

**Dorothy's Not the Only One Who Needs Ruby Slippers**  
**The RPPTL Section's No Place Like Home Program**

"There's no place like home, there's no place like home, there's no place like home."

*Frank Baum, The Wizard of Oz*

There is no clicking of the heels three times for those confronting destruction of what they believe has been their family's generational home. Stated in more stark terms, it is a rather bleak nightmare when financial disaster assistance is available but proof of title is not. The Real Property, Probate & Trust Law ("RPPTL") Section of The Florida Bar has focused on the issue and is ready to provide real estate and probate assistance to Florida's underserved population who confront, usually on an emergent basis, all of the practical issues which arise from imperfect title to residential real property.

1. What is the "No Place Like Home Program" ("NPLH")? NPLH is a joint cooperative project between the RPPTL Section and Florida's legal aid organizations.
2. What will NPLH do? NPLH will provide legal resources to perfect legal title to residential real property at limited or no cost to Florida residents whose imperfect title undermines their continued occupancy and ownership of, and rights and benefits to, their homes.
3. How will NPLH work? RPPTL Section members will train and be trained to provide title related legal services in both the real estate and probate settings aimed at perfecting title and resolving title issues. Those who qualify for the legal services and benefits provided by NPLH will be able to continue to reside in their homes and receive assistance from disaster and similar relief/insurance programs. Quiet title, probate and title oriented proceedings and legal counsel will be provided by RPPTL Section members and coordinated through legal aid offices throughout the state.
4. How will NPLH be "rolled out?" NPLH has already been rolled out in the following legal aid offices: Bay Area Legal Services (13<sup>th</sup> Circuit/Hillsborough); Legal Aid of Manasota (12<sup>th</sup> Circuit/Sarasota and Manatee only); Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County (15<sup>th</sup> Circuit/Palm Beach); Legal Aid Service of Broward County (17<sup>th</sup> Circuit/Broward); and Legal Services of North Florida (1<sup>st</sup> Circuit/Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton; 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit/Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty and Wakulla and 14<sup>th</sup> Circuit/Bay,

Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson and Washington). NPLH is now being rolled out to all of the remaining circuits in the State of Florida.

5. What role can I play? While services may vary in various circuits, generally speaking, at least two distinct and equally important areas of service will be available. First of the two areas of service will be educating others in the "how to's" of perfecting title, as well as educating lawyers as to the purposes and methods of the program. Mentoring of lawyers involved with ongoing title procedures will be included. RPPTL Section members may be asked to speak about and promote the program in conjunction with Florida's legal aid offices. The second area will be the operational aspect of NPLH and will have RPPTL Section real estate and probate lawyers spearheading and strategizing the best methods for resolving title issues and then pursuing them. Now that the pilot circuits have initiated the process, NPLH is being made available for participation by all RPPTL Section members and Florida practitioners. Additional assistance in raising funds (after RPPTL Section sponsors are contacted) for continuation of NPLH will be sought through RPPTL Section members, including contact with program sponsors in their judicial circuits. In addition to trainers and mentors, experienced RPPTL Section member volunteers are needed to assist the various legal aid offices in vetting cases as to merit and assisting with the preparation of written case summaries to facilitate the vetting. The vetting process is intended to provide those RPPTL Section member volunteers who will be handling cases, with sufficient information for a determination as to whether they wish to handle a given case, while at the same time providing conflict information.
  
6. How will NPLH be initially funded (title searches, filing fees and other costs and expenses)? Existing RPPTL Section sponsors are being canvassed for financial assistance for the program and those who qualify for assistance through the program. Some title companies have indicated, on a preliminary basis, that they will provide title searches and related services at "cost." Additional sponsors may be necessary and contact information may be sought from RPPTL Section members for such sponsors. (NOTE: THOUGH NPLH HAS BEEN FUNDED IN CERTAIN PILOT CIRCUITS BY A LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION GRANT, THAT FUNDING IS LIMITED TO THOSE PILOT CIRCUITS).

