

## 2026 Private Attorney Involvement Plan

The federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC), a funder of Georgia Legal Services Program, requires us to develop an annual plan for involving private attorneys in helping meet the civil legal needs of Georgians with low incomes. 45 CFR 1614.4.

The phrases “private attorney involvement” or “PAI” are used in the federal regulations that apply to GLSP’s use of grant funds from the federal Legal Services Corporation. Private attorney involvement refers to “pro bono” as that term is commonly understood in the legal profession. It also encompasses legal services for which an attorney charges our program (for services to our client) a reduced fee or “low bono.” Private attorney involvement also encompasses volunteer engagement generally, extending to the use of law students, law graduates and allied professionals enlisted to support legal services delivery.

This plan presents an overview of GLSP’s current program, provides information about new and ongoing obstacles to meeting the legal needs and service gaps in our region, and previews solutions that we are working toward in 2026 and beyond.

GLSP’s 2026 priorities for the delivery of legal services are: Families, Health, Housing, and Income Maintenance and Education. Our 2026 PAI plan honors these priorities. GLSP regional offices collaborate with their community partners and colleagues to identify local client needs that can be addressed by volunteers based on skills and interests. Volunteers can assist clients by participating in legal clinics or through individual case representation.

Our 2026 Pro Bono Unit (PBU) staff is a mix of 18 lawyers, paralegals, and other professionals. Leadership includes the Senior Director of Litigation and Advocacy (lawyer); two PBU Deputy Directors (lawyers), one who oversees clinics and compliance and a second who oversees partnerships and collaborations; and the Director of the State Bar Pro Bono Resource Center. Five PBU Staff Attorneys support our Augusta, Gainesville/Athens, Macon, Piedmont, and Savannah regional offices. An additional four PBU Coordinators (non-attorneys) support our Albany, Brunswick, Columbus, and Dalton offices. In our central Atlanta office, an additional five individuals provide partial or full-time assistance to the Unit, including the PBU Support Manager, IT Analyst, PBU Paralegal, Statewide Project Manager, and an additional Project Manager.

### **I. Current Program Overview**

#### *A. What We Do and Our Service Territory*

The mission of Georgia Legal Services Program is to provide access to justice and opportunities out of poverty for Georgians with low incomes. Our lawyers, paralegals, and volunteers provide help that reflects our community’s values of fairness, equality, and responsibility to assist others in need.

We are a non-profit law firm serving rural and small-town Georgia—all of Georgia except the five-county metro Atlanta area. That is a service territory of 154 mostly rural counties. We have nine offices around the state to serve people where they live. We also have a significant presence in

Atlanta, where our central administrative office is located along with many of our partners, funders, and other supporters. Many of our volunteers are also Atlanta-based.

We offer free civil legal services to people who cannot afford to hire a lawyer. Our clients have “high stakes” problems such as domestic violence, eviction, probate issues, denial of hard-earned benefits such as unemployment, inability to get critically needed health care or food aid, and more.

We enlist private attorneys as volunteer lawyers to help provide civil legal services to the poor throughout our service territory. The work of our staff and volunteers assures that people with low incomes have access to justice and opportunities out of poverty. When problems occur, we help our clients secure the support they need to get back on their feet — with dignity. When rights are denied, we help our clients seek redress and have those rights assured.

### *B. Our Pro Bono Approach*

GLSP’s pro bono programming and support are closely tied to the State Bar of Georgia in several capacities. Under a decades-old arrangement that recognizes the shortage of legal resources outside Atlanta, a PBU attorney leads the State Bar Pro Bono Resource Center as its Director and works from an office located at the State Bar headquarters, providing support for Bar sections, committees, and Bar leadership. In addition to this attorney role, GLSP also provides a dedicated non-attorney Pro Bono Resource Manager responsible for ensuring consistent access to information, guidance, and support for legal professionals and the public. In the early 1980s, the State Bar recognized the paucity of legal resources to support pro bono and access to justice outside the city of Atlanta and provided a structure to support volunteerism by Bar members in rural and small-city Georgia.

Our PBU staff participate in State and local bar activities and engage with, or are members of, State Bar sections and committees. Such relationships provide us many opportunities to highlight the need for support and participation in our pro bono program and allow us to draw attention to ways to address the justice gap and the legal deserts within the state.

