

IAM Pro Bono Committee Report

To: IAM Board of Directors

From: Rande S. Sotomayor

Date: January 19, 2023

Late spring or early summer 2022, Steve Paul and I agreed that the IAM Pro Bono efforts would continue to take the form described in the brochure Mike Young produced, *The IAM Pro Bono Mediation Initiative* (“*Initiative*”). That meant identifying cases consistent with the criteria set out in the brochure: (1) Matter being handled by lawyers/firms on a completely pro bono basis; (2) Matter involves issues having social impact or important; and (3) Matter is ripe for mediation.

In early July, I was researching different ways to identify such cases, as individual efforts in the past, while somewhat successful, had not been as fruitful or widespread as hoped.

In 2022, I connected with Ben Feldman, Chief Growth Officer of Paladin (<https://www.joinpaladin.com>) to explore potential collaboration with their service to law firms and law departments in identifying and matching them to pro bono cases. Upon further consideration on Paladin’s end, they concluded that they could not determine a way to integrate IAM’s pro bono program. The door is open to further discussion. I think their need is to generate revenue from subscribers, and in my view, IAM most likely would not want to spend money on such a subscription anyway.

I have since researched further, as I believe there must be a web-based method of matching the unique pro bono services IAM could provide with appropriate cases as stated in the *Initiative*. I reached out to Scot Fishman, Partner and Director of Pro Bono at Shook, Hardy & Bacon in their Washington, D.C. office. You can see his profile and substantial experience in developing pro bono programs [here](#). A copy of my email to him is attached here as well.

I am scheduled to speak with Scott on February 7 to brainstorm about implementing our pro bono program, i.e., get the cases. I will advise further after that Zoom meeting. Individual IAM members approaching law firms and legal aid societies has proven ineffective. In any event, our members probably do some of that work anyway. I’m working on a framework for an institutional program.

When I have what I consider to be a good “seed” idea, I plan to convene the Pro Bono Committee for their thoughts and recommendations.

From: Rande Sotomayor
<rande@sotomayorlaw.com>
Subject: Inquiry on behalf of the International
Academy of Mediators
Date: January 9, 2023 at 10:52:32 AM PST
To: sfishman@shb.com
Bcc: "Rande S. Sotomayor"
<rande@sotomayorlaw.com>

Dear Scot,

I hope this email makes its way to you. I am the current chair of the Pro Bono Committee of the International Academy of Mediators ("IAM"). The IAM is an invitation-only membership organization of top commercial mediators from around the world. iamed.org Membership includes exceptional mediators from 35 countries around the globe. Our members are regularly engaged by prominent law firms for cases of great importance and/or consequence.

The IAM's Pro Bono Committee seeks to connect with law firms and legal aid agencies to provide pro bono mediation services in matters generally involving issues having some social impact or importance that go beyond helping just one individual party. In the past, individual members have reached out to colleagues they know in law firms with pro bono departments, and to various legal aid associations.

This has been a haphazard and ultimately limiting approach.

I found you while I was researching online. Your experience in developing programs could be very helpful. IAM has the goal of identifying appropriate cases for pro bono services we can provide *worldwide*. I am attaching IAM's pamphlet, *Pro Bono Mediation Initiative*, which describes the approach my predecessors have taken. I would think that by now, however, we could somehow develop an online presence for pro bono purposes. Just a thought.

Would you be willing to have a brief chat to discuss some ideas that you could recommend? IAM is eager to develop pipeline for a worldwide network of premier pro bono mediation services. I very much hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Rande



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