

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**



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To: All Members of the Western District of New York Bar  
From: Chief United States District Judge Elizabeth A. Wolford  
Date: August 5, 2021  
Re: Call for Volunteer Attorneys for the Court's Volunteer *Pro Bono* Panel & Publication of the *Pro Bono* Honor Roll

Dear Member of the Bar:

I hope that this letter finds you and your family in good health. Just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Court enacted L.R. Civ. P. 83.8 in an effort to reinvigorate its *pro bono* counsel program as a means of ensuring equal access to justice. Our community has been through a lot since that time and while we are all looking forward to returning to normalcy, the impact from the pandemic remains. Unfortunately, it has left an increasing number of individuals unable to afford legal counsel and the need to ensure equal access to justice is all the more important.

Since the inception of the program, the bar of this Court has answered the call. Notwithstanding the extraordinary challenges placed on us all from the pandemic, over 75 members of this bar have generously volunteered their time and joined the Court's *Pro Bono* Volunteer Panel over the past year. Because of the willingness of these individuals to devote their time and skill to this important endeavor, the Court has been able to appoint *pro bono* counsel to eligible *pro se* litigants in over 30 civil cases since April 1, 2020.

The selfless commitment and dedication that *pro bono* service requires is laudable. Accordingly, I am pleased to announce publication of the Court's inaugural ***Pro Bono Honor Roll***, acknowledging each of the attorneys who have appeared as *pro bono* counsel in civil matters from January 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. The Honor Roll is available on the Court's website and will be updated at least annually. I extend the Court's sincerest appreciation and gratitude to each of the attorneys listed on the Honor Roll and look forward to inviting the members of the Volunteer and Senior *Pro Bono* Panels to a Court gathering in the future to personally thank you for your *pro bono* service.

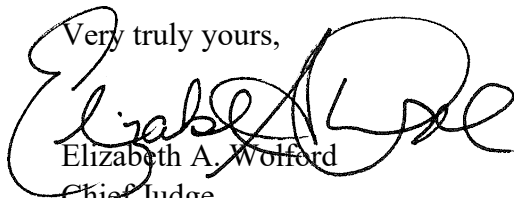
However, the need for additional volunteers remains. Therefore, I encourage those members of this bar who have not yet joined the Volunteer Panel to please give serious consideration to doing so. The use of *pro bono* counsel facilitates equal access to justice for civil litigants, permits the Court to address cases more effectively, and often provides valuable federal

court experience to attorneys. Attorneys may elect to volunteer for a limited-scope *pro bono* appointment (*i.e.* for a targeted portion of the case, including mediation, amendment of pleadings, motion practice, etc.), full-scope *pro bono* appointment (*i.e.* through final disposition of the case), or both.

Additionally and to the benefit of our volunteer attorneys, JustCause, formerly the Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, Inc., and the Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc., have partnered with the Court to provide benefits to *pro bono* attorneys appointed under L.R. Civ. P. 83.8, including primary malpractice insurance coverage and CLE credits for *pro bono* service in this Court. The Senior *Pro Bono* Panel, comprised of 11 experienced federal practitioners, is also available to provide guidance and assistance to *pro bono* attorneys upon request.

If you would like to join the Volunteer Panel, please complete the Volunteer Panel form located on the Court's website at <https://www.nywd.uscourts.gov/pro-bono-program> and email it to [probono@nywd.uscourts.gov](mailto:probono@nywd.uscourts.gov).

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth A. Wolford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "W".

Elizabeth A. Wolford  
Chief Judge

United States District Court