Our multi-faceted approach to providing legal services in rural and small-city Georgia relies on active participation from solo and small-firm lawyers living in our 154-county service area. In recent years, we have amplified our impact by incorporating law students, large law firms, corporations, and other Atlanta-based attorneys remotely. Our staff coordinate with local and statewide partners to host clinic events and arrange one-on-one service delivery to clients in their area. These range from counsel and advice opportunities to representation in court. Our coordinators place a great deal of emphasis on a well-rounded volunteer experience, and that includes consideration of client need, matching volunteers to impactful services, and assuring training and support systems are encouraging success at every step of the way.

We have always urged lawyers to think strategically about pro bono and to include pro bono in their annual business plans. We ask lawyers to contact us and tell us exactly how many cases they would like to receive from us in the upcoming year, the type of case, and how frequently we should send a case to them.

There are several benefits to volunteering with GLSP. Our staff screen all clients, ensuring legal assistance is going to individuals who meet LSC eligibility guidelines 45 CFR § 1611 and §1626 with household incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level, with most falling below 125%, and low assets. GLSP provides pro bono volunteers with malpractice insurance. Pro bono volunteers also have access to substantive support from GLSP's expert staff and can receive training/assistance throughout their time working on a case.

### *C. Transformation*

GLSP continues an expansive long-term effort to transform its pro bono program. Since beginning the overhaul of our pro bono programming in 2019, we have fully integrated pro bono services into GLSP's overall civil legal services delivery system and received grants to support largescale overhauls to our collaboration, communication, and case management systems (2020) and to standardize our service delivery processes and policies across all offices. The transformation of our pro bono programming involved comprehensive assessments, strategic improvements, and restructuring of our organizational and unit management systems.

## **II. Pro Bono Program Operations**

### *A. Services Available*

GLSP provides a wide variety of opportunities for volunteer engagement. This ability is greatly expanded and supported by Georgia Bar Rule 1.2, which allows attorneys to provide limited-scope service rather than full representation to every client. GLSP has embraced the option of limiting the scope of representation and encourages volunteer attorneys to do so when appropriate. Attorneys may accept referrals to review client circumstances in depth, negotiate with adverse parties, and more. New volunteers and those considering opportunities outside of their expertise benefit greatly from this approach. Our current model leans heavily toward providing lawyers with limited-scope service work that is respectful of time commitments and still provides valuable services to clients.

GLSP staff post volunteer opportunities, including both one-on-one services and clinics, on its [Paladin website](https://app.joinpaladin.com/!/georgia-legal-services-program-2/opportunities/) (<https://app.joinpaladin.com/!/georgia-legal-services-program-2/opportunities/>). GLSP tested the website in mid-2022 in partnership with the State Bar of Georgia's Access to Justice Committee. By 2023, the State Bar of Georgia contracted with Paladin (<https://app.joinpaladin.com/gaprobono/>) to support legal organizations and amplify pro bono opportunities available to Bar members.

#### 1. Regional Pro Bono Services

While we have developed systems that allow Atlanta-based attorneys to support clients remotely, we remain committed to matching clients to local volunteers where possible. This is especially important where clients need representation in court or before administrative forums. Regional Coordinators or Staff Attorneys recruit and support volunteers in these cases and work with local attorneys, firms, and/or other legal professionals to identify suitable cases that meet the needs of our client community as well as the interests of our volunteers.

In addition to posting cases on [Paladin](#), PBU staff contact active volunteers and new interested attorneys to place individual cases. Upon confirmation of the match, the volunteer attorney receives the client information, and the relevant coordinator continues to monitor the case through completion.

## 2. Statewide Pro Bono Services

While our focus is serving clients locally where they are, our PBU is also able to accommodate one-time “impact projects” in response to a sudden community need or volunteer interest that pertains to providing impactful civil legal services aligning with GLSP’s priorities. These are frequently small clinics in partnership with large firms and/or corporate counsel attorneys. We encourage innovation and are open to new opportunities to serve clients. Those interested in developing an impact project should contact the PBU Deputy Director of Partnerships and Collaborations (Cari King, [cking@glsp.org](mailto:cking@glsp.org)) for more information.

