

**THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BAR FOUNDATIONS (NCBF)/
LEXISNEXIS AWARD FOR SUCCESSFUL
BAR ASSOCIATION/FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIPS**

NOMINATION FORM

DEADLINE: Monday, May 7, 2012

Name of Nominee: TARRANT COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

Nominee's Address: 1315 Calhoun Street

City: Fort Worth State: TX Zip: 76102

Phone: (817) 338-4092 Fax: (817) 335-9238

Executive Director or Senior Staff Person: Patricia Graham, Executive Director

Chair or President of Foundation: E. Michael Sheehan

1. What is the name of the program?

Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans – TCBA Chapter (“TLTV-TCBA Chapter”).

2. Please describe the program in one to two paragraphs.

The Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans program-Tarrant County Bar Association Chapter (“TLTV-TCBA Chapter”) was established in July 2010, as one of the community service committees of the Tarrant County Bar Foundation (“TCBF”) in conjunction with the Tarrant County Bar Association (“TCBA”). The program is led by a committee of volunteer attorneys. The program holds monthly legal clinics during which approximately 30 veterans receive legal counsel and advice in various areas of law, including criminal matters for which the veterans cannot get a court appointed attorney.

If the veteran qualifies under the poverty income guidelines and needs further representation, the veteran is referred to a pro-bono attorney for representation. Since its inception the program has served over 500 veterans and more than 200 attorneys have contributed by participating in the committee, taking pro-bono cases or attending the clinics.

3. What is your relationship to the organization? How are you aware of the program?

I was the program's first chair and have been involved in the program since its inception. This month I was hired this month as the Pro Bono Programs Director of the Tarrant County Bar Association in direct response to the growth of the TLTV-TCBA Chapter program and the commitment of the TCBA and the TCBF to further develop a pro-bono services culture.

4. To your knowledge, has this program received other awards or recognition?

Yes No If yes, please explain. As far as I know, the program has not been submitted for awards.

5. Below, please explain how the program meets the award criteria and why the foundation should be selected for this award. Please include in your description:

- How the program or initiative is consistent with NCBF's guiding principles

The program has been able to put in the forefront the importance and impact of pro-bono work. When the program started TCBA/TCBF did not have a program dedicated to provide pro-bono legal services to our community. The program engaged the membership by providing them with the opportunity to participate at different levels. The program has been able to engaged big to mid-size law firms, as well as solo practitioners and retired attorneys who have offered their assistance to be involved with the program.

TCBF has supported the program financially, and the members of the Board of Directors are great ambassadors of the program. TCBA has been active in engaging its membership in the TLTV-TCBA Chapter program by providing space in the *Bar Bulletin* for articles and by providing a staff person to support the program.

At this time, the program has a formal pro-bono network of attorneys, has developed an efficient web-based database used to follow up and track the status of each case. The TCBA and TCBF now have a recognized project that keeps growing. Each month we have more volunteers than needed who offer to attend the clinics. Every county agency and non-profit organization that deals with veterans issues in Tarrant County knows about the program. We receive over 100 calls a month to fill the 30 appointment that we have available for the clinic. The demand is so great and the support of the TCBA members so reliable, we are looking next year into either taking more appointments per clinic or increasing the amount of clinics per month.

- The program's impact on the justice system and/or the community

It is quite clear that the program has made a significant impact in our community. One effect that we have noticed is the change in the public opinion regarding lawyers in our county. When we started promoting the program it was clear that veterans were guarded and did not trust of our intentions. One veteran even asked me what our real intentions were, because attorneys never did anything for free. It is very different now... last month, I attended a VETCO (Veterans Coalition) meeting and after I introduced myself, a VA social worker stopped the introductions and addressed everybody to tell them how positively the attorneys in our program had impacted her clients and how they were able to get jobs, housing and straighten their lives because of the legal help that they have received through TLTV-TCBA Chapter. It is humbling now, how when we attend

an outreach activity, someone comes to us or shares their own testimony with others on how our program has helped them or their clients.

- How the program or initiative advances the foundation's mission that has real buy-in from the association

The TCBF is a charitable organization formed under the auspices of the TCBA. The TCBF was established in 1997 to support and expand its commitments to "justice, service, and professionalism" by funding important community service projects. These projects include crucial legal services to needy citizens and education of the public about their rights and responsibilities under the law.

The TLTV-TCBA Chapter program has been the first successful project of its kind in the Tarrant County area. In part as a direct result of the program's success and understanding the need to reach other sectors of our community and expand the legal services that the TCBF/TCBA bring to our community, in January 2012 a new program was formed--the Tarrant County Attorney Volunteer Services. This new pro-bono project will not only reach the veterans in our county but also reach the community at large. Its first pro-bono event is scheduled for October 2012.

