capacities. All work performed through Prairie State's *pro bono* projects is covered by Prairie State's malpractice insurance.

2019 Pro Bono Highlights

- In 2019, over 300 volunteer attorneys in our local communities accepted 1035 new *pro bono* case referrals from our local offices for advice or more extensive representation. Approximately 37% of these cases involved criminal records relief and 30% involved a family law matter.

2019 PRO BONO REFERRAL BY CASE TYPE



- Volunteers reported securing court awards for family law clients referred to them by our local projects totaling over \$343,200 in annual child support or maintenance and \$266,410 in one-time property allocations. These awards will provide essential help to these clients to care for their families.
- In 2019, volunteers reported almost 4400 hours of service to clients referred by our local *pro bono* projects. This outstanding contribution of volunteer time demonstrates the strong commitment of our volunteers; in some cases these hours help us access grant funding because of the value of this time. We believe that some volunteers underreport their volunteer time, perhaps not realizing that this information is critical to us for our assessment of the effectiveness of our volunteer programs and that the data is considered by some funders of Prairie State.

“I welcome more projects. I appreciate the opportunity to help and feel good about the practice of law.”

– Joliet volunteer

- Thirty attorney volunteers with our Telephone Counseling/Intake Project completed over 500 cases by providing individualized advice or other brief services to callers. They also spoke with many additional clients with the most critical cases, offered them initial advice, and referred their cases on to our local offices for more in-depth services. In addition, a volunteer intake specialist who is not an attorney contributed significant time in taking phone applications, allowing our lawyers to spend their time providing legal advice.
- In 2019, 12 attorneys volunteered in our offices as unpaid staff, handling cases, interviewing new clients, or assisting the attorneys with their work.
- In total, volunteer attorneys in the community, working through our special projects and working as unpaid staff in our offices completed more than 1520 cases in 2019.
- Over 40 undergraduate, paralegal, and law students interned with Prairie State in 2019. These students interviewed clients, drafted court pleadings, conducted legal research, reviewed files at administrative agencies, reviewed and summarized medical records in Social Security cases, and performed other activities in support of our work. Many law student interns become *pro bono* volunteers after they are admitted to practice; at least one member of Prairie State’s current Board of Directors began his relationship with us as a summer law student.
- In 2019, 15 retired, inactive, or out-of-state attorneys were licensed to perform *pro bono* services through Prairie State under [Illinois Supreme Court Rule 756\(k\)](#).
- Prairie State presented 20 live or web-based continuing legal education courses free of charge to volunteers and prospective volunteers.

“Everything went perfect. It made everything easier.”

- Bloomington *pro bono* client on working with a volunteer attorney

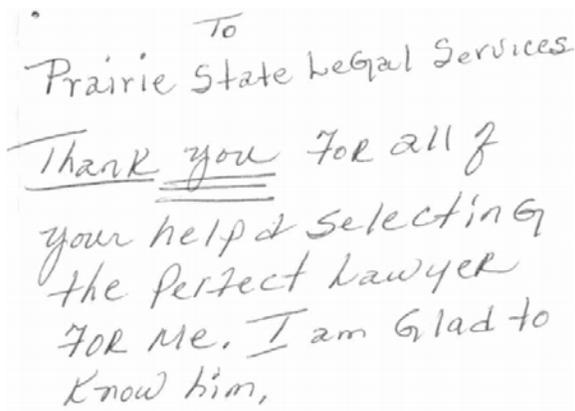
- Prairie State has continued its collaboration with the 17th Judicial Circuit Domestic Violence Coordinated Courts and the Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic/NIU Law School to provide services to victims of domestic violence. The OP Court Project was conceived by one of the judges, who saw unmet need for legal representation of petitioners in plenary orders of protection where the respondent has counsel. Prairie State and the Court worked together to provide an initial training in 2017 and in-depth follow

up training in 2018 and 2020. At the time of preparation of this plan, 26 volunteer attorneys are participating in the project. Volunteers have represented 47 clients since the inception of the project.

