



## Pro Bono for House Counsel Not Licensed in Illinois

On July 1, 2008, amendments to Illinois Supreme Court Rules 716 and 756 went into effect that give retired and inactive attorneys as well as in-house attorneys with limited admission status the ability to provide on a pro bono basis critical legal assistance to disadvantaged people who would otherwise be shut out of the justice system. The amendments grew out of a desire of retired, inactive and in-house attorneys across the state who wanted to help meet the legal needs of the most vulnerable in Illinois, but were previously barred from doing so.

The [Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission's \(ARDC\)](#) website includes the forms that organizations ("sponsoring entities") and pro bono attorneys must complete in order to perform pro bono work under the amended rules. The Rules are summarized below, with references to the relevant ARDC forms.

### **In a nutshell, the amendments to Rules 716 and 756:**

- Provide that retired, inactive and in-house attorneys with limited admission status may do pro bono work — without charge or expectation of a fee — for individuals of limited means or charitable, civic, community or other similar groups; and
- Include safeguards to ensure that clients are receiving high quality legal services and that the profession is adequately protected.

### **Potential Pro Bono Attorneys Covered by these Amendments Must:**

- Provide pro bono services under the auspices of a sponsoring entity, which is defined as "a not-for-profit legal services organization, governmental entity, law school clinical program or a bar association providing pro bono services";
- Register their pro bono participation, along with verification from the sponsoring entity, with the ARDC on an annual basis (Form: [Attorney 1 on the ARDC website is the initial form to be completed](#); Form: [Attorney 2 is the renewal form](#)); and
- Participate in any trainings required by the sponsoring entity (the amendments exempt retired or inactive attorneys engaged in pro bono from meeting Illinois' MCLE requirements).

### **Legal Aid Organizations That Want to Work with These Attorneys Must:**

- Submit an application to the ARDC describing the organization's pro bono program in which retired, inactive or in-house counsel may participate ([Form: Sponsor 1 on the ARDC website](#));
- Certify that the organization will provide appropriate training and support to pro bono attorneys
- Provide malpractice insurance to pro bono attorneys; and
- Submit an annual statement to the ARDC verifying the continuation of any pro bono programs and describing any changes in pro bono programs in which retired, inactive or in-house counsel participate. ([Form: Sponsor 2 on the ARDC website](#)).

Additional information about the Rules is available at [www.IllinoisProBono.org](http://www.IllinoisProBono.org); the webpage includes a list of legal aid and pro bono organizations that have registered with the ARDC to act as a sponsoring entity under Rule 756.