

**2010 California Pro Bono Conference  
October 12, 2010, Los Angeles**

**Pro Bono Conference Session Title:**

INNOVATIVE MENTORSHIP MODELS IN PRO BONO

**Name/Title of Project/Model:**

Pro Bono Land Use Coalition

**Name of Organization:**

Public Counsel

**Project/Model Overview**

**1. Brief Overview of PURPOSE and MISSION of this project/model:**

The purpose of this "land use coalition" model is to engage pro bono attorneys in advocacy efforts to reduce barriers to development of child care facilities throughout Los Angeles County. Pro bono attorneys involved in the coalition advocate on similar issues in different local jurisdictions, share best practices and strategies, identify common issues, and work together on developing the advocacy message.

**2. Why was it created?**

The land use coalition was created to involve pro bono attorneys in our advocacy efforts for two reasons: first, to leverage our efforts by bringing more people (and new ideas) to the table; and second, to increase the impact of our advocacy by having the message delivered by private law firm attorneys as well as public interest attorneys.

**3. What partners or organizations were involved?**

Other partners involved in the formation of the coalition included nonprofits that finance child care center development and provide consulting services to child care centers. The coalition consists of pro bono lawyers from various law firms.

#### 4. What successes has it accomplished?

Various jurisdictions have added or changed language in their general plans relating to zoning or permit requirements for child care, or have made the permitting process more transparent to clients. The coalition has also identified ways to resolve certain issues related to parking and traffic requirements and shared these solutions with other pro bono attorneys helping our clients.

#### 5. What particular strategies or program components does it demonstrate?

Volunteer attorneys and Public Counsel attorneys share best practices and strategies. As the coalition members identify common barriers they collectively determine the next advocacy priorities. Pro bono attorneys develop relationships with non-legal experts (such as architects and planners) to help develop solutions that will work for clients. Public Counsel attorneys with experience doing similar advocacy provided a lot of support at the outset, less support is needed over time.

#### 6. What challenges/barriers were faced in creating it?

The model requires a long-term commitment from volunteer attorneys in order to ensure that relationships necessary for advocacy are maintained throughout the process. The model also requires a lot of up front planning and coordination. Deadlines and follow-up meetings and calls had to be scheduled at the outset in order to keep the momentum moving.

#### 7. What are THREE primary things you would want conference attendees to know about the project/model?

This model takes a lot of organization up front and a commitment to developing a work plan with specific goals before starting the work (the initial year tasks and goals were set by Public Counsel, the coalition works together to determine ongoing goals). The model requires a long-term commitment on the part of pro bono attorneys but not necessarily a significant number of hours. In this model, outside partners were brought in to educate volunteer attorneys about the subject matter of the advocacy (child care facility development), but volunteers also learned strategies for advocacy efforts that would be transferable to other subject areas.

*For more information regarding this particular project/model, please contact:*

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