- We continued our initiative in partnership with Pro Bono Network to address the need among DuPage County residents for advanced directives, including powers of attorney. Clinics were held at our offices prior to COVID-19. Prairie State screens the cases and sets them for appointments with volunteer attorneys who are recruited and supported by PBN. In 2019, thirteen attorneys prepared documents for 23 clients.
- Prairie State's Bloomington and Peoria offices hosted regular criminal records relief clinics throughout the year. Fifteen attorneys volunteered at the Bloomington clinics, helping 48 clients to prepare and file petitions for sealing or expungement. In Peoria, 22 volunteers assisted 73 clients to prepare and file petitions through the clinics in 2019. This relief enables clients to find employment and housing.

A seriously impaired client won her disability claim with Social Security thanks to the hard work of a volunteer attorney. The client's ability to focus, maintain attention, concentrate and persist with work was severely impaired by her bipolar disorder and depression. She had been laid off her part-time job at a local library but the Social Security Administration denied her benefits, finding that she could return to past work. A volunteer attorney worked with our staff to obtain new medical evidence countering that conclusion; the volunteer wrote a brief advocating the client's case and won her much-needed benefits.

- Prairie State's Rockford office, in collaboration with State Senator Steve Stadelman, hosted the second annual Second Chances Summit on November 1, 2019. Seventeen volunteer attorneys assisted over 100 *pro se* petitioners in preparing documents to file to request for expungement or sealing in the 17th Circuit Court of Winnebago County and surrounding counties.
- Volunteer attorneys worked with staff in several of our offices on appeals of denials of SSI disability benefits from the Social Security Administration. Volunteers help us analyze the medical and other evidence, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the potential cases, and develop arguments to support the clients' claims for benefits. In some cases, volunteers took cases on themselves and advocated on clients' behalves before the Bureau of Disability Determination Services at the reconsideration stage of appeal.



To
Prairie State Legal Services
Thank you for all of
your help & selecting
the perfect lawyer
for me. I am glad to
know him,

-from a Peoria Office *pro bono* client

- Prairie State continued its successful *pro bono* legal advice walk-in clinics in Bloomington in partnership with State Farm, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit *Pro Bono* Committee, the McLean County Bar Association, Central Illinois Paralegal Association, the Immigration Project, Mid Central Community Action, and the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI). We held two clinics in 2019; 73 volunteer attorneys and 15 volunteer paralegals provided legal help to 69 Prairie State clients.
- Prairie State worked closely with bar associations throughout our 36 county service area to place cases with local attorneys, recognize volunteers, encourage *pro bono* involvement, and develop new volunteer opportunities.
- Prairie State continued to work with PILI (the Public Interest Law Initiative) and with members of the local bar and judiciary to promote *pro bono* participation through the Judicial Circuit *Pro Bono* Committees in the Tenth, Eleventh, Fourteenth and Eighteenth Judicial Circuits in 2019.
- Prairie State enjoyed ongoing relationships with the corporate legal departments of Abbott Laboratories, AbbVie, Caterpillar Inc., Deere & Company, McDonald's and State Farm.

We thank our volunteers and our *pro bono* partners for making these accomplishments possible in 2019!

Pro Bono Innovation Fund Grant

On October 1, 2019, Prairie State was awarded a Pro Bono Innovation Fund (PBIF) grant from LSC for a two year period ending September 30, 2021. This funding allowed Prairie State to create a new Director of *Pro Bono* Services position, and a part time Executive Administrative Assistant position, to expand and improve our *pro bono* program. Under the PBIF grant, the Director of *Pro Bono* Services is conducting a thorough inventory of how *pro bono* operates throughout our service area, as well as looking at how *pro bono* operates at other successful organizations, and identifying potential areas for growth. We will use this information to develop innovative strategies to increase *pro bono* throughout our service area, with a particular focus on expanding *pro bono* involvement in the Collar Counties surrounding Chicago.

"So very grateful this service is available. I may have been stuck in that situation yet today." - Kankakee Office *pro bono* client

2020-2021 Volunteer Involvement Goals and Local Input

With approximately 14,000 attorneys registered with the ARDC in the Prairie State service area and hundreds of thousands of low-income residents in need of legal aid, we continue to explore ways to increase participation in our *pro bono* program and to efficiently integrate volunteers into our service delivery model.

