



Wisconsin Judicare, Inc.

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December 30, 2011

RECEIVED

Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson
State of Wisconsin
Supreme Court
P.O. Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688

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**CHIEF JUSTICE SHIRLEY S. ABRAHAMSON
SUPREME COURT**

Dear Chief Justice Abrahamson:

Thank you for your December 8, 2011 letter regarding the manual to aid attorneys representing indigents in civil cases. Justice Prosser mentioned the existence of a previous version of such a manual, and kindly provided me with a copy a few months ago. The manual is titled, "Legal Counseling for the Indigent."

An examination of the manual revealed that it was published in 1968 by the Marquette University Law School's Institute on Poverty and the Law using funds from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity.

While I would be very interested in working on an updated version of the manual, economic circumstances at Wisconsin Judicare have become quite difficult. We have lost all state funding, and have recently suffered additional federal funding cuts. This means that we are attempting to serve more clients, with fewer resources.

The original manual was produced with the assistance of a faculty of judges, lawyers and law professors, and assembled by two directors of the Institute on Poverty at Marquette Law School. I fear that without the institutional backing of a law school or any grant funding, an updated manual would be too onerous an endeavor to attempt at this time.

There are also many resources that have been developed by our colleagues at Legal Action of Wisconsin which cover much of the same material, and these resources are available from Legal Action to any attorney who takes pro bono cases. For our part, Wisconsin Judicare provides staff attorney assistance with research and forms to attorneys who take Judicare cases on either a standard or a "compensated" pro bono basis. We also provide free continuing legal education courses and use of our office library to encourage pro bono service to our client population. Of course, these efforts are complicated by the generally sparse population of attorneys in our service area. For instance, Rusk County has only 7 practicing lawyers, serving a population of 15,347. This makes pro bono recruiting in much of our service area nearly impossible.

Wisconsin Judicare appreciates the interest of the Wisconsin Supreme Court in this project, and in access to justice initiatives in general. If I become aware of any source to fund revamping the manual, I will contact the Court immediately.

Sincerely,


Karen M. Bauer
Staff Attorney

