

The 2005 Louis M. Brown Award Recipients, Meritorious Recognition Recipients and Nominees are listed below

[Click here](#) for additional information about the Louis M. Brown Award for Legal Access  
[Click here](#) to submit a nomination for the 2006 Brown Award

2005 Recipient:                   The Law School Consortium Project

Meritorious Recognition:   MdFamilyLawyer.com  
  Rosen Divorce

Nominees:                        Access to Justice Network of the University of New  
  Mexico Clinical Law Program

  Access to Justice Program, Chester County (PA) Bar  
  Association

  ARAG North American, Inc.

  Landlord/Tenant Resource Center of the DC Bar Pro  
  Bono Program

  Eviction Defense Network

  LegalZoom.com

  The Mushroom Workers Legal Service Plan

### **The Law School Consortium Project**

The Law School Consortium Project is a national collaborative of law schools that has created an innovative approach to increasing access to affordable legal services. The project works with law schools to initiate, support and expand solo and small firm practices that provide legal services to moderate income communities.

The law school members commit resources to graduates who have community-based practices, providing them with technical assistance and substantive training, educating them in law practice management issues and linking them to other practitioners committed to social justice practices. The Consortium also works with its law school members to incorporate curriculum geared toward solo and small firm community-based practices.

The Consortium has no preconceived model, but instead works with the law school members to develop projects that are most suitable for their communities. This results in

delivery mechanisms that are different in New York City, Baltimore and Albuquerque, for example. Some projects, such as the Civil Justice Network (which was the recipient of the 2002 Brown Award) rely heavily on the use of technology to support and network the participating practitioners. Others are more focused on community service. Nevertheless, the projects all focus on serving the needs of under-represented populations and at the same time enabling practitioners to provide high quality services within the marketplace.

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**MDFAMILYLAWYER.COM**

MDFAMILYLAWYER.COM was developed in 2001 by Richard Granat, a Maryland lawyer, in an effort to use technology to deliver unbundled legal services in family law matters to the moderate means population of Maryland. Organized as a private law firm, the objectives of this project are:

- To examine new methods to deliver legal services that utilize the Internet in ways that reduce the costs to clients, yet retain and support core professional values of confidentiality, competence, client accountability and avoidance of conflicts of interests;
- To demonstrate viable economic strategies that illustrate how small law firms can expand their markets and add revenues to their practices;
- To demonstrate the advantage to the consumer of purchasing legal services from a lawyer on an unbundled basis, as distinguished from merely purchasing legal forms from an Internet web site;
- To provide an example of a law firm web site that meets and supports the ABA's Best Practice Guidelines for Legal Information Web Sites; and
- To create specific digital applications that enhance client service and can be replicated by other law firms at low costs.

MDFAMILYLAWYER.COM uses an open source approach, where code developed for this project is available at no cost to any law firm with five or fewer lawyers that makes a commitment to serve clients of moderate income as evidenced by a fee structure that is responsive to the needs of those with moderate incomes.

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### **Rosen Divorce**

Rosen Divorce is a North Carolina law firm that is dedicated to using a variety of methods to disseminate legal information to moderate income families. These include:

- Online Divorce Services, at [www.rosendivorceonline.com](http://www.rosendivorceonline.com), where the firm creates the necessary divorce documents and provides clear instructions on filing and completing a divorce for North Carolina residents who agree to the terms of their divorce;
- Free Divorce Seminars, where the firm partners with non-profit organizations such as the Triangle Area YWCA, to provide seminars to the community. People may also conference calls to obtain the information in the privacy of their home. The seminars are held at least three times per month;
- Educational videos, which are available online, where Board certified family law specialists explain various facets of divorce, including custody, support, alimony and property distribution;
- Online calculators, which assist those with children to determine support amounts based on the North Carolina Child Support Guidelines. The site also includes a legal fee calculator to help families get an idea of the cost of their divorce;
- Downloadable forms, to assist those who are able to complete this portion of their divorce;
- An online forum, which enables people to post questions, which are answered by lawyers who specialize in divorce law and are then posted on the forum for all visitors to see.

The firm also publishes a magazine, entitled Families in Transition, and mails an outline on family law to other practitioners, who may make referrals. All of these techniques serve the dual purposes of addressing the needs of those with moderate incomes, who have difficulty affording full legal services, and generating clients for the firm.

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**Access to Justice Network  
University of New Mexico Clinical Law Program**

The University of New Mexico Clinical Law Program set out to address two issues. First, the Clinic was turning away many moderate-income individuals with legal problems. Second, many of the school's graduates went on to practice as solo and small firm lawyers serving those with personal legal needs. As a result, the clinic established the Access to Justice Network, designed to link these practitioners with clients who can only afford a reduced fee.