We shared our 2019-2020 PAI Plan with many members of the bar and the judiciary in our service area. We also used an online survey, seeking feedback from members of the private bar on our 2019-2020 PAI plan and *pro bono* program. We received 197 responses. The majority of survey respondents felt that we should try to offer limited scope opportunities for *pro bono* volunteers to provide representation beyond advice. Respondents also felt it was important to involve volunteers to provide representation in family law cases.

Many respondents agreed that full representation is the “gold standard” for *pro bono* to provide clients with the help they need and the best chance of making a meaningful change in their lives. However, respondents also agreed that volunteer attorneys need options that let them volunteer in the evening or on the weekend, and that Prairie State should continue to develop both bite-sized and full representation opportunities. Among the goals from the 2019-2020 PAI Plan, respondents felt the most important goal was to recruit more retired and inactive attorneys to volunteer in our offices. According to survey respondents, the second most important goal was to develop and offer cost-effective “bite-sized” *pro bono* opportunities, followed by expanding the use of limited scope *pro bono* representation and continuing to prioritize referral of individual clients to volunteer attorneys for extended representation.

These responses have helped inform our goals and priorities for the coming year. In addition, the outbreak of COVID-19 has brought to light many new needs for our clients, and has also brought about new opportunities to serve the community. We hope to incorporate some of these new approaches through the use of volunteers. While each of our local *pro bono* projects has its own specific goals and plans, the following are our goals for our volunteer program as a whole.

1. Continue to prioritize referral of individual clients to volunteer attorneys for extended representation.

The single greatest need of our clients – and one of the most cost effective uses of the limited resources Prairie State is able to devote to *pro bono* involvement – is for experienced attorneys who will provide direct and extended representation in court and in negotiations. This is particularly true in the area of family law. While thorough advice and brief services enable many of our clients to represent themselves effectively, many more of our clients lack the ability to navigate the legal system successfully without an attorney. We need more volunteer attorneys who are able to commit to providing in-court representation to Prairie State clients. In many of our counties, we are able to match new attorneys with mentor volunteers to provide representation.

2. Increase referrals in the areas of housing, family law, bankruptcy, wills/powers of attorney and expungement/sealing.

These have been areas of significant client need for many years and although we have prioritized finding attorneys willing to help in these areas, there are many more clients in need of *pro bono* assistance. More recently we have identified these as areas of particular client need in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, with housing presenting the greatest and most immediate challenge. The combination of high rates of unemployment and eviction moratoria will likely create a “surge” in eviction cases once moratoria end. Additionally, changing laws and regulations will make it hard for clients to navigate these cases on their own. We are developing a project utilizing volunteer attorneys to provide advice to clients facing eviction to help them understand the law and their possible legal defenses; we anticipate that some of these volunteers also will enter into negotiations on behalf of clients.

Family law, bankruptcy, and wills/powers of attorney will continue to be areas of high client need as clients grapple with the effects of confinement at home, increasing family conflict, job losses, and the unknown long-term health impacts of the virus. Expungement and sealing cases will be important to help clients find new employment. These cases are particularly appropriate for volunteer involvement. These are cases which do not require a volunteer to “drop everything,” but in which the volunteer can make a very significant difference for a client. These extended representation cases are cost effective for our *pro bono* coordinators to refer.

3. Recruit more retired and inactive attorneys to volunteer in our offices.

Retired attorneys who volunteer in our offices and function as unpaid staff are one of our most valuable *pro bono* assets. While most of these attorneys do not have prior poverty law experience, their years of practice allow them to learn new areas of law quickly and they bring a fresh perspective to the issues legal aid attorneys see day in and day out. Because they no longer have an outside practice, many of these retired attorneys are able to devote time to contested or complex matters. Prairie State provides support, training,

and supervision to these in-house volunteer attorneys. This goal was identified by participants in our survey as the highest priority.

