

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND
ONE EXCHANGE TERRACE
PROVIDENCE, RI 02903

WILLIAM E. SMITH
CHIEF JUDGE

July 1, 2014

Dear Federal Practitioner:

The United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island is seeking your assistance in connection with an initiative to provide counsel to indigent parties in a limited number of civil cases each year. By this letter, I am writing to invite you as a member of the bar of this Court to consider applying for membership on a panel of attorneys available for appointment in such cases.

The Court recognizes that there are special occasions when it may be in the interest of justice of appoint counsel to assist a *pro se* party of limited financial means in a civil case. To address this need, the Court recently adopted a Plan for Pro Bono Representation in Civil Cases, which was drafted by the Court in conjunction with a subcommittee of the Federal Bench-Bar Committee of the Rhode Island Bar Association.

Now that the Plan has been adopted by the Court, we are looking to create a roster of civil practitioners to handle a small number of cases on a *pro bono* basis each year. All members of the Court's bar are welcome to apply for membership on the panel. In addition to encouraging experienced practitioners to volunteer to be on the panel, the Court also believes that this is an excellent opportunity for newer attorneys to gain valuable litigation experience under the direction of a mentor attorney.

The Court anticipates that there may be three or four cases that warrant a *pro bono* appointment each year. In light of the relatively small number of cases available each year for *pro bono* representation, we anticipate that a panel attorney would be asked to handle no more than a single case annually, and most likely would only receive a single appointment every few years.

If you are interested in applying to become a member of the panel, please visit the Court's website, and review the application and plan materials included in the "*Pro Bono*" section.

If you have any additional questions about the civil *pro bono* program, please contact the Clerk's Office at (401) 752-7220 or send an email to ProBono@rid.uscourts.gov. Thank you in advance for considering this request from the Court.

Very truly yours,



William E. Smith
Chief Judge