One such impact project is in response to an environmental disaster, such as a hurricane. The Disaster Legal Services Project operates statewide, bringing together legal partners across Georgia (Georgia Team Ready) to ensure that survivors in every community have access to critical civil legal assistance after a disaster. Georgia Team Ready (GTR) is a partnership between GLSP, the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia, and several large Atlanta-based law firms to provide legal assistance after a disaster. GLSP maintains the materials, partnerships, and systems necessary to support the temporary restructure of the Pro Bono Unit following federal or state-declared disaster events.

When a disaster occurs, GTR goes into action by strategically placing and monitoring pro bono cases with members of the private bar, including attorneys at law firms (large and small), corporate counsel, and others in alignment with client need and grant criteria.

In addition, we are developing several small-scale regional projects in hopes of expanding them in the future. These include a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy project in partnership with Mercer Law School, a counsel and advice Probate project in Hall and Athens-Clarke Counties, representation for survivors of violence in Protective Order hearings in Chatham County, and a project to help unhoused individuals gain access to birth certificates and powers of attorney in Savannah. We anticipate building and piloting additional new substantive projects in 2026.

### *B. Opportunities for Lawyers*

In 2025, we shifted away from larger-scale, labor intensive clinics in favor of more frequent regional opportunities that allow for participation by local and remote volunteers.

This shift in focus allowed our staff more time to build relationships with client services partners and ensured our PBU efforts continue to impactfully meet the needs of our local communities. In 2026, these smaller clinics will continue to have access to our statewide technology, expertise, and staffing support where needed to ensure event success. We will continue to develop new regional clinic models to provide experiences for more volunteers.

### *C. Opportunities for Non-Lawyers*

GLSP pro bono and direct services staff engage with a variety of non-attorney volunteers to find innovative ways to improve our outreach and services abilities.

## 1. Law Students and Recent Graduates

Local GLSP offices engage law student volunteers to support volunteer lawyers on a limited basis, usually in the development and referral of pro bono cases and for supporting pro bono legal clinics. We also offer law students the opportunity to develop pro bono volunteer support materials and pro bono-themed social media outreach opportunities. Our law students have participated in the development and staging of pro bono recognition and training events. In 2026 GLSP will work with Georgia State University College of Law on two immersive alternative spring break trips for students in our regions.

GLSP will continue using Georgia’s Student Practice Rule (<https://www.gabaradmissions.org/studpracrule>) to ensure our interns and externs gain valuable advocacy experience. The Bar rule authorizes student practice that is co-extensive with all the work that a licensed attorney can do. A law student “when under the supervision of a member of the State Bar of Georgia, may, as if admitted and licensed to practice law in Georgia, advise, prepare legal instruments, appear before courts and administrative agencies and otherwise take action on behalf of” persons unable to pay for legal services.

The Supreme Court of Georgia and the Georgia Commission on Continuing Legal Competency are considering a new “CLE for Pro Bono” rule that would encourage lawyers to engage in pro bono legal services by providing the volunteer lawyers with a reduction in required CLE hours based on hours of pro bono service provided. GLSP will monitor the progress of this proposed rule and implement a response that will support its volunteers under the rule.

## 2. Paralegals

Paralegal opportunities primarily involve preparation of documents or the collection of client information ahead of a clinic event. Among regional offices, paralegals or other non-attorney legal professionals may also be able to provide other assistance to GLSP staff or other pro bono volunteers under the supervision of a licensed attorney. Please contact the PBU Deputy Director of Partnerships and Collaborations (Cari King, [cking@glsp.org](mailto:cking@glsp.org)) for more information.

### *D. Volunteer Training and Supports*

GLSP takes seriously the LSC requirement to provide training and other supports to its volunteers and accomplishes this through several outlets. We have an online learning management system that houses our volunteer training and support materials: <https://learning.glsp.org/home/signup.php>.

GLSP also hosts periodic webinars – most Georgia CLE-accredited—and local bar presentations on pro bono and substantive law for volunteer lawyers. We will continue this practice in 2026.

PBU staff attorneys maintain substantive knowledge in our most popular project areas, but our team can additionally support volunteers through the expanded substantive expertise of our GLSP staff. Our Program employs several specialist attorneys in the areas of family law, housing, public benefits, elder, and health law. These attorneys are available to our volunteers and connected to them as needed by members of our PBU. Attorneys in our local field offices also help support volunteers in our pro bono program through training, on-site legal clinic support, development of manuals, presentation of PowerPoint trainings, and the creation of other forms of legal content to support

volunteer development.

