

# A Soundstart to Legal Family Issues

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# Program Background

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- Created in 2008 by the Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program.
- Designed to help at risk families address legal issues by educating them on basic legal information.
- Given through live presentations by volunteer attorneys and law students
- The goal of the program is to empower families to get the help they need to solve their own legal issues through education.
- Agencies we offer classes to:
  - BabySteps: (Boise and Pocatello)
  - Salvation Army (Caldwell and Boise-English and Spanish)
  - South West Boise Correctional Center/SICI
  - Idaho State University
  - Pocatello's Women's Correctional Center
  - Marian Pritchett High School
  - Boise Rescue Mission and City Light

# Soundstart Statistics

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Soundstart class presentations:

2016 - taught 27 classes, helping 433 families

2017 - taught 37 classes, helping 535 families

2018 – taught 32 classes, helping 427 families

**90% of the volunteer attorneys who teach classes do not practice family law.**

# Soundstart Lessons

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Each lesson comes with a detailed curriculum and handouts. All curriculums follow a similar format and offers tips on how to get the attendees to get involved.

Topics include:

- Custody, Child Support, and Paternity
- Wills, Guardianship, and POA
- Creating a parenting plan
- Grandparents as parents
- Custody for incarcerated women

**All presentations are given by volunteer attorneys and law students**

Curriculum was created by an attorney to be flexible and designed to suit presentation times. (times vary between 30 minutes to 3 hours depending on the agency)

You travel to the agency to present the lessons-attendance will vary based on agency (travel time is included in your prep)

- Attendance can be anywhere from 5-40 individuals.

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# Sample lesson - Custody

# Main concerns that come up from new volunteer attorneys...

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- Do I have to represent them?
  - No, this program offers only legal educational courses and does not require you to represent any of the individuals attending the classes.
  - We do not offer legal representation; however the individuals should be encouraged at presentations to call IVLP to see if they qualify for services there.

# Ethics: Rule 6.1 Voluntary Pro Bono Publico Service

Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay. A lawyer should aspire to render at least (50) hours of pro bono publico legal services per year. In fulfilling this responsibility, the lawyer should:

(a) provide a substantial majority of the (50) 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 that 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.

**In addition, a lawyer should voluntarily contribute financial support to organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means.**

❖ **Access to Justice**-A contribution to Access to Justice Idaho will ensure these Idaho organizations continue to serve the poor and people with disabilities throughout Idaho in cases such as domestic violence, foreclosure prevention, disability claims, access for long-term care, guardianships, and other legal services that would otherwise be out of reach.

# Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program

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It is important to understand that you are presenting this information on behalf of IVLP and that you are not soliciting for clients.

IVLP can help those that attend Soundstart classes-even if the family is not ready to start working on their legal needs IVLP can help with a referral to community or governmental agencies. If the parent states, they attended a Soundstart presentation they are automatically added to the call back list.

## IVLP Case Types:

- Custody and visitation
- Divorce
- Modification of Custody
- Guardianship adult and child(ren)
- Debt Defense
- Wills and Estates
- Assistance for nonprofit corporations
- Advice and Counsel regarding whether Bankruptcy can assist you if facing foreclosure
- Other limited foreclosure assistance
- Immigration assistance for victims of domestic violence (VAWA and U Visas)
- Legal assistance fro start-up and emerging businesses
- Contested protection orders