



Ohio Driver's License Reinstatement Fee Amnesty Initiative

OSBA Members Volunteer in Perry County

This spring, the Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA) travelled to New Lexington, Ohio for the **Perry County Driver's License Reinstatement Clinic**. The first of these clinics to take place in a rural Ohio county, the program was part of the Reinstatement Fee Amnesty Initiative, a six-month pilot program created by House Bill 336 in the 132nd General Assembly.

The Perry County effort was a true collaboration. **Judge Dean Wilson** of the Perry County Municipal Court and District 9 Representative to the OSBA Board of Governors, provided his courthouse as a venue for the clinic. Members

of the **OSBA Young Lawyers Section** travelled from across the state to participate in the pro bono work and the **Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation** and **Southeastern Ohio Legal Services** were on site to facilitate as well as provide training and insurance for participating attorneys. The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles and the Perry County Department of Job and Family Services were also on site.

Approximately 85 clients pre-registered to see about eight attorney volunteers.

Here's what participants had to say about the experience:



"We don't have the same media market that Columbus has, we don't have a local tv station or a local radio station. This has all been word of mouth. There is a real opportunity in these rural areas for attorneys to come in and be part of the community."

Judge Dean Wilson
Perry County Municipal Court
OSBA Board of Governors District 9 Representative



"I think it's very important that attorneys volunteer their time, especially in a rural area like Perry County. Oftentimes, folks have challenges and one of them is financial, and so even though they may be eligible to have a driver's license, or there may be a few simple steps they can take to become a licensed driver, they don't have that ability to hire an attorney. A program like this takes down that barrier, allows people to take these simple steps to get licensed, and that helps the community as a whole."

Andrew Joseph
Partner, Gottlieb, Johnston, Beam & Dal Ponte, PLL



"We tried to eliminate all the excuses that people have for not doing pro bono. People think that they're not going to know the subject matter, but Legal Aid has provided a robust CLE and training on this, so that is eliminated. People think they can't do it because they don't have malpractice insurance, but OLAF provides malpractice insurance so we eliminated that excuse. We all drove down together. We're really trying to make it as easy as possible so people could participate as much as possible."

Jane Gleaves
Associate Attorney, Kegler Brown Hill Ritter
OSBA Young Lawyers Section Executive Committee Member



Get Involved!

Visit OhioBar.org/LicenseClinics to see a list of **volunteer opportunities** at upcoming clinics around the state and to see **video** of the OSBA's day at the Perry County License Reinstatement Clinic.



"Legal Aid cares about this because we see lack of transportation as a poverty issue, especially in rural counties. So we're here facilitating, organizing volunteers, supporting attorneys with training that they need if they aren't as familiar with traffic suspension issues. We think it's a great opportunity for attorneys to get involved, because just in the few hours that they may be here, they can really make a big impact on clients' lives."

Ann Roche
OLAF Justice for All Fellow
Staff Attorney for SEOLS



"It gets back to this question that we think about a lot which is, what is a lawyer's obligation to help people who can't pay legal fees? I think that every lawyer has an obligation to do his or her part to try and provide legal help for people who can't pay fees. It's in the preamble of our ethical code. Whether it's this, or something else pro bono, or giving money to legal aid, I think it's all of our responsibilities."

Bill Dowling
Of Counsel, Buckingham,
Doolittle & Burroughs
Past Chair, OSBA Access to
Justice Committee



"I think pro bono is something that's necessary in our profession. There is much too large of an access to justice gap and there is a great need for people who can't afford our services. At a clinic like this, you're getting a lot of hands-on instruction. And so you're learning new skills that you can then apply in your regular private practice for paying clients. So to me it's double benefit: We get to help people who really need it, and we get to better ourselves as attorneys."

Christopher Brown
Deputy Law Director for the City
of Mansfield
Chair of OSBA Young Lawyers
Section

Did You Know? The OSBA Council of Delegates recently adopted a proposal to extend and make the amnesty initiative permanent. In the meantime, the OSBA advocacy team is working closely with the Ohio Senate on an amendment to the state budget bill that, if passed, will extend the pilot program through the end of the year.