



LAW FIRM/CORPORATE LAW DEPARTMENT GUIDE TO ABA FREE LEGAL ANSWERS™

Tali K. Albukerk

ABA Free Legal Answers, National Administrator

American Bar Association | 321 North Clark Street | Chicago, IL 60654

T: 312.988.5704 | F: 312.932.6426

Tali.Albukerk@americanbar.org | ABAFreeLegalAnswers.org

WHAT IS ABA FREE LEGAL ANSWERS™?

ABA Free Legal Answers™ is a virtual legal advice portal for users to pose legal questions online to volunteer attorneys:

- Users must meet income eligibility guidelines
- Questions must be regarding civil legal matters
- Answers will be provided by volunteer attorneys in the users' respective states
- Links will be provided to lawyer referral and other legal services projects for those not eligible or who need more in-depth legal representation

ABA Free Legal Answers™ increases services to low-income populations:

- ABA Free Legal Answers has, in just over one year of service, received over 61,500 legal questions, over 5,700 pro bono attorney registrations and has 42 jurisdictions committed to participating.
- Provision of brief advice can prevent larger legal crises from developing
- Allows users in rural areas to access legal resources from across the state
- Provision of brief advice allows legal services staff attorneys to focus on full representation

ABA Free Legal Answers™ increases pro bono opportunities:

- Convenient pro bono opportunity that attorneys can fit into their schedule
- Attorneys can log in and provide answers 24/7/365
- Reaches volunteer populations with restricted time in which to provide pro bono, such as stay-at-home parents, law firm/corporate attorneys, and government attorneys



The American Bar Association offers:

- Malpractice insurance for all volunteer attorneys
- A national staff person to maintain the site, manage the queue and collect and analyze data
- Web hosting, at no cost to participating states



HOW CAN MY LAW FIRM OR CORPORATE LAW DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATE?

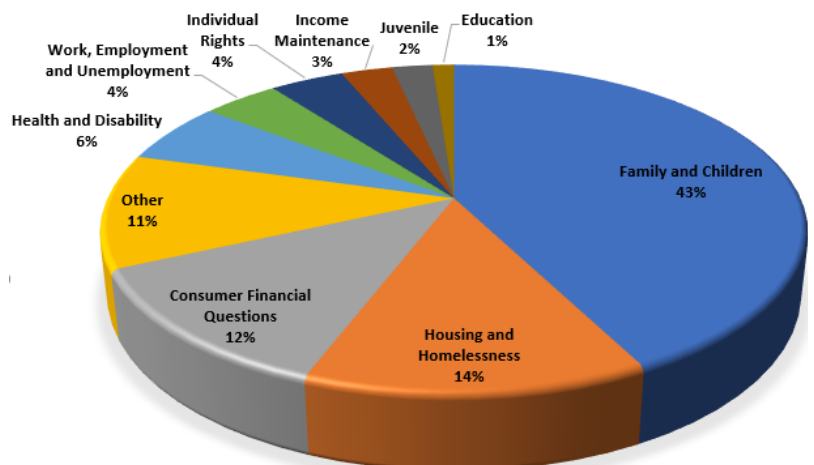
Recruit Your Attorneys to Provide Convenient Pro Bono Through ABA Free Legal Answers™

- Attorneys licensed in a participating state and in good standing can provide pro bono services through ABA Free Legal Answers
- They can go to ABAFreeLegalAnswers.org, click on "Volunteer Attorney Registration" and select their state

With the mobile-friendly platform of ABA Free Legal Answers™, your firm or corporation can:

- Host online legal clinics from the comforts of your office
- Encourage team building amongst attorneys
- Attract newer attorneys to "get their feet wet" with providing pro bono legal assistance
- Create rewarding partnerships with bar associations and law schools
- Potentially combine lunch-time clinics with an hour of ethics CLE

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF LEGAL QUESTIONS POSTED?





ABA Free Legal Answers™

Virtual Legal Advice Clinic Check-List

☐ Set the Venue

- Pick a space that allows for multiple laptops (or tablets) to be set up for volunteers to answer questions.
- Participants should be able to see the screen they are using to respond to a question, e.g. a conference room.
- Keep in mind the group can get noisy as they collaborate.
- Your venue may determine the number of people you can fit.

☐ Set the Date and Invite Speaker (Optional)

- Check your venue calendar for a free date.
- If you are scheduling regular clinics, schedule them at least two weeks apart on the calendar. This allows time for the question queue to refill with new questions for your volunteers to choose from after the last clinic.
- Consider inviting an experienced local legal aid attorney, e.g. in housing, family law, limited scope ethics, to attend as a resource and/or to provide an hour of CLE training.
- Notify national administrator of date and time of clinic.

☐ Seek Out Volunteer Attorneys

- Contact individual attorneys and law firm pro bono/public interest committees who might be interested and ask if they would volunteer.
- Publicize event with electronic and hard-copy flyers. *See attached example*
- Let volunteers know if their time qualifies for CLE credit. State-specific info here: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/probono_public_service/policy/cle_rules.html
- Let volunteers know that they are covered under the ABA's malpractice insurance for work done through the Free Legal Answers site.

☐ Send Instructions to Confirmed Volunteers

- Provide volunteers with instructions on how to register (if they need to do so) and how to select questions at the event. *See attached flyer and [instruction video](#).*
- Send reminders as appropriate/needed.
- Be prepared that some volunteers will not follow instructions.

☐ Notify the state administrator for all states in which volunteer attorneys are licensed

- The state administrator will watch for and approve new volunteers who register before/during your event.

☐ Pair Volunteer Attorneys (Optional)

- Encourage collaboration when possible by pairing one experienced attorney for every 1-2 junior-level attorneys.
- Ask for areas of interest from attorneys and match attorneys based on indicated areas of interest.
- If collaborating with a law school, pair one experienced attorney for every 1-2 law students.

