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Attorneys Lend a Hand to Foreclosure Crisis

More than 60 attorneys across Colorado signed up to help out with the foreclosure crisis in their communities today.

Licensed attorneys who signed up for a foreclosure training session agreed to take on a qualified foreclosure case *pro bono* (free of charge). Today's online program, "The Basics of Foreclosure Defense" covered the foreclosure process and ways to keep qualified homeowners in their homes.

The online-only training was organized and hosted by Colorado Legal Services and the Colorado Bar Association, two nonprofit organizations in the legal community with members and resources throughout the state of Colorado. CLS will connect the trained volunteer attorneys with Coloradans facing foreclosure.

"Lenders are motivated to get involved in cases right now," said Jose Vasquez, the main presenter, who is the supervising attorney in the Consumer Law Unit of Colorado Legal Services. "We wanted to give the legal community greater access to ways to respond and help their communities handle foreclosures, to show that we're there for them."

CLS and the CBA continued to receive requests from attorneys around the state to sign up to participate, even as it was underway this afternoon online.

Reaching out from Colorado's plains and mountains, to the Western Slope and Front Range communities, Vasquez spoke about the foreclosure process, how to manage a case from start to finish, resources for attorneys and case law. He covered legal technicalities of what state and federal claims are available to borrowers in foreclosure.

Longtime attorney Gary Witt, of Denver, signed up for the program to help in his own way with the foreclosure crisis. He said he sees his involvement as a way to prevent homelessness.

"I'm looking to help out here. Foreclosures are the seminal issue in the economic crisis we're seeing," Witt said.

Although Witt has specialized in telecommunications law the past 30 years, he said the online training session this afternoon by Colorado Legal Services provided him with all the tools and resources he needed to get started on a foreclosure case *pro bono*.

Program attendee Leigh Cravin, an attorney in Colorado Springs, said, "Every American is now faced with one of two choices: to be part of the problem or to be part of the solution. I look forward to using the information gained to help homeowners facing foreclosure in Colorado Springs."

An audiocast of the session will be available in the coming weeks online only for attorneys who are currently involved in the legal aid community or who will commit to taking a *pro bono* case in the next six months at www.COAdvocatesForum.org.

Colorado had 4,345 properties in foreclosure in September, or one per every 482 households, according to the *Denver Business Journal* on Oct. 23, 2008.

Colorado Legal Services is a nonprofit organization committed to providing quality legal representation to low-income and elderly individuals. Areas of assistance or representation include those legal areas of importance or need to those who cannot afford legal counsel, like housing, domestic relations, consumer and public benefits.

The Colorado Bar Association is a non-profit voluntary member organization with approximately 17,000 members — about 73 percent of active Colorado attorneys.

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