Our partnership with the State Bar of Georgia will continue. GLSP and the State Bar partner to support the State Bar of Georgia Pro Bono Resource Center, an effort that is decades old. The Pro Bono Resource Center works closely with GLSP's local offices and assists with CLE programming, local bar presentations, lawyer demographic data, marketing, social media, training materials development, and more.

Through networking events, we are also able to educate local lawyers about the legal needs of our clients, volunteer opportunities, and strengthen relationships between the coordinators and the private bar.

#### *E. Volunteer Recognition*

Recognition of our volunteers allows us to celebrate achievements, reward our team, and encourage future pro bono participation. GLSP does this in several ways.

In 2026, we will continue to host both local and state-level recognition events. Locally, each regional office is encouraged to partner with their bar associations and/or other community leaders to present Champion, Advocate, and Catalyst awards—recognizing, respectfully, the individuals who accepted the greatest number of cases, performed outstanding service for a pro bono client, and made the greatest effort to support pro bono engagement in their region. Similarly, the state-level awards recognize those who most impacted PBU efforts across GLSP's 154-county service area. Currently our lawyer volunteers are also recognized at regional office and local bar events and on the State Bar of Georgia [Pro Bono Honor Roll](https://www.gabar.org/programs/pro-bono-resource-center/pro-bono-honor-roll#:~:text=The%20State%20Bar%20of%20Georgia%20Pro%20Bono%20Honor,services%20to%20low-income%20individuals%20and%20families%20throughout%20Georgia.) (<https://www.gabar.org/programs/pro-bono-resource-center/pro-bono-honor-roll#:~:text=The%20State%20Bar%20of%20Georgia%20Pro%20Bono%20Honor,services%20to%20low-income%20individuals%20and%20families%20throughout%20Georgia.>).

#### *F. Case Management*

##### 1. Intake and Eligibility

GLSP allows potential applicants to apply in-person, by phone, and online. Staff dedicated to screening applicants for financial eligibility take calls from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Applications received through the online intake system are routed through GLSP's case management system. To determine initial eligibility, applicants are asked about family size, current and potential income and assets, citizenship status, and other eligibility factors. Before cases are referred to a potential volunteer attorney, a Pro Bono Unit staff member evaluates each case for merit and confirms the applicant's financial eligibility.

##### 2. Referrals

All GLSP clients undertake our intake process, whether through GLSP's Statewide Intake, coming in person to a local office, or through a referral from another nonprofit. Appropriate cases are then routed to the PBU for placement. In 2026, newly updated technology will allow us to schedule eligible clients into pro bono clinics more efficiently.

Clients are typically required to register for clinics hosted by the PBU. This can be done over the phone. In some cases, GLSP will arrange in-person registration events coupled with a client education seminar on the topic of the clinic. Ideally, all relevant legal work on clinic cases is completed on the day of the event. This requires more extensive engagement with the clients in some substantive areas than it does in others. Some clinic models, such as our counsel and advice clinics, allow for same-day intake registration but make no guarantee of services until intake has been completed.

GLSP is aware that some volunteer attorneys are not regularly referred a case, despite their willingness to accept cases. The match between case type and the location of the volunteer attorney sometimes makes a match difficult. GLSP continues to work to utilize all volunteer attorneys to meet the needs of eligible clients. We use our quarterly pro bono newsletter, *Pro Bono Insights*, and monthly opportunities updates to maintain contact with our volunteers over time and to keep other stakeholders informed about our programming.

### 3. Follow Up

GLSP staff regularly follow up on their placed cases to determine the status of representation. The follow up is done no less than quarterly until the pro bono attorney notifies GLSP that the case is concluded. Assistance can be provided to the pro bono attorney throughout the case by GLSP staff unless the case referred represents a conflict of interest for GLSP.

#### *G. Volunteer Outreach*

##### 1. Resources

Information about the GLSP Pro Bono Program is available on our website, [glsp.org](http://glsp.org). Attorneys can explore volunteer opportunities and access our learning management system through the links provided there. We add all our volunteers to our case management system, LegalServer. Our PBU team members can search for a potential volunteer by county and LSC legal problem code type, clinic interest, and more.

##### 2. Online

We use [Paladin](#) to advertise our available pro bono cases.

