

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I

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In the Matter of the  
HAWAI‘I RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

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ORDER AMENDING RULE 6.1 AND ADOPTING RULE 6.5 OF THE  
HAWAI‘I RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(By: Recktenwald, C.J., Nakayama, Acoba, Duffy, and McKenna, JJ.)

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Rule 6.1 of the Hawai‘i Rules of Professional Conduct and Comments, is amended, effective January 1, 2012, as follows (deleted material is bracketed and stricken; new material is underscored):

**Rule 6.1. PRO BONO SERVICE.**

A lawyer should aspire to provide at least [~~fifty~~] 50 hours of pro bono services per year. In fulfilling this responsibility, the lawyer should:

(a) provide at least [~~twenty-five~~] 25 hours of legal services without fee or expectation of fee to:

(1) persons of limited means or

(2) charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means; and

(b) provide any additional services through:

(1) delivery of legal services at no fee or substantially reduced fee to individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights, or charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters in furtherance of their

organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources or would be otherwise inappropriate;

(2) delivery of legal services at a substantially reduced fee to persons of limited means; or

(3) participation in activities for improving the law, the legal system or the legal profession.

(c) In lieu of providing 50 hours of pro bono service, a lawyer may exercise his or her desire to provide pro bono services by contributing at least \$500 each year to the Hawai'i Justice Foundation, or an entity that provides legal services at no fee, or at a significantly reduced fee, to persons of limited means.

(d) In addition to performing pro bono services or contributing under subsection (c) each year, a lawyer should voluntarily contribute financial support to organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means. [~~Where, in a given year, the lawyer experiences personal or employment circumstances that make it unduly difficult or impossible to provide services which qualify as pro bono activity, the lawyer may substitute such a financial contribution for direct pro bono legal services.]~~

**COMMENT:**

*[1] Every lawyer, regardless of professional prominence or professional work load, has a responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay, and personal involvement in the problems of the disadvantaged can be one of the most rewarding experiences in the life of a lawyer. This rule urges all lawyers to provide a minimum of 50 hours of pro bono services annually. It is recognized that in some years a lawyer may render greater or fewer hours than the annual standard specified, but during the course of his or her legal career, each lawyer should render on average per year, the number of hours set forth in this rule. Services can be performed in civil matters or in criminal or quasi-criminal matters for which there is no government obligation to provide funds for legal representation, such as post-conviction death penalty appeal cases.*

*[2] Paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) recognize the critical need for legal services that exists among persons of limited means by providing that at least 25 hours of the legal services rendered annually to the disadvantaged be furnished without fee or expectation of fee. Legal services under these paragraphs consist of a full range of activities, including individual and class representation, the provision of legal advice, legislative lobbying, administrative rule making, and the provision of free training or mentoring to those who represent persons of limited means. The variety of these activities should facilitate participation by government attorneys, even when restrictions exist on their engaging in the outside practice of law.*

*[3] Persons eligible for legal services under paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) are those who qualify for participation in programs funded by the Legal Services Corporation and those whose incomes and financial resources are slightly above the guidelines utilized by such programs but nevertheless, cannot afford counsel. Legal services can be rendered to individuals or to organizations such as homeless shelters, battered women's centers and food pantries that serve those of limited means.*

*[4] Because service must be provided without fee or expectation of fee, the intent of the lawyer to render free legal services is essential for the work performed to fall within the meaning of paragraphs (a)(1) and (2). Accordingly, services rendered cannot be considered pro bono if an anticipated fee is uncollected, but the award of statutory attorneys' fees in a case originally accepted as pro bono would not disqualify such services from inclusion under this section. Lawyers who do receive fees in such cases are encouraged to contribute an appropriate portion of such fees to organizations, programs, or projects that benefit persons of limited means.*

*[5] While it is possible for a lawyer to fulfill the annual responsibility to perform pro bono services exclusively through activities described in paragraphs (a)~~(1)~~ and ~~(2)~~(b) to the extent that any hours of service remained unfulfilled, ~~the remaining commitment can be met in a variety of ways as set forth in paragraph (b)~~ a monetary contribution in accordance with paragraph (c) replaces services described by (a) and (b).*

*[6] Paragraph (b)(1) includes the provision of certain types of legal services to those whose incomes and financial resources place them above limited means. It also permits the pro bono attorney to accept a substantially reduced fee for services. Examples of the types of issues that may be addressed under this paragraph include First Amendment claims, Title VII claims and environmental protection claims. Additionally, a wide range of organizations may be represented, including social service, medical research, cultural and religious groups.*

*[7] Paragraph (b)(2) covers instances in which attorneys agree to and receive a modest fee for furnishing legal services to persons of limited means. Participation in *judicare* programs and acceptance of court appointments in which the fee is substantially below a lawyer's usual rate are encouraged under this section.*

*[8] Paragraph (b)(3) recognizes the value of lawyers engaging in activities that improve the law, the legal system or the legal profession. Serving on bar association committees, serving on boards of pro bono or legal services programs, taking part in Law Day activities, acting as a continuing legal education instructor, a mediator or an arbitrator, and engaging in legislative lobbying to improve the law, the legal system or*

the profession are a few examples of the many activities that fall within this paragraph.

