

STATE OF MINNESOTA

DISTRICT COURT

EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY NUMBER 29

JUDICIAL INVOLVEMENT IN PROMOTING PRO BONO REPRESENTATION

On February 9, 1996, the Eighth Judicial District judges adopted the attached policy, as recommended by the Caseflow Management Committee, relating to judicial involvement in providing pro bono representation.

Dated: March 1, 1996

B.W. Christopherson
BRUCE W. CHRISTOPHERSON
CHIEF JUDGE
EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT POLICY
ON JUDICIAL INVOLVEMENT IN PROMOTING PRO BONO REPRESENTATION

The Eighth Judicial District recognizes that there presently exists within the district a significant need for legal representation on behalf of economically disadvantaged persons, and that this need will increase in light of budgetary constraints that will have a negative impact upon the publicly funded legal services organizations operating in the district. In order to encourage the members of the bar to increase their pro bono activity and fill this void, the Eighth Judicial District hereby adopts the following policy:

1. Consistent with the Code of Judicial Conduct, the judges of the Eighth Judicial District shall encourage the recruitment of members of the bar to become involved in increased pro bono activity, either through participation in local volunteer attorney programs or through private no or reduced fee representation of economically disadvantaged persons.

2. There shall be increased communication between the bench, through the district administrator's office, and the publicly funded legal services organizations in the district to monitor the effect that policies adopted by the district may have upon the ability of pro bono counsel to easily and economically provide legal services to their clients.

3. Court administrators in the district are encouraged to identify those cases in each county in which pro bono representation is being provided to one or more parties, and to provide scheduling flexibility where possible. If possible, pro bono cases could be scheduled to minimize waiting time and reduce multiple trips to the courthouse. All court personnel can be educated concerning the peculiar problems that pro bono representation creates for attorneys, in order to avoid compounding those problems by means of court scheduling or procedures.

4. In those cases in which attorneys' fees can be awarded, the judges are encouraged to consider awarding attorneys fees in cases involving pro bono representation.

5. All court personnel will be periodically reminded, at meetings or training sessions, of the general need for pro bono services and the existence of local legal service or volunteer attorney programs so that this information can be more readily disseminated to pro se litigants.