

Frequently Asked Questions for Civil Litigation Panel Volunteers

What is the Civil Litigation Panel?

The District Court's Civil Litigation Panel provides pro bono counsel to self-represented litigants whose cases are referred by the Court for appointment of counsel. Cases in which representation is needed generally involve prisoner rights and civil rights.

Membership on the panel is open to all who are admitted to practice before this Court. Panel membership can afford opportunities for full-scope representation, which often includes cases ready for trial, and/or opportunities for limited-scope representation, such as settlement conferences before Magistrate Judges.

How can I volunteer?

Attorneys who are interested in applying for membership on the District of Arizona's Civil Litigation Panel, or serving as a mentor, or who wish to be a point of contact for a law firm, should complete an online application form located [here](#).

What is the commitment?

There is no required minimum commitment. Volunteers and firms can designate the number of matters they wish to take on each year. Moreover, if contacted to review a matter, a volunteer is not required to accept the appointment.

How do I get in touch with my client?

The case docket sheet will have the plaintiff's current contact information. If the plaintiff is housed in the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry, the Court can connect pro bono counsel with ADCRR's Legal Access Monitor.

How will I get notified about opportunities to volunteer?

Court staff will reach out to panel members by email or phone when pro bono opportunities arise.

May I reach out directly to the Court and request an opportunity?

Yes, absolutely. If there is a particular time when you are able to volunteer, please let the Court know and see what opportunities are available.

Is there training for volunteer attorneys?

Yes, the Court held a training seminar in April 2020 that was recorded and can be accessed on the Court's website [here](#).

What types of cases are typically placed with Civil Litigation Panel volunteers?

The most frequent kind of matter is prisoner civil rights, dealing with denial of access to health care, excessive force, religious accommodation, and retaliation. The Court has also sought volunteer counsel for employment and other civil matters.

Are costs reimbursable?

General Order 10-10 permits reimbursement up to \$3,000 for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by court-appointed attorneys representing indigents in civil cases not covered by the Criminal Justice Act.

To seek reimbursement, pro bono counsel must file a motion in their case for reimbursement of costs. If the motion is granted, the attorney may then seek reimbursement from the Court's Non-Appropriated Fund by sending a letter request to the Clerk of Court.

If I take the case pro bono but win, am I eligible to move for fees?

Yes, taking a case pro bono does not preclude a prevailing party from moving for fees under any applicable statute.

If a client agrees to a contingent fee agreement, may I obtain it?

Yes, if the plaintiff and attorney agree to negotiate a separate fee agreement, they are free to do so.

How do I ensure my client appears in Court if he/she is incarcerated?

Counsel must file a motion with the Court in advance to facilitate the incarcerated litigant's telephonic, video, or in-person appearance.

How can I ensure my client has street clothes for a hearing or trial?

Counsel must file a motion with the Court seeking permission to bring outside street clothes for an incarcerated litigant to wear. Counsel must provide any clothes.

What if I would like to reopen discovery?

Counsel must file a motion as soon as practicable upon their appointment identifying the discovery to be conducted.

Who should I contact with additional questions?

Please contact Jodie Brown, Supervisory Staff Attorney, at Jodie_Brown@azd.uscourts.gov.