The network is linked through a listserv maintained by the law school. The school also provides low cost continuing legal education in courses focused on increasing the capacity to serve low and moderate-income individuals as part of the law school curriculum. For example, lawyers and law students may take a course together on Workers' Compensation, which is an area of unmet legal need in the state. Other courses cover consumer law, law office management for community-based lawyers, domestic violence and Spanish for lawyers.

The Access to Justice Network is a project of the Law School Consortium.

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**Access to Justice Program  
Chester County (PA) Bar Association**

The Chester County Bar Association began the Access to Justice Program in July 2004. The program targets those who fall into the gap by making too much money to qualify for legal aid, but not enough to afford private full-serve representation. In the past, the bar sponsored a reduced fee program and attempted to serve the "working poor" by limiting fees to \$50 per hour. However, people were unable to afford services at that cost.

Legal aid accepts clients with incomes up to 125 percent of poverty guidelines, which would be \$11,638 per year for an individual and \$23,563 for a family of four. The Access to Justice Program serves those who make up to 187.5 percent of the poverty guidelines, or \$17,456 for an individual and \$35,344 for a family of four. The bar recruits and provides volunteer services for those who fall below these limits.

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### **ARAG North America, Inc.**

ARAG was once a company focused on providing legal services only as an employee benefit. It has grown to be a company that helps people obtain affordable legal services through insurance and a variety of other models. The company offers a full breadth of legal services for the employer, employee assistance programs (EAPs), and through affinity groups. Employers use legal services from ARAG to create an optimal workplace and increase employee productivity. Organizations such as associations, financial institutions and insurance companies use the services of ARAG to offer value-added legal services to their members and customers.

ARAG has developed a consumer-focused legal solutions channel, where individual customers are able to access legal information and guidance through the Internet, over the phone or in person. This aspect of the company, known as the Legal Enterprise Solution, enables consumers to obtain legal solutions at every access point. Among the wide range of services offered by ARAG is identify theft protection.

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### **Landlord Tenant Resource Center DC Bar Pro Bono Program**

Recognizing that 99 percent of tenants sued in the Landlord Tenant Branch of the DC Superior Court are not represented by counsel, and that nearly 14 percent of landlords are also without representation, the DC Bar Pro Bono Program, in cooperation with the Landlord Tenant Court, established the Landlord Tenant Resource Center. Regardless of the facts of their cases, unrepresented tenants face a high risk of eviction, which inexperienced landlords risk having their cases dismissed, often due to procedural missteps.

In response to this need, the Center is available to unrepresented landlords and tenants in need of legal information, resources, and, if appropriate, referrals for representation from

local legal service providers. Volunteer lawyers from nine participating law firms consult with interested parties each weekday morning. Nearly 1000 people received services from the Center in the first half of 2004.

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**Eviction Defense Network**

The Eviction Defense Network is a California Public Benefit Corporation dedicated to ensuring access to justice in housing matters for tenants in Los Angeles County. The network targets moderate income people and others not eligible for legal aid or pro bono services, as well as the overflow from legal services organizations. The network works in the marketplace and offers creative payments in order to make its services widely available. Full representation for eviction matters is offered on a sliding fee scale ranging from \$300 to \$1,000. Payment plans are then offered for as little as \$5.00 per month.

The network reports that it litigates nearly 40 percent of its cases and has an 89 percent success rate at trial. It serves over 2,600 tenants per year and plans to expand both within the Los Angeles area and throughout the country.

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**LegalZoom.com**

LegalZoom.com, Inc., is an online document preparation service, providing low-cost alternatives for uncomplicated, routine legal documents, such as uncontested divorces, simple wills and business formations. Prices range from \$35 to \$399.

Customers answer a plain-language questionnaire online. LegalZoom.com reviews the answers for spelling and grammar, then prepares the documents through its software, and, when necessary, files them. LegalZoom also contains extensive legal information and

help menus so that customers can do their own research. Those with complicated matters are encouraged to find a lawyer through the online attorney listing service.

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**The Mushroom Workers Legal Service Plan**

In 1992, attorney John P. Winicov established the Mushroom Workers Legal Service Plan. The plan was designed with the unique legal needs of agricultural workers in mind. Unlike other prepaid legal service plans, the Mushroom Workers Legal Service Plan is employer-sponsored. The plan administrator and attorneys work directly with the employer's human resources departments to ensure that employees get consultations at the work place.

Under the plan, consultations are paid for by the employer, while court appearances and related types of work are paid for by the employee at a reduced rate. The services provided by Mr. Winicov are done so with an interpreter for the employees who are mostly from Mexico, and address immigration, discrimination, housing, family law and estate matters. In more than 12 years since its inception, the plan has assisted hundreds of workers who would not have otherwise have had access to legal services.

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