We find that many attorneys are not aware that [Illinois Supreme Court Rule 756\(k\)](#) allows them to perform *pro bono* services through a sponsoring entity like Prairie State, even after they have changed their attorney registration status to inactive or retired. We will continue to publicize this option and to target retiring attorneys in our recruitment efforts. Retired attorneys are not the only potential source of in-house volunteer lawyers. Many attorneys do not have paid positions because of family situations or obligations, but wish to remain active and contribute their special knowledge to their communities. These potential volunteers bring a wealth of value to our clients and our work. We will continue to seek these volunteers, and to provide them with the support they need to represent our clients and find a meaningful volunteer opportunity with us.

4. Expand the use of limited scope *pro bono* representation to reach and assist more clients.

Illinois Supreme Court Rule 137(e) allows an attorney to assist a self-represented litigant in drafting or reviewing a pleading, motion, or other document without making a general or limited scope appearance. We see many potential clients who might be able to represent themselves successfully in court with this drafting assistance and detailed advice for proceeding in court, but we have not made a specific effort to match those potential clients with volunteers. In the coming year we will look for ways to expand referrals for this important assistance. Additionally, we will look to be more creative in finding cases in which an attorney willing to enter a limited scope appearance to handle a single aspect of a case in court can make a difference for a client.

5. Develop and offer cost effective “bite-sized” *pro bono* opportunities.

The demand from busy attorneys for discrete, time-limited *pro bono* opportunities has grown enormously in recent years. Prairie State has responded to this demand by making more bite-sized *pro bono* opportunities available to volunteers. In 2010, only 37% of our *pro bono* cases were closed as advice or brief services; in 2019, 65% of our *pro bono* cases were closed as advice or brief services. Our Joliet and Bloomington advice clinics; our Rockford bankruptcy helpdesk; power of attorney clinics; self-represented litigant divorce clinics; our growing number of expungement clinics; and telephone counseling opportunities all provide discrete *pro bono* opportunities to volunteers.

However, while the need for civil legal aid services is almost limitless, it is challenging to create bite-sized *pro bono* opportunities that are meaningful to both volunteers and clients, and also cost effective for Prairie State. Many people who are unfamiliar with the operation of *pro bono* programs are surprised to learn that there is significant time involved in administering them properly. Attorneys volunteering their time expect that Prairie State will screen the cases for client financial eligibility and for at least apparent merit. The cases we refer through our *pro bono* projects remain Prairie State cases. This allows us to offer malpractice insurance to our volunteers and to report the cases to our funders. It also means, however, that we must comply with certain reporting and oversight requirements of our funders and our malpractice carrier. We must follow up to be sure that the cases are completed and that we have case closing data such as the information reflected in this Volunteer Involvement Plan. All of this takes time.

The Prairie State staff time required to refer an advice or brief services *pro bono* case to a volunteer is almost identical to the staff time required to refer a complex litigation matter; Prairie State staff frequently spend two to two and half times longer screening, referring and following up on an advice or brief services *pro bono* matter than the volunteer attorney spends on the same matter. In some cases, the disproportion is even greater. As we analyze our “bite-sized” *pro bono* opportunities, it is increasingly clear that not all such opportunities make sense.

Throughout 2020, we have also faced the challenge that many of the bite-sized opportunities we previously

offered were in the form of in-person clinics, most of which needed to be canceled once COVID-19 cases began to rise and in person gatherings were no longer safe. Looking forward, we will reassess our clinic models and determine ways to make some of these opportunities remote. This will not only allow us to continue to offer these important services to our clients, but will also enable us to utilize volunteers from throughout our service area, and even the city of Chicago. While we hope that we will be able to return to some in person clinics in the future, we also recognize that some clients and volunteer attorneys may continue to prefer virtual opportunities.

We will continue to assess our current bite-sized *pro bono* offerings to maximize their cost effectiveness and efficiency. We also will continue to refine our data collection and client data base to maximize efficient data entry and effective extraction of meaningful reports. Before committing resources to new discrete *pro bono* ventures, we will evaluate these projects with a close eye toward cost effectiveness.

6. Use technology to train and support volunteers.

We believe that in-person continuing legal education is an effective way to train new volunteers and to thank existing volunteers for their service. However, technology affords new opportunities to efficiently and timely train and support volunteers, especially now that many attorneys (including those at Prairie State) have been working from home and have become more comfortable utilizing new technology to hold meetings and interact with clients.