The TLTV-TCBA Chapter volunteer attorneys have also attended outreach activities to educate the veterans regarding, for example, landlord-tenants issues and have attended fairs and stand-downs to reach the veterans' homeless population. In fact, the program's first four clinics were conducted at Liberty House, a transitional home for homeless veterans.

- How the program or initiative receives meaningful support from its bar association

The members of the bar association are actively involved in the program, over 10,000 hours of volunteer services and pro-bono work are the reason of the program's success. The members of the bar association have also contributed to the program with financial and in-kind donations of approximately \$30,000.

- How the program or initiative engages other community partners (e.g., law firms, courts, other legal organizations, other foundations, supporting or developing law-related programs

Since the inception of the program, the TLTV-TCBA Chapter leadership made it a goal to have strategic partnerships to fulfill the mission of the program. Partnerships were immediately established with Legal Aid of Northwest Texas as well as the Tarrant County Family Bar Association to participate in the program. To date, both groups are still actively involved in the delivery of services to the veterans.

The Mental Health and Mental Retardation of Tarrant County has supported the Program from the start. To date, the agency provides the time of one of its

employees to answer the TLTV-TCBA Chapter telephone line to make clinic appointments. That employee also attends all the clinics to provide support with the veterans that suffer from mental issues. They also provided the graphic designer to produce a brochure for the program.

The law students at Texas Wesleyan Law School are an essential part of the TLTV-TCBA Chapter clinics. And, the professors have taken cases pro-bono cases to work with their students.

Juris Fabrilis, a technology company, has provided, for a minimal cost a custom made web-based case management program to complete the veteran's applications; to track the appointments, case assignments and case status; to generate the grant reporting information; and to track all volunteer hours, etc. Also, the company donated the program's website and the owner (a veteran himself) attends the clinic to provide IT support.

The TLTV-TCBA Chapter also works closely with the Texas Veterans Commission. The Commission's Claims Representation and Counseling Director participated in one of the CLE programs that the TLTV has offered to the participating attorneys. Two of their claims representatives have attended the committee meetings.

The Veterans Administration provides a conference room at no cost inside the VA Outpatient Clinic in Fort Worth to hold the clinics, and have provided equipment and security, if needed.

The TLTV-TCBA Chapter is also a member of VETCO, a coalition of all the veterans' service organizations in the county. Members of the committee attend the VETCO's monthly meetings and participate at their events.

The TLTV-TCBA Chapter program also works closely and receives numerous referrals from the Veterans Court Diversion program. Judge Brent Carr is a frequent speaker at TLTV-TCBA Chapter events and he is a strong supporter of the program.

Specialty Bars around the County have also provided their members for support and have participated in the clinics or by taking pro-bono cases.

The overall support and involvement of the different agencies, bars and community in the program has contributed to the success of the program.

- An explanation of how the program or granting award outcome can be replicated by other bar associations and foundations around the country

The fact that our bar association/foundation started this program without having an established network of pro-bono attorneys is a real testament to other small and mid-size bar associations/foundations that it can be done. The program holds monthly clinics and is placing with private attorneys 80% of the cases that financially qualify for full representation. This has inspired other associations

around the state. Our program has also received calls from out of state, including Colorado and Washington, requesting information about our program and how we were able to accomplish our goals.

Receiving this award will help the program gain more momentum and will inspire more attorneys to join our program. Also having the opportunity to present our program at the NCBF Annual Meeting will certainly inspire other members to see that it is possible to create a successful program with few resources and a lot of determination. We are like the little engine that could, only 12 people attended the first meeting to create the program and in less than two years we have grown the program and created a structure that others bar associations/foundations want and can easily follow.

- Any other outstanding qualifications that would distinguish this candidate from others

The fact that this program has been able to accomplish its goals by mainly volunteer time is a great accomplishment. The first year the program ran with only 15 hours per month paid to a staff person from the bar association. The second year 30 hours per month were paid to 2 staff personnel of the bar association. All the other time required to run and manage the program is provided by the attorneys in the Tarrant County Bar Association.

Due to the fact that the program receives private funding and the intensive involvement and commitment of the members of the bar, the program also distinguishes itself in two ways from similar programs around the State. First, the program provides free consultations to all veterans regardless of income eligibility as a "thank you" for their service to our nation. And second, the program provides assistance in criminal matters in which a court appointed attorney is not available or in traffic/municipal court cases. We learned early in the program that criminal matters are very significant in the veteran population due, in part, to the high percentage of veterans that suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental issues. These issues increase the likelihood of certain veterans to have run-ins with the justice system. Our volunteer attorneys help veterans clear these matters which makes them eligible for a driver's license, housing and employment so the veteran can become once again productive members of society.

NOMINATED BY:

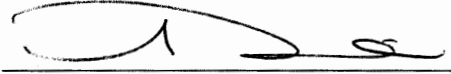
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Affiliation and Title: Pro Bono Programs Director for Tarrant County Bar Association

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Your Signature:  Date: 5/7/2012

Please return form to:

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