



Appleseed This Week

Help Pro Bono Lawyers Assist After Disasters: Urge Your State to Adopt New Model Rule

July 12, 2007 - Appleseed is launching an advocacy campaign to urge state bar associations and the highest courts in every state to adopt a new **American Bar Association model rule** that clarifies the process by which lawyers from one state can provide free legal assistance to another state after disasters.

The ABA approved the rule in February, and **Alabama and Georgia Appleseed Centers** have taken the lead in urging their chief justices to adopt it. Iowa is the first state in the country to adopt the rule.

What's the problem?

Appleseed's work in the aftermath of **Hurricane Katrina** revealed that lawyers who wanted to help hurricane survivors were often blocked from donating their services by local rules. If all states adopted the proposed model rule, access to justice for future disaster victims would be more attainable.

What's Being Proposed?

Appleseed endorses the ABA model rule (resolution number 104), which gives lawyers in good standing in one state the ability to help where help is needed. First, it authorizes lawyers to render pro bono legal services in another state when the chief justice of that state declares an emergency in the state's justice system. Second, the rule authorizes lawyers who are themselves victims of a disaster in their home state to come to another state and continue to serve clients from that location.

Take Action.

Urge your state to adopt this important model rule by sending letters of support to the president of your state's bar and your state's chief justice. For help finding out whom to direct letters to in your state, contact **Alison Lima** at alima@appleseed.net or (202) 347- 7960.

Craig Baab, Katrina advocacy legal fellow for Alabama Appleseed, has written sample letters to the [chief justice](#) and [bar](#), which you can adopt to your own state. If you want to read more about the Model Rule click [here](#).

Thanks from Appleseed and from all those who will benefit from legal services in the future following a disaster.

For more information on Appleseed, visit www.appleseednetwork.org. To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).

Appleseed, a non-partisan and non-profit organization, is a network of public interest law Centers working to identify and address injustices in their communities. Appleseed works to build a just society through education, legal advocacy, community activism and policy expertise, addressing root causes and producing practical solutions. As one of the nation's largest legal pro bono networks, Appleseed Centers work both independently and collectively, bringing their own experiences to create local solutions that are nationally relevant. We connect the top private practice lawyers, corporate counsel, law schools, civic leaders, and other professionals to tackle problems locally, at their root cause.

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