**Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Nov. 19, 2020

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**Closing the justice gap in Wisconsin**

**State Bar launches new pro bono portal to**

**connect lawyers with their communities**

**Madison, WI – More** low-income Wisconsinites facing civil legal challenges are expected to receive free legal help from pro bono attorneys with the **development of Wisconsin’s first statewide Pro Bono Opportunity Portal,** thanks to a partnership between the [State Bar of Wisconsin](https://www.wisbar.org/Pages/default.aspx) and [Paladin](https://www.joinpaladin.com/), a justice technology company.

The portal, which launched today at <https://app.joinpaladin.com/probonowi/>, comes as civil legal service organizations in Wisconsin face critical funding issues and are turning away nearly 50 percent of those who need legal help.Examples of civil legal challenges include landlord evictions, unpaid health care bills due to unemployment, and child custody issues during the pandemic.

The new website will enable attorneys and law students to match their skilsls and interests with opportunities available through free legal agencies across the state, such as Legal Action of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Judicare. It will also allow the agencies to post their opportunities to a nationwide, American Bar Association-led Disaster Relief Pro Bono Portal to extend reach for COVID-19 specific pro bono work.

“Civil legal aid programs in the state are telling us that pro bono assistance is crucial to making our shared goal of equal justice for all a reality,” said State Bar President Kathleen Brost. “Requests for legal services have surged with the recent pandemic, and increased pro bono engagement will greatly benefit people in need of critical legal services.

“Pro bono efforts by private attorneys and law students help their clients, the courts, and the profession by reducing barriers to justice and closing the justice gap by meeting the legal needs of all Wisconsin residents and ensuring a just and equitable legal system,” Brost said.

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**Photo: Kathleen Brost, 2020-2021 president, State Bar of Wisconsin**

*The State Bar of Wisconsin is an integrated professional association, created by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, for attorneys who hold a Wisconsin law license. With more than 25,000 members, the State Bar aids the courts in improving the administration of justice, provides continuing legal education for its members to help them maintain their expertise, and assists Wisconsin lawyers in carrying out community service initiatives to educate the public about the legal system and the value of lawyers. For more information, visit* [*www.wisbar.org*](http://www.wisbar.org)*.*

**About Paladin:** Paladin's mission is to increase access to justice by helping legal teams run more efficient pro bono programs. They work with AmLaw 250 firms, Fortune 500 teams, and Bar Associations to increase pro bono engagement and decrease administrative costs.