



# Commitment to pro bono work would expedite court proceedings

**I**t was a rite of spring for the Lee County Legal Aid Society. Every year around this time, we typically write to area attorneys asking you to “buy out” your pro bono service obligation with a financial contribution.

While we always appreciate donations of monetary support, we do not actually want you to “buy out” your pro bono service hours. You should act on your commitment to provide pro bono service in your community. And we want you to do it with us.

The Legal Aid Society has been operating in this community for more than half a century, and we are excited about our new partnership with the Clerk of Court to provide free legal advice to Lee County residents who have basic questions inappropriate for full-blown legal representation. Many are seeking to stop their wages from being garnished, though a handful would like to garnish someone else’s wages. Many are trying to prevent an eviction, though a handful would like to get a squatter out of their spare bedroom.

What these cases have in common is that none of the people who present them would otherwise be your customers. Absent our help, they would proceed *pro se* and set about wasting valuable court time and resources with rambling haphazard pleadings and near-incoherent court appearances.

You wonder why you have to tell your clients you can’t get a hearing for two months? It is not because of a veteran attorney’s thoughtful and well-crafted motion to suppress. It’s because someone is busy answering a judge’s question with irrelevant nonsense.

You can help these people not waste our time, and you can

educate them while helping yourself, your practice and your community.

We get many questions related to every conceivable legal practice area, and our expertise only extends so far. We need your help to take our courthouse clinic to the next level.

The work of the new LCBA Pro Bono Committee has just begun. We are excited to have you at our next meeting on Thursday, May 23 at the Green Cup Café. We can’t wait to see you there to talk about the impact we can make together. ⚖️

## Reminder:

Add LCBA Pro Bono Committee Lunch Meeting dates to your calendar on the fourth Thursday of every month. We meet at noon at the Green Cup Café, 1412 Dean St., No. 100, Fort Myers.

2019			
May 23	Jul 25	Sep 26	Nov 21
Jun 27	Aug 22	Oct 24	Dec 19
2020			
Jan 23	Apr 23	Jul 23	Oct 22
Feb 27	May 28	Aug 27	Nov TBD
Mar 26	Jun 25	Sep 24	Dec TBD



Andrew Banyai is the co-chair of the LCBA Pro Bono Committee and executive director of the Lee County Legal Aid Society. He is the most recent winner of the Paulette Burton Citizen of the Year Award and a former president of the Lee County Chapter of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He earned his Juris Doctor from Michigan State University.