☐ Send Reminders to Attendees

- Include relevant information like parking or directions.
- Remind everyone to bring their laptops.

→ Remind volunteer attorneys to ensure they've registered on their state's Free Legal Answers site.

□ Prep the Venue

- Test the Wi-Fi connection and ABA FLA site prior to volunteer attorney arrival.
- Set out snacks or provide lunch (optional).
- Organize seating (if applicable).

□ Conduct the Clinic

- Remind volunteer attorneys of the following:
 - They should only take questions they feel comfortable answering.
 - They may conduct research before submitting an answer.
 - They may draft an answer for review by a more experienced attorney.
 - They may return the question to the queue before submitting their response if they decide they can't answer the question. Note: An open question will remain in the attorney's queue for a maximum of 3 days.
 - Provide attached flyer with instructions and view [instruction video](#).
- Prepare experienced attorneys so they know they may be reviewing drafted answers.
- Remind volunteer attorneys of places to find resources like the "Training Resources" page on their state's FLA page.
- Contact state and/or national administrator with issues or concerns during clinic.
- Take photos (optional).

□ Post-Event Follow-Ups

- Thank volunteer attorneys for attending.
- Encourage volunteer attorneys to attend the next clinic and/or take additional questions on their own.
- Encourage volunteer attorneys to take on longer-term pro bono projects through the firm once they feel comfortable doing pro bono through ABA Free Legal Answers.
- Provide volunteer attorneys with a post-event survey (optional).





Are you curious about **pro bono** but not sure where to get started?

Does your firm want a **flexible** pro bono opportunity that lawyers can do on their own or as a group?

Curious about hosting an **online legal clinic** from the comfort of your office?

Looking for a free hour of ethics **CLE** that comes with lunch?

If any of these describe you, please join us to learn more about the newest statewide pro bono program, **TexasLegalAnswers.org**. This online legal advice clinic for low-income Texans fits into any lawyer's practice and lifestyle. With the mobile-friendly platform, your firm can host virtual legal clinics; create rewarding partnerships with clients or law schools; and encourage team building amongst colleagues.

March 8, 2018
Lunch served at 11:45 a.m.
Presentation begins at 12:00 p.m.

Vinson & Elkins LLP
1001 Fannin
Suite 2500
Houston, TX 77002

The presentation will be live at their Houston office and broadcast to the Austin and Dallas offices.

Please RSVP to Malissa Wauls at Mwauls@velaw.com.

Please contact Hannah Allison if you have any questions at Hannah.Allison@TexasBar.com.

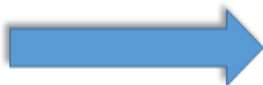
**Lunch at each location
generously provided by
Vinson & Elkins.**



Steps to Register as a Volunteer Attorney

- Navigate to [ABAFreeLegalAnswers.org](https://abafreelegalanswers.org).
- Click on [Volunteer Attorney Registration](#).
- Select the [state](#) you practice in.
- Read and agree to the [Attorney Agreement](#).
- Fill out the required registration information.
- Check your [email inbox](#), follow the directions to activate your account.
 - Check your spam folder!
- Check your [email inbox](#) for account approval.
 - Can take up to 2-5 business days.

You are now ready to take a question



Steps to Answer Civil Legal Questions

- Go to your state site (see attached state list), click [Sign In](#).
- Under [I am an Attorney](#), enter email address or license and password, click [Login](#).
- Verify attorney status by clicking [Yes](#).
- [Select a question](#) under the Subject Column if you are comfortable answering and don't know the listed parties.
 - Unsure of your state's limited scope representation ethic rules? Click on the [FAQ page](#).
- Select [Answer Now](#).
- Enter your response within 3 days.
 - Include hyperlinks and attach any documents that may be helpful to the client.
 - [Save as Draft](#) to research and confer with colleagues, click on [Training Resources](#) for help.
 - Can't answer the question? Click on "I want to return this question."
- Enter your [pro bono time](#).
- Click [Submit](#).

Thank you for your pro bono service!



ABA Free Legal Answers State Sites

Alaska	alaska.freelegalanswers.org
Arizona	az.freelegalanswers.org
Arkansas	ar.freelegalanswers.org
Connecticut	ct.freelegalanswers.org
Florida	florida.freelegalanswers.org
Georgia	georgia.freelegalanswers.org
Hawaii	hawaii.freelegalanswers.org
Illinois	il.freelegalanswers.org
Indiana	indiana.freelegalanswers.org
Iowa	iowa.freelegalanswers.org
Kansas	kansas.freelegalanswers.org
Louisiana	la.freelegalanswers.org
Maine	maine.freelegalanswers.org
Maryland	maryland.freelegalanswers.org
Massachusetts	mass.freelegalanswers.org
Minnesota	mnlegaladvice.org (third party site)
Missouri	missouri.freelegalanswers.org
Montana	askkarla.org (third party site)
Nebraska	ne.freelegalanswers.org
New Mexico	nm.freelegalanswers.org
New York	ny.freelegalanswers.org
North Carolina	nc.freelegalanswers.org
Oklahoma	oklahoma.freelegalanswers.org
South Carolina	sc.freelegalanswers.org
South Dakota	sd.freelegalanswers.org
Tennessee	tn.freelegalanswers.org
Texas	texas.freelegalanswers.org
Utah	utah.freelegalanswers.org
Vermont	vt.freelegalanswers.org
Virginia	virginia.freelegalanswers.org
West Virginia	wv.freelegalanswers.org
Wisconsin	wi.freelegalanswers.org
Wyoming	wyoming.freelegalanswers.org
National Site	ABAFreeLegalAnswers.org