Over the past several years we have created a substantial library of recorded training to allow for continuous onboarding of specialized *pro bono* project volunteers. We will continue to build that library in 2020. In addition, we have started offering more virtual MCLE events and attorney trainings. This allows us to reach attorneys throughout our service area, rather than only targeting attorneys in one community.

Prairie State is a sponsoring entity under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 756(k); retired and inactive status attorneys can register with the Illinois ARDC to practice under our auspices, without returning to active status.

Prairie State also is an MCLE provider. We offer a variety of MCLE events and recorded training to support the work of our volunteers. All of our MCLE events are free of charge.

7. Recruit bilingual volunteer attorneys to represent limited English-proficient clients, and train English-speaking volunteer attorneys to use Prairie State's interpreting and translation resources.

Many residents of our 36 counties have limited ability in English and require legal help for basic needs problems, but it has been a challenge to find volunteers to serve these clients. Over 5 percent of the clients served by Prairie State staff in 2019 were limited English-proficient, but only 1.7 percent of *pro bono* cases involved limited English-proficient clients. Self-representation is a particular challenge for individuals who are not proficient in English and thus finding volunteers who are willing to work with these clients is a priority. Prairie State has funds available to cover the costs of interpretation and translation services.

8. Involve more non-attorney volunteers.

We continue to explore and experiment with ways to involve non-attorney volunteers. Non-attorneys who are able to volunteer regularly in our West Suburban and Waukegan offices can help screen clients for eligibility for Prairie State's services, which enables our intake attorneys to spend more time giving legal advice to eligible clients and improves our ability to find appropriate cases to refer to our corporate partners.

Our law student internship program remains a critical piece of our non-attorney volunteer program. In 2020, every Prairie State office hosted at least one law student intern and several hosted two or more. Most students have completed only one year of law school, but a small number of the students had completed enough course work to qualify for student S Ct Rule 711 licenses. It was challenging to involve the students in the COVID-19 environment, but the students gave very positive feedback about their summer experience, and we learned valuable lessons in using remote volunteers effectively.

Our Peoria office has a vibrant paralegal internship program. Our Rockford office utilized non-attorney volunteers in several ways leading up to the Second Chances Summit in November, 2019. An undergraduate student helped to screen clients for financial eligibility and schedule appointments for the summit, while over 30 law students helped to review the cases for eligibility for sealing or expungement and prepare the cases for the clinic.

This coming year we will continue to seek undergraduate interns and others who would be willing to work with our local office *pro bono* coordinators. We believe that this arrangement will be “win-win,” as the interns become familiar with the legal system and our cost in staff time per case drops, allowing us to serve even more clients.

9. Develop and expand opportunities in the collar counties

DuPage and Lake Counties are the most populous counties in Prairie State’s service area, and home to over half of the ARDC-registered attorneys in our 36 counties. Although we currently have some volunteers in these counties, we believe there is great potential for growth, given the number of registered attorneys who do not currently volunteer with Prairie State. However, we are aware that there are other *pro bono* opportunities in these counties, and do not seek to compete with or duplicate the efforts of other organizations. For example, in DuPage County, the DuPage Legal Aid Foundation, a program initially developed by the DuPage County Bar Association, coordinates *pro bono* family law services in the county as well as some other *pro bono* services. We have developed stronger communication with DuPage Legal Aid over the past year, and are committed to continuing our efforts to work together to maximize services to DuPage County residents. In 2020-2021, we will be working to make the best use of the untapped resources while not duplicating the excellent work of the other legal aid organizations.

10. Increase coordination among Prairie State offices to expand opportunities that cross geographical boundaries

With the increase in remote court appearances and virtual meetings due to COVID-19, it is no longer always necessary for attorneys to travel to the county where a client lives to meet with the client or even attend court. This provides us the opportunity to utilize the expertise of attorneys in one geographical area to assist clients in other parts of our service area. In 2020-2021, we will work to increase the communication and coordination among our different offices to develop *pro bono* programs and projects that stretch across local offices’ service areas to best utilize the availability and expertise of our attorney volunteers. By creating an effective and efficient coordinated *pro bono* service delivery model throughout our service area, we will be better situated to meet the needs of our clients, even after court dockets return to in person appearances.

