



P R O B O N O P R O G R A M

Formerly the Public Service Activities Corporation

TIPS for Working With Your Pro Bono Lawyer

Congratulations! Your case has been accepted for referral to a lawyer through the CED Pro Bono Project Legal Clinic. Here are five tips for working with a lawyer that are important to consider as the process moves forward:

1. Be sure you actively participate in finalizing a retainer agreement and understand its terms. What legal matter(s) has the lawyer agreed to work on? What are the arrangements regarding costs? (Large photocopying costs and filing and permit fees are expected to be paid for by the client.) Make sure you have the lawyer's phone number and any other contact information, and that you get name and numbers for anyone else who may be working on your case in his office (i.e. attorney's secretary, legal assistant etc.).
2. Get a working understanding of what issues will be addressed within what time frame by the attorney. Some aspects of your case or transaction may be driven by project time lines, make sure you and the lawyer understand these time lines.
3. Be mindful of the many priorities that are competing for your pro bono lawyer's attention. Try to avoid urgent requests for service that require the attorney to drop everything and deal with your case. Give your attorney and yourself adequate lead time to respond.
4. Be forthright and disclose all relevant facts and background. The legal advice will only be as good as the quality of information that you provide. The attorney is ethically bound to keep all material communications about your organization's legal issues confidential. If new facts develop, keep your attorney up to date.
5. Even though the services are pro bono, be mindful of the fact that time is money for you and the volunteer attorney. Use the resource wisely. Call your lawyer when you need to, but don't monopolize his or her time with every problem that arises during your business day. Be on time and prepared for meetings. Keep meetings and discussions on track and productive.