##### 3. Local, Specialty and Diversity Bars

Pro Bono Team members and other GLSP attorneys attend bar association meetings and events to recruit volunteers and other supporters. In 2026, GLSP will work to host several clinics with legal/specialty bar associations and local partners.

#### *H. Information, Obstacles, and Challenges*

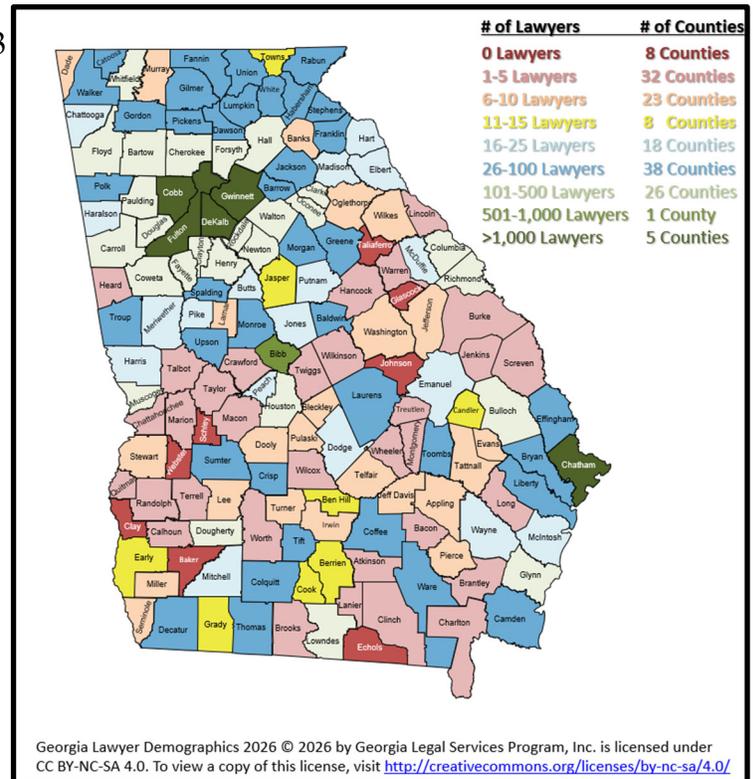
##### 1. Volunteer Needs

In December 2025, the State Bar issued a pro bono services survey to collect feedback from private attorneys about barriers that affect pro bono participation. GLSP will review the survey results and translate the findings into a targeted plan for improvement in the services we provide our volunteer attorneys.

## 2. Counties Without Lawyers

There are eight Georgia counties with no resident lawyers (two more than in 2024) and an additional 63 counties with 15 or fewer lawyers. For purposes of this count, “lawyer” also includes judges, prosecutors, public defenders—lawyers not available to provide free civil legal services to the poor. As displayed on the map, many of these counties are in the southern portion of the state.

The PBU 2024 survey of current volunteers (those who have accepted a case within the past year) suggested that GLSP has expanded its volunteer population to include more seasoned attorneys who are early and mid-career, rather than relying heavily on volunteers near retirement. In 2026, GLSP will continue to make volunteer opportunities accessible to new Georgia lawyers through increased CLE programming, additional substantive support, and increased partnership with the Younger Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia.



## III. **Feedback on this Plan**

The federal Legal Services Corporation, a funder of Georgia Legal Services Program, requires us to develop an annual plan for involving private attorneys in helping meet the civil legal needs of persons with low-income. 45 C.F.R. Sec. 1614.4. GLSP seeks comments on this plan throughout the year. Please provide comments to Sarah J. Anderson, GLSP Pro Bono Unit Deputy Director/Clinics & Compliance, 104 Marietta St. NW, Suite 250, Atlanta, GA 30303. You can also contact us by email at [sjanderson@glsp.org](mailto:sjanderson@glsp.org) or reach out to Lisa J. Krisher, Senior Director of Litigation and Advocacy, at [lkrisher@glsp.org](mailto:lkrisher@glsp.org).

A copy of this plan is posted annually on a [State Bar of Georgia website page](https://www.gabar.org/programs/pro-bono-resource-center/georgia-legal-services-program) (<https://www.gabar.org/programs/pro-bono-resource-center/georgia-legal-services-program>) and provided to local GLSP offices for sharing with local bar associations.