

The following are commonly asked questions asked by *pro bono* volunteers like yourself. We hope that in reviewing them you can find the answers you need to help you resolve your case, but if for some reason the answer is not provided here, please contact the TRLA staff person who referred the case to you.¹

FAQs for *Pro bono* Attorneys

Case acceptance and responsibilities

- What is the process for taking a *pro bono* case?
 - Our *pro bono* coordinators will send you a case profile for a case that falls within the substantive areas that you indicated when signing up at www.trla.org/probono. If you indicate that you are interested in receiving that referral, we will first send you the information necessary for you to run a conflict check. We ask that you advise us within three (3) days if a conflict exists or if you will accept the referral. If you accept the referral, we will send you a case description and intake notes as well as all documents that the client provided to TRLA.
 - NOTE – TRLA recommends that you meet with your *pro bono* client as soon as practicable so that you can both establish expectations and results.
- Does TRLA provide malpractice insurance coverage for any *pro bono* case/matter referred to me?
 - Yes, but only for cases formally referred to you by TRLA. See <https://probonotexas.org/get-support/state-bar-support> for more information.
- What information do you need from me once I have accepted a referral or once the matter is finalized?
 - We will request a status update from you every sixty (60) days or so, and will seek the names of the attorney(s) working on the file as well as the amount of time spent so far;
 - When the representation has ended, we will ask for the following information so that we can provide you the proper *pro bono* credit:

¹ For questions related to reduced-fee contracts, email Tracy Figueroa at tfigueroa@trla.org (non-family) or Tricia Moore at tmoore@trla.org (family).

- any new information about the names of attorneys or other volunteers who worked on the referral;
 - The hours that each individual worked on the referral;
 - A copy of the documents evidencing the finalization of the case or representation, *e.g.*, final court order, copy of the will drafted, final benefits award letter, mediated agreement; and
 - A copy of the closing letter you sent to the client.
- What happens to attorney fees if I recover any in my *pro bono* case?
 - If you request that the Court order another party besides your client to pay attorney fees and the request is granted and fees are recovered, you may retain the fees. However, please let us know so we note for our records and funders that the case is no longer considered a *pro bono* referral.

Fee waivers

- Will TRLA provide me with statement of inability to pay court costs?
 - A blank copy of the standard form approved by the Supreme Court of Texas can be found at [Texas Law Help](#). When TRLA refers a case to a *pro bono* attorney, we will provide the attorney with all financial eligibility information the client provided to us, which will assist you in entering most of the information you will need for the statement of inability to pay court costs.
- When I filed the statement of inability to pay court costs, how will the court know that the case is a *pro bono* referral?
 - TRLA will provide you a Legal Aid Certificate that will indicate that you have taken the case on a *pro bono* basis.
- Can I avoid e-filing costs for pleadings e-filed with the court in my *pro bono* referral docket?
 - Yes, all you need to do is set up a "waiver" account within your current e-file account. The step-by-step instructions can be found [here](#).
- Can TRLA pay third party fees like publication, mediations or deposition costs?

- TRLA cannot pay the fees. However, most court fees should be covered by the statement of inability to pay court costs. Furthermore, if any court or clerk informs you that a cost or fee is not covered, you can contact TRLA to seek input about commentary by the Supreme Court of Texas or caselaw from appellate courts that can be used to support a request to avoid requiring a legal aid client to pay the fees.

Resources

- Do I get any access to a legal research database to be able to research issues that come up in my *pro bono* referral?
 - As an attorney licensed in Texas you get access to free legal research through [Fastcase](#).
- Are templates or sample forms available to assist me in my *pro bono* referral case?
 - Yes. There is free access to [Westlaw Doc & Form Builder](#). For case types that do not have samples available in Westlaw, samples may be available upon request. TRLA also maintains a list of *pro bono* volunteers who are experienced in several areas of the law and can provide some guidance upon request (see FAQ about mentors below).
- Do you provide access to a mentor?
 - While we do not have mentors on all substantive areas, TRLA has a list of experienced practitioners in areas of the law where we see a greater need for *pro bono* help. Those volunteers are ready to answer your questions and TRLA is always looking to expand that list. If you feel you can be a mentor to a colleague who is handling a *pro bono* case, please let TRLA know by signing up at www.trla.org/probono.
- Can TRLA provide me a translator?
 - There is [free access to the Language Access Fund](#) for telephonic, on-site, or video remote interpretation as well as document translation in *pro bono* cases taken through approved legal aid and *pro bono* service programs.

- Can I be provided assistance to be able to better communicate with a client with disabilities?
 - The [Communications Access Fund](#) will assist *pro bono* attorneys in communicating with their clients with disabilities.
- Can TRLA support provide resources and support staff to help me with the case (e.g., drafting, calling the client, researching)?
 - No, unfortunately TRLA does not have the resources to offer this support to *pro bono* attorneys.