

## How Do I Volunteer?

Excellent question! Just complete the below form and return it to John Amodeo Esq., Pro Bono Coordinator, at jamodeo@plsny.org

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Admitted to NY Bar: \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney Registration #: \_\_\_\_\_

### *I am interested in (circle):*

Challenges to disciplinary hearings

Excessive Use of Force

Jail/Parole/Merit Time & Sentencing

Medical/Mental Health

Family/Matrimonial

First Amendment      Advocacy

State Court              Federal Court

Appeals                  Trial Practice

Writing/Research      Immigration

Translating (language \_\_\_\_\_)

Other (programming, guardianship, visitation, medical parole, or specify): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ )

**I am only one, but still, I am one.  
I cannot do everything but I can  
do something. And, because I  
cannot do everything, I will not  
refuse to do what I can.  
- Edward Everett Hale**



## Prisoners' Legal Services of New York

**John Amodeo  
Pro Bono Coordinator**

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# Pro Bono Partnership Program

**The best way to find yourself  
is to lose yourself in service  
to others.  
- Mohandas Gandhi**

## Providing Legal Services to Indigent Prisoners . . .

Prisoners' Legal Services of New York (PLS) is a not-for-profit organization that provides civil legal services to indigent prisoners in New York State prisons where no other counsel is available. PLS has four offices—in Albany, Buffalo, Ithaca and Plattsburgh—and receives over 10,000 requests for assistance each year.

## The Program . . .

In 2011, PLS created the Pro Bono Partnership Program (PBPP), tasked with increasing access to legal services for prisoners, by referring cases to volunteer counsel. The program is managed by the Director of Pro Bono & Outreach, who works closely with PLS staff and the PBPP Pro Bono Coordinator to thoroughly screen cases for their appropriateness for referral. This pre-screening process includes obtaining releases and requesting relevant documents (including medical and mental health records, disciplinary records, and hearing transcripts) which will be provided to the *pro bono* attorney working on the case.

## Types of Cases Referred . . .

The PLS Pro Bono Partnership Program refers the following case types:

- Excessive use of force;
- Disciplinary hearings;
- Inadequate medical and mental health care;
- Sentence and jail time calculations;
- First Amendment rights;
- Parole and reentry issues (including medical parole applications);
- Applications for executive clemency;
- Immigration cases (including Petitions for Early Conditional Parole for Deportation Only and Conditional Parole for Deportation Only); and
- Family/Matrimonial Cases

These cases may require anything from advocacy efforts to litigation work, and may be in the Court of Claims, New York State Courts, or the Federal Courts located in New York State. The PBPP staff strives to identify the goals and concerns of pro bono counsel and appropriately match cases.

## Available Resources . . .

PLS provides a wide range of resources for all volunteer attorneys:

- PLS Attorneys can answer questions and provide guidance to volunteers.

- PLS will provide training materials on substantive areas of law and procedural legal issues.
- As an accredited CLE provider, PLS can provide attorneys with CLE credit for the work they do on *pro bono* cases. (NOTE: Attorneys can now earn up to 10 of their required CLE credits from *pro bono* work, with one CLE granted for each 120 minutes of work completed.)
- Volunteer attorneys can coordinate visits to prisons with staff in the four field offices.
- Volunteer attorneys may utilize PLS resources including, office space, fax and copier machines and computer/internet/phones.
- PLS also provides liability coverage for *pro bono* attorneys.
- Through a partnership with Albany Law School, law students can be assigned to assist counsel with research and writing tasks.

## AND

- The PBPP staff will engage in regular follow-up to ensure that all of the volunteer's needs are being met.