We need your input!

Prairie State needs input to make our *pro bono* program as effective as possible. Our most successful *pro bono* efforts have grown out of conversations with our partners – the courts, bar associations, law firms, social service agencies, state and federal government, and individuals in our communities. Please share your ideas with us at volunteer@pslegal.org.

We actively invite bar leaders and other *pro bono* partners to offer input on this plan by completing our fall 2020 *pro bono* survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ProBonoPlan2020> or by contacting Prairie State's Executive Director, Director of *Pro Bono* Services or Director of Advocacy Training:

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You may also contact the staff of our regional offices and special projects:

Bloomington – (309) 827-5021

(serving Livingston, McLean, and Woodford Counties)

- Managing Attorney Adrian Barr (abarr@pslegal.org)
- *Pro Bono* Coordinator Kathy Boyle (kboyle@pslegal.org)

Joliet – (815) 727-5123

(serving Grundy and Will Counties)

- Managing Attorney Andrea DeTellis (adetellis@pslegal.org)
- *Pro Bono* Coordinator Suzanne Helwich (shelwich@pslegal.org)

Kankakee – (815) 935-2750

(serving Iroquois and Kankakee Counties)

- Managing Attorney Ketura Baptiste (kbaptiste@pslegal.org)
- *Pro Bono* Coordinator Karen Snyder (ksnyder@pslegal.org)

McHenry – (815) 344-9113

(serving McHenry County)

- Managing Attorney Paul Zukowski (pzukowski@pslegal.org)
- *Pro Bono* Coordinator Dori Michaels (dmichaels@pslegal.org)

Ottawa – (815) 434-5903

(serving Bureau, LaSalle, and Putnam Counties)

- Managing Attorney Don Dirks (ddirks@pslegal.org)

Peoria and Galesburg – (309) 674-9831

(serving Fulton, Henderson, Knox, Marshall, McDonough, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Warren Counties)

- Managing Attorney Denise Conklin (dconklin@pslegal.org)
- *Pro Bono* Coordinator Lydia Wagenbach (lwagenbach@pslegal.org)

Rockford – (815) 965-2902

(serving Boone, Carroll, Jo Daviess, Ogle, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties)

- Managing Attorney Jesse Hodierna (jhodierna@pslegal.org)
- *Pro Bono* Coordinator Wendy Crouch (wcrouch@pslegal.org)

Rock Island – (309) 794-1328

(serving Henry, Lee, Mercer, Rock Island, and Whiteside Counties)

- Managing Attorney Gretchen Farwell (gfarwell@pslegal.org)
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Waukegan – (847) 662-6925

(serving Lake County)

- Managing Attorney Samuel DiGrino (sdigrino@pslegal.org)
- *Pro Bono* Coordinator Susan Perlman (sperlman@pslegal.org)

West Suburban – (630) 690-2130

(serving DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, and Kendall Counties)

- Managing Attorney Marisa Wiesman (mwiesman@pslegal.org)
- *Pro Bono* Coordinator Mary Petruchius (mpetruchius@pslegal.org)

Low Income Tax Clinic – (630) 580-3315

(serving all 36 Prairie State counties)

- Project Supervisor, David Wolowitz (dwolowitz@pslegal.org)

Legal Help for Homeowners Project – (224) 321-5640

(serving all 36 Prairie State counties)

- Project Director Tiffany Harvey (tharvey@pslegal.org)

Fair Housing Project – (815) 965-2902

(serving Boone, Lake, McHenry, and Winnebago Counties)

- Project Manager AJ Young (ajyoung@pslegal.org)

Telephone Counseling Pro Bono Project – (630) 690-2130

- Project Coordinator Cindy Matre (cmatre@pslegal.org)
- Telephone Counseling Service Managing Attorney Melissa Fuechtmann (mfuechtmann@pslegal.org)

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