

Your Own Super-Power By Stacy Rupprecht Butler (Volunteer Lawyer Program)

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Iron Man, Batman, Hancock. Think you have nothing in common with the caped crusaders storming the movie theaters this summer? Think again. As an attorney, you have a special power that you share with only a few: the power to use your skill and talent to make a difference in the lives of impoverished Arizonans who have nowhere to turn for legal assistance. Every day in Pima County, hundreds of people seek assistance from civil legal aid programs: a woman lost in the legal process of divorcing her abusive spouse; a grandparent struggling to obtain guardianship over his or her grandchild; a single parent unsure of his or her rights in a landlord-tenant issue. They are people who need heroes. Some of these people are rescued just in time. Currently, more than 1,200 attorneys volunteer their time with the Volunteer Lawyers Program, a division of Southern Arizona Legal Aid. VLP manages intake and screening for Pima County residents living below poverty level who seek legal assistance but cannot be assisted through Southern Arizona Legal Aid. The VLP then matches clients with volunteer attorneys willing to provide *pro bono* legal assistance. These volunteer lawyers are larger-than-life heroes to their clients – for a person feeling lost in the civil legal system, a volunteer lawyer is stronger, faster ... and able to leap legal hurdles in a single bound. Unfortunately, as Arizona's population grows, so does the number of Pima County residents living in poverty. Many people in need are turned away due to inadequate resources and lack of volunteers. So VLP is looking for a few new superheroes this fall. In September, all three of Arizona's Volunteer Lawyers Programs will participate in Arizona's first statewide recruitment campaign in more than five years. The campaign will target attorneys who practice in Arizona, but who do not currently participate in the VLP. And like any true superhero, a volunteer attorney need not quit his or her day job to find time for acts of derring-do. VLP offer an expansive range of opportunities to assist indigent clients. Through VLP, volunteers can donate a few hours at a clinic, supervise law students as they assist clients or represent a client from beginning to end. VLP offers training, mentoring and encouragement (capas and tights are not included).

So if you remember the mighty success achieved when Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Flash and the Green Lantern all teamed up on the Justice League of America, take this opportunity to join an elite fighting force. You are already qualified just by doing what you do. Go ahead, be a hero. Just by being a lawyer.

Interested in volunteering? [Click here...](#)