## NO PLACE LIKE HOME

### Addressing Emergent Title Issues for Qualified Florida Residents

From the Attorneys of the Real Property, Probate & Trust Law Section  
of the Florida Bar ("RPPTL") and Florida's Legal Aids and Services

### Offices

### Attorney Registration Form (for ALMs)

What is NO PLACE LIKE HOME ("NPLH")? NPLH is a joint project of RPPTL and legal aid offices in Florida. The program and objectives are more fully described in the attached Q & A. The program seeks to resolve and rectify title issues experienced by certain members of Florida's underserved population which might otherwise preclude them from receiving or experiencing the benefits of real property ownership or title, including receipt of available disaster aid or assistance.

What is attorney registration? While services may vary in various circuits, generally speaking, at least two distinct paths or programs for RPPTL attorney participation/registration are being offered. The first path is pilot area participation as a trainer ("Program 1: Train the Trainer Program"). You will be receiving materials and training for teaching those in your circuit as to how to resolve and perfect relevant title issues. The second path or program is pilot area participation in actually resolving title issues and perfecting title ("Program 2: Resolving Title Program"). You may sign up with your circuit's legal aid office for the available programs.

See next page.

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**Please email this completed form to [LMiller@floridatax.com](mailto:LMiller@floridatax.com)**

No Place Like Home Attorney Registration Form

Contact and Related Information

Date:

Name:

Area of Practice: (RP/PT) (Circle one)

Member of RPPTL Section (Circle one) Yes No

Florida Bar Number and year admitted to Florida Bar:

Law Firm/Employer:

Address:

Email Address:

Phone number:

Fax number:

Judicial Circuit:

I am interested in (circle one or both):

PROGRAM 1: TRAIN THE TRAINER PROGRAM

PROGRAM 2: RESOLVING TITLE PROGRAM

**Please email this completed form to [LMiller@floridatax.com](mailto:LMiller@floridatax.com)**

## **NO PLACE LIKE HOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. I am a transactional attorney and would like to participate. However, I cannot accept a case for representation. How can I help?

There are many pro bono opportunities in addition to direct client representation. For instance, you may train other pro bono attorneys, develop training materials for pro bono attorneys, mentor an attorney, mentor legal services staff, review and assess a potential NPLH case and/or participate in client intake. Please contact your local legal services organization's pro bono coordinator for specific information about their pro bono opportunities.

2. What types of cases are involved?

Probate administration (both summary administration and formal administration), quiet title actions, preparation of corrective documents, administrative process through Dept. of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (involving mobile home title), transfer documentation and transactional assistance.

3. Will I be assigned a case?

No, cases are not assigned. You will be given the opportunity to conduct conflict checks and review the case for representation before accepting it.

4. I am concerned about litigation expenses. How is this handled?

The legal services organizations provide reimbursement of litigation expenses to pro bono attorneys handling their pro bono cases. Some may require pre-approval of a litigation expense if it is above a certain threshold (ex. \$100 or more). Please contact your local legal services organization's pro bono coordinator to obtain information about their process.

Some legal services organizations may be able to provide additional support such as interpreters, court reporters for a reduced fee and office space to meet with your client. Contact your local legal services' pro bono coordinator for information.

In most circuits, the clerks of court waive the filing fee if an application for determination of indigent status is filed and the clerk determines that the client is indigent. If there is a determination of indigence, the client may be able to get the sheriff's service of process fee waived. Please notify your local legal services pro bono coordinator if the clerk refuses to waive the fee or determines that the client is not indigent.

5. I would like to get involved and take a case, but my firm's professional liability insurance does not extend to pro bono cases. What to do?

Legal services organizations provide professional liability insurance to their pro bono attorneys. For some, the insurance is secondary to the attorney's own insurance. If the attorney has no professional liability coverage, the legal services' professional liability insurance is primary.

6. I'm interested in taking a NPLH case, but this is outside my area of practice. Will training be provided?

Yes. The FL Bar/RPPTL CLE, "Hurricane Irma: Now What Do We Do?", is available. Your local legal services organization may offer additional trainings/free CLEs and may have access to resource materials from other legal services offices. Mentor attorneys will be provided, upon request.