



PRO BONO PROBATE SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

The Pro Bono Probate Settlement Program provides parties with pending probate matters an opportunity to resolve their cases with the assistance of experienced, attorney volunteers screened and selected by a committee of local Bar Associations. If the parties and the assigned judge believe a settlement conference would be helpful, the parties will then be directed to reserve a date by utilizing the reservation book on the clerk's desk in **Department 5**.

Currently, the program operates only on Tuesdays and Thursdays mornings with all sessions commencing promptly at 8:30 a.m. On the date selected and reserved by the parties, the parties would report to **Department 5**, not to the originating courtroom. They would then be directed to a location for the settlement conference. When the conference has been completed, if the session has resulted in a full or partial settlement the parties would then complete and sign the settlement agreement form. If a follow up court date is necessary, such as a Petition to Confirm Settlement, counsel should select a date for hearing in the ordinary course.

The program is able to accommodate self-represented litigants and includes all probate matters such as guardianships, conservatorships, decedents' estates, and trust litigation.

The court is in the process of placing "Most Frequently Asked Questions and Answers" on the probate portion of the court's website which may be accessed at: www.lasuperiorcourt.org. Until the material appears on the website, a hard copy of the Q&A's is located in Department 5 at the front of the Reservation Book.

INSTRUCTIONS

If you wish to participate, confirm to your judge that you are willing to stipulate to an Order requiring all of the parties to appear *in person* for a settlement conference on the date the parties select.

The parties must reserve a Tuesday or Thursday 8:30 a.m. session by entering the information in the Reservation Book found on the clerk's desk in **Department 5**. In order to ensure the settlement program resources are efficiently utilized, the parties should pick a date which is available on their calendars. Court personnel cannot be involved in re-scheduling.

Parties (and counsel) must appear by 8:30 a.m. in **Department 5** on the date selected. They will then be advised by court staff where to meet with their settlement conference officer.

Parties must advise each other (not the court), in advance, if, due to an emergency, they are unable to attend on the date selected. The parties are again reminded to select a conference date which they are certain will be available on their calendars.