

Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges

In the spring of 2010, the judicial department sent out a voluntary and confidential survey to all Oregon judges. The results reflected that the majority of judges feel a confidential service comprised of colleagues and trained professionals would be beneficial and utilized. The survey results indicated that stress, burnout, depression, anxiety, retirement, and compulsive behavior are all areas of needed assistance.

In response to these survey results, Judge Ron Thom, a group of interested judges, and a representative from the judicial department met with Oregon Attorney Assistance Program (OAAP) staff to brainstorm ways to respond to the survey and make personal assistance more readily available to judges.

One of the ideas discussed was the creation of a volunteer network of assisting judges. This network would be comprised of judges who are willing to help their colleagues by sharing their experience and connecting their colleagues to other resources.

This handout describes the Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges as it has so far been envisioned, sets out the process for registering as a volunteer, the applicable protections, and ideas that have been considered so far. We hope that you will consider volunteering to become part of the network of assisting judges.

DESCRIPTION

The Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges is comprised of concerned judges who are willing to assist colleagues who are experiencing difficult times. Volunteer assisting judges will connect those colleagues with the resources available through the OAAP – either by encouraging the colleague to call the OAAP for assistance or by making a call to the OAAP on behalf of the colleague. A judge who is seeking assistance can also be connected with a volunteer assisting judge in his or her area by calling the OAAP.

All judges are eligible to become a part of the volunteer network of assisting judges. The only requirements are a willingness to learn about available resources and a desire to help colleagues connect to needed resources. No specific personal experience is required. Professional assistance will be given through the attorney counselors of the OAAP, who will work in conjunction with the Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges.

PROCESS

To access the Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges for assistance for yourself or a judge you are concerned about, call the confidential network hotline at 503-226-7150 or call the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program at 503-226-1057 and ask for an OAAP attorney counselor.

To become a part of the network, fill out a volunteer registration form and provide a copy to the OAAP. The registration forms are available through OAAP attorney counselors. Registering as a volunteer assisting judge provides a judge with the confidentiality protections of the OAAP. To

register as an assisting judge, send a registration form to Doug Querin, OAAP, 520 SW Yamhill, Suite 1050, Portland, Oregon 97204 or email to: DougQ@oaap.org. To reach Doug Querin by phone, call 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-OAAP (6227), extension 12. The OAAP will verify the receipt of your registration form.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The names of judges involved in or accessing the network will not be released to anyone outside the OAAP, without the consent of the judge. The Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges works in conjunction with the OAAP and receives the resulting confidentiality protections including those found in Oregon Code of Judicial Conduct JR 2-104(C), ORPC 8.3(c)(3), ORS 9.568(3), OSB Bylaw Article 24, and PLF Policies 6.150 – 6.300.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Chief Justice and the judicial department support the formation of the Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges. As part of that support, they have agreed to work with the Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges and the OAAP to help educate all judges about the volunteer network and about the other resources that are available to help judges. This may take place at judicial conferences and through other communication means such as mailings and listserves.

The OAAP is available to offer training to the Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges on topics of interest to the network. Some of the topics suggested for training sessions include: scope of volunteer assistance, confidentiality protections and responsibilities, decision making protocols, signs and symptoms of specific illnesses, managing crisis situations, listening and communication skills, and personal safety.

STEWARDSHIP

The Volunteer Network of Assisting Judges may want to create an advisory council that provides feedback to the OAAP, suggests additional services that are needed, and helps the OAAP develop additional ways to reach judges who are experiencing difficult times or struggling.