[9] Because the provision of pro bono services is a professional responsibility, it is the individual ethical commitment of each lawyer. [Nevertheless, there may be times when it is not feasible for a lawyer to engage in pro bono services. At such times a lawyer may discharge the pro bono responsibility by providing financial support to organizations providing] Unlike the Model ABA Rule, paragraph (c) expressly allows a lawyer to exercise his or her desire to provide pro bono service through annual financial contributions to the Hawai'i Justice Foundation or other qualified entities for the support of organizations that provide free or significantly reduced fee legal services to persons of limited means[. Such financial support should be reasonably equivalent to the value of the hours of service that would have otherwise been provided. In addition, at times it may be more feasible to satisfy the pro bono responsibility collectively, as by a firm's aggregate pro bono activities]. While the personal involvement of each lawyer in the provision of pro bono services is generally preferable, such personal involvement may not always be possible. The annual contribution alternative allows a lawyer to provide financial assistance to increase and improve the delivery of pro bono services when a lawyer cannot or decides not to provide pro bono services through the contribution of time. Also, there is no prohibition against a lawyer's contributing a combination of hours and financial support.

[10] Because the efforts of individual lawyers are not enough to meet the need for free legal services that exists among persons of limited means, [the government] there are organizations, programs, and [the profession] projects that have been instituted [additional programs] to provide those services. [Every] Paragraph (d) encourages every lawyer [should] to financially support [such] organizations, programs and projects that benefit persons of limited means, in addition to, and not as a substitute for, [either] providing [direct] pro bono services, or making financial contributions annually to the Hawai'i Justice Foundation or other qualified entities when pro bono service is not [possible] feasible.

[11] The responsibility set forth in this rule is not intended to be enforced through disciplinary process.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Rule 6.5 of the Hawai'i Rules of Professional Conduct, is adopted, effective January 1, 2012:

**Rule 6.5. NONPROFIT AND COURT-ANNEXED LIMITED LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS.**

(a) A lawyer who, under the auspices of a program sponsored by a nonprofit organization or court, provides short-term limited legal services to a client without expectation by either the lawyer or the client that the lawyer will provide continuing representation in the matter:

(1) is subject to Rules 1.7 and 1.9(a) only if the lawyer knows that the representation of the client involves a conflict of interest; and

(2) is subject to Rule 1.10 only if the lawyer knows that another lawyer associated with the lawyer in a law firm is disqualified by Rule 1.7 or 1.9(a) with respect to the matter.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(2), Rule 1.10 is inapplicable to a representation governed by this Rule.

**COMMENT:**

[1] *Legal services organizations, courts, and various nonprofit organizations have established programs through which lawyers provide short-term limited legal services—such as advice or the completion of legal forms—that will assist persons to address their legal problems without further representation by a lawyer. In these programs, such as legal-advice hotlines, advice-only clinics or pro se counseling programs, a lawyer-client relationship is established, but there is no expectation that the lawyer's representation of the client will continue beyond the limited consultation. Such programs are normally operated under circumstances in which it is not feasible for a lawyer to systematically screen for conflicts of interest as is generally required before undertaking a representation. See, e.g., Rules 1.7, 1.9 and 1.10.*

[2] *A lawyer who provides short-term limited legal services pursuant to this Rule must secure the client's informed consent to the limited scope of the representation. See Rule 1.2(c). If a short-term limited representation would not be reasonable under the circumstances, the lawyer may offer advice to the client but must also advise the client of the need for further assistance of counsel. Except as provided in this Rule, the Rules of Professional Conduct, including Rules 1.6 and 1.9(c), are applicable to the limited representation.*

[3] *Because a lawyer who is representing a client in the circumstances addressed by this Rule ordinarily is not able to check systematically for conflicts of interest, paragraph (a) requires compliance with Rules 1.7 or 1.9(a) only if the lawyer knows that the representation presents a conflict of interest for*

*the lawyer, and with Rule 1.10 only if the lawyer knows that another lawyer in the lawyer's firm is disqualified by Rules 1.7 or 1.9(a) in the matter.*

*[4] Because the limited nature of the services significantly reduces the risk of conflicts of interest with other matters being handled by the lawyer's firm, paragraph (b) provides that Rule 1.10 is inapplicable to a representation governed by this Rule except as provided by paragraph (a)(2). Paragraph (a)(2) requires the participating lawyer to comply with Rule 1.10 when the lawyer knows that the lawyer's firm is disqualified by Rules 1.7 or 1.9(a). By virtue of paragraph (b), however, a lawyer's participation in a short-term limited legal services program will not preclude the lawyer's firm from undertaking or continuing the representation of a client with interests adverse to a client being represented under the program's auspices. Nor will the personal disqualification of a lawyer participating in the program be imputed to other lawyers participating in the program.*

*[5] If, after commencing short-term limited representation in accordance with this Rule, a lawyer undertakes to represent the client in the matter on an ongoing basis, Rules 1.7, 1.9(a) and 1.10 become applicable.*

DATED: Honolulu, Hawai'i, December 13, 2011.

/s/ Mark E. Recktenwald

/s/ Paula A. Nakayama

/s/ Simeon R. Acoba, Jr.

/s/ James E. Duffy, Jr.

/s/ Sabrina S. McKenna

