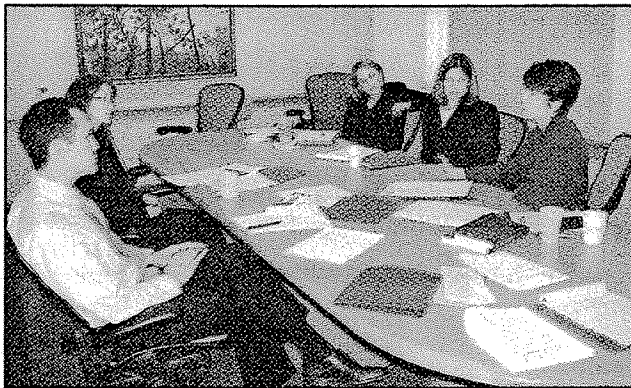


## Devine Millimet & Branch Part of Landlord/Tenant Initiative

A new homelessness prevention initiative developed in partnership with Devine, Millimet & Branch in Manchester marks the Pro Bono Program's latest effort to involve volunteer attorneys in crafting new solutions to low-income client needs. In collaboration with New Hampshire Legal Assistance and the Legal Advice & Referral Center, Pro Bono has launched a project to link low-income families and individuals with lawyers at the Devine firm for representation at district court hearings where basic shelter is on the line.

"This project helps fill an important client need in a state with incredibly high housing costs and low vacancy rates," commented Pro Bono Director Virginia Martin, "while providing another important option for volunteer involvement. The initiative offers a reliable system for referring two to three dozen eviction cases a year in Hillsborough and Merrimack Counties instead of less dependable 'catch as catch can' methods of trying to place these extremely time-sensitive cases."

The project, which calls for a Devine Millimet "Swat Team" of attorneys to accept cases involving hearings with as little notice as 48 hours, is the result of Martin



*Clockwise: Johnathan M. Shirley, Elizabeth J. Baker, Holly J. Kilibarda, Jeanneane N. Osborne and Lynn Parker conducts training at Devine, Millimet & Branch.*

and NHLA Litigation Director Kay Drought exploring new ideas for Pro Bono attorney involvement with Attorney Alexander Walker, the president of Devine, Millimet & Branch. "Devine Millimet has a long and rich history of helping to deliver legal services to the poor. This initiative is the result of the firm's efforts to find new and innovative ways to draw upon the considerable legal talent within our litigation department. Given the firm's size and litigation horsepower, we are uniquely positioned to deliver this type of legal assistance on an expedited basis."

To equip the Devine Millimet "Swat Team" of attorneys to handle landlord-ten-

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ant matters, Pro Bono recently coordinated a training session led by attorney Lynne Parker, Deputy Director of NHLA. The seminar focused on defending eviction actions. Members of this team include Jonathan Shirley, Holly Kilibarda, Betsy Baker, and Jeanneane Osborne.

Attorney Matt Johnson, the Chairman of Devine Millimet's new Pro Bono Committee will oversee this effort. "Eviction cases run on a very tight timeline, so we have designed a training program and rapid response system to ensure that when the need arises, we can promptly dispatch one of our attorneys to help the tenant." Attorney Joceline Champagne of the Pro Bono Program has responsibility for overall project operations, including case referrals and follow up. In addition to Attorney Johnson and Attorney Walker, other members of Devine Millimet's Pro Bono Committee include George Moore, Ovide Lamontagne, Pat McGrath, Pam Peterson, Brian Cullen, Danielle Pacik and Betsy Baker

"In the few weeks since the initial training we already have several success stories," said Champagne. "Attorneys at Devine Millimet responded quickly to Pro Bono's request for assistance and within 24 hours a tenant in need was provided with representation by Holly Kilibarda. In another case, Jeanneane Osborne accepted a case a bit far afield geographically to assure a family in Grafton County could defend loss of their shelter and rent subsidy."