



## United States Bankruptcy Court

Central District of California  
Roybal Federal Building & Courthouse  
255 East Temple Street, Suite 1360  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Vincent P. Zurzolo  
Chief Bankruptcy Judge

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December 7, 2009

### An Open Letter to the Bankruptcy Bar

The Bankruptcy Judges of the Central District of California would like to urge you to consider volunteering for one of the bankruptcy *pro bono* opportunities available in your area. As our filings continue to rise to unprecedented levels, the number of low-income *pro se* individuals in our court has also risen. As you might imagine, the organizations currently assisting low-income people in bankruptcy are seeing hundreds of families on the brink of foreclosure or in other economic distress. Recently, however, the number of newly homeless families contacting these groups has also risen.

Volunteer opportunities range from just a few hours every other month at a clinic to full representation in a Chapter 7 case or adversary proceeding. Consumer bankruptcy training can usually be provided where necessary. While most requests are for debtor assistance, low-income creditor assistance is also needed. The programs are structured so that traditionally creditor or business attorneys may volunteer without a concern about conflicts or becoming a debt relief agency. The vast majority of the people coming to these programs cannot afford counsel, but attorney referrals are also made through these organizations where appropriate.

Even a brief consultation with an attorney can make a big difference to a *pro se* party. Attorney assistance also greatly helps the court and other litigants. The attached list will soon appear on the Court's website under the tab "Don't Have an Attorney" where you can find the contact information for the group in your area along with the types of opportunities available. We encourage you to contact one of these groups and see if there might be a way to contribute your expertise in these difficult economic times. To those of you who already volunteer or provide badly needed *pro bono* help in other ways, we say **thank you**. Your efforts help the court be more responsive to all litigants, regardless of income level.

**PRO BONO ORGANIZATIONS SEEKING BANKRUPTCY VOLUNTEERS: ♥**

**Organization: Public Counsel**

Area served: Los Angeles County

Go to [www.Publiccounsel.org](http://www.Publiccounsel.org) and click on the “Volunteer” tab OR

Contact David Daniels, Pro Bono Director

Phone: (213) 385-2977

Volunteers Needed for:

Self Help Desk – Monday and Wednesday 10 am – 1 pm

Reaffirmation Clinics, Chapter 7 Seminars, preparing Ch.7 bankruptcy petitions

**Organization: Bet Tzedek**

Area served: Los Angeles County

Contact: Zach Lebovits, Pro Bono & Volunteer Coordinator

Phone: (323) 549-5895

[zlebovits@bettzedek.org](mailto:zlebovits@bettzedek.org)

Volunteers Needed for:

Client intake interviews and follow-up; preparing Ch. 7 bankruptcy petitions

**Organization: Neighborhood Legal Services**

Area served: Northern Los Angeles County

Contact: [AngelicaCarrillo@nls-la.org](mailto:AngelicaCarrillo@nls-la.org)

Volunteers Needed for:

Self Help Desk in Woodland Hills, Monday & Thursday, 9am – 4 pm

**Organization: Inland Empire Bankruptcy Forum**

Area served: Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

Contact: Public Services Law Corporation - 909-682-7968

Volunteers Needed for non-dischargeability cases

**Organization: Public Law Center**

Area served: Orange County

Contact: 714-541-1010 or [www.publiclawcenter.org](http://www.publiclawcenter.org)

Volunteers Needed for:

Prefiling Chapter 7 Clinic; Post Filing Chapter 7 Clinic

Reaffirmation Clinic in Santa Ana, Ch. 7 representation

**Organization: Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County**

Area served: Santa Barbara County

Contact: Casey B. Nelson - (805) 963-6754 or [cnelson@lafsb.org](mailto:cnelson@lafsb.org)

Volunteers Needed for:

Ch. 7 representation and Self Help Clinic

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♥ Updated December 8, 2009