

# A New Home and New Opportunities for Service: Terri's Journey with AppalReD Legal Aid

Woman with a quote

When Terri Buskey moved to Kentucky two years ago, she knew she wanted to give back to her community. Having volunteered extensively in Illinois—both before and after retirement—she quickly began looking for ways to get involved in her new home.

“I had done a great deal of volunteering in Illinois,” Terri said. “I wasn’t sure what I could legally do as a volunteer in Kentucky, so I looked up the local legal aid and asked.” That search led straight to AppalReD Legal Aid—and to a new chapter of meaningful service.

She says, “I like pro bono work because I am able to use the gifts and education God gave me to help others.”

For Terri, justice means more than laws and courtrooms. It means access.

“Justice to me means that everyone can get the help they need to navigate the court system, which is not easy for an untrained person to do,” she explained. “Most of what we help clients with [at eviction and pro se clinics] is just understanding the basics of the system—who does what, when, why, and how.”

The case that has stayed with Terri most is one that still weighs heavily on her heart but also inspires her to keep showing up for family law clients.

“The case that sticks with me the most is one where the client came to us too late,” she shared. “The client went through a very tough divorce. Her husband had a lawyer, and she did not. Emotionally spent, she just wanted to get it over with and signed an agreement [with inaccurate information], and, later, she realized she now had to pay her ex-husband thousands of dollars she didn’t have. We tried to help her, but the judge wouldn’t budge.”

That experience reinforced an important lesson Terri now shares with every client: take the time to understand what you’re signing. Seek help early in the process. Especially when you’re tired and overwhelmed. “I don’t know how many people I’ve helped with divorces who just want to ‘get it over with’ and I explain there are long-term consequences attached to that exhaustion.”

Her advice to other attorneys thinking about pro bono work? Don’t let fear or uncertainty stop you from doing meaningful legal aid work. “Like anything, you just need to dive in and try it.”

*Interested in joining Terri? Email [CharnelB @ ardfky.org](mailto:CharnelB@ardfky.org) or fill out a [volunteer application](#).*

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## Table of Contents

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