

# Private Bar Involvement & PRIME

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## ***Why this is important to your office.***

You have a panel of private attorneys or other volunteers who work with your office. You need to track the cases they handle, the work that they do and the results they achieve. It's also possible that some of these volunteers handle cases at a reduced fee. This means that there are payments to be made and bills to be tracked. Your funders and board members request reports on a regular basis. You want to keep on top of the cases and make sure the clients are receiving the quality of representation they deserve.



## ***What can PRIME do to help?***

PRIME can help you with these tasks. It can track your work, time, tasks, staff, volunteers and money. It can produce the reports, letters, calendars and other forms that you need. It does this by gathering the information and then using it to produce the different forms you require. In looking at what any case management system does, you look at three things. The first is what is gathered. The second is what the system does with the information once it is gathered. Last, how easy is it to adjust to what you need.

PRIME can help. It tracks the cases and assists with the work of legal aid, law school clinics, domestic violence shelters and pro bono offices that provide representation to low income people across the country. It improves the quality and quantity of legal representation and produces the reports you need.

PRIME has a full range of case management features for use on cases handled by in-house staff. Time keeping, calendaring, project management, case collaborative messaging and extensive report writing capabilities are just some examples of these features. This handout will concentrate on those features involving *Private Bar Involvement and PRIME*, rather than the staff features.



## ***What do you gather?***

To do your reports and help your clients, you have to gather information. You might not currently put this information into a computer, but you have it somewhere. Every program puts together a list of clients helped. They keep information about a panel of attorneys and note the law firms that they belong to. These attorneys are willing to help clients with different types of cases and in different localities. When they do work for you, you want to be aware of how many cases they take and how many hours are spent. There are questions about how much time staff



members spend and how much the volunteers spend. There are deadlines that have to be met and appointments set. Applicants must be screened, since not all of them will qualify for representation. Letters are sent to clients and attorneys to confirm referrals, check status, get closure information and find out if the client was satisfied with the representation.

A computer case management system is nothing more than a filing system that also uses the information gathered to produce things you need. These things might be reports in the form of calendars, letters, reminders, evaluations and lists. Just like a word processing program, it is unlikely that you are going to use all the features built into the software. However, it is important that the features 'you' need are there.

### ***What is necessary to get started?***

Sometimes local bar associations in the area that you serve have their members in a database. If you can get that information, it can be translated and put into PRIME. This could save you the time it would take to enter them, and it should insure reasonably accurate data. Almost always we can move information into PRIME from Excel spreadsheets, tables stored in Microsoft Word or converted from an older system.

### ***How do things work?***

There are separate sheets stored for each client and each lawyer. When you fill out a client intake sheet, the push of a button brings up a list of your lawyers that help with the type of problem the client has - in the county they live. You can sort the lawyer list in the order of when each last took a case, and then call the appropriate attorneys. Click on the lawyer who agrees to handle the case to automatically assign them to that case.

### ***Can I Track the Contacts I Have with the Lawyers?***

PRIME allows you to keep track of each contact you have with your lawyers. That way you can easily look at their 'history' and see how many times they took a case, refused cases, agreed to work on the Saturday Advice Panel, etc.

### ***Tracking PBI Lawyer Time***

Private attorneys want credit for the work they do. You want to provide awards to those attorneys who spend a lot of their time helping your clients. Thus how much time your lawyers spend is important to you.

In some offices, you want a report on the time each PBI Lawyer spends each month. Other offices have a hard time getting time information from a lawyer, even when a case closes. That is why PRIME has two different methods of tracking PBI time.

The first and simplest way is to merely put time spent on a case by the lawyer when you close the case. The second way to track time is to use separate time slips that store the time spent by attorneys. These slips can be entered when the case is closed, monthly or using



any period you wish. You can use these slips to track time spent by attorneys on things other than cases, such as running a wills clinic, recruiting other attorneys, or mentoring a new, inexperienced attorney.

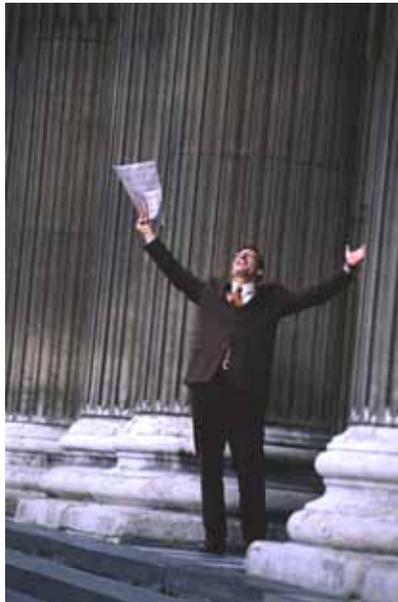
### ***Compensated Cases (Judicare) and the Value of Donated Time***

Do you pay attorneys at a reduced rate for handling cases? PRIME has a built-in method of tracking the monies OK'd, owed, and paid to your lawyers. A case is marked as compensated. You can then display the compensated intake form that tracks bills from the lawyers and your payments to them. *It also allows you to store the estimated value of donated time and the maximum OK'd time and money on the case.* There can be an unlimited number of Compensated slips associated with a case. Slips are entered when you begin the case, receive bills from the lawyer or pay those bills. The Reports tab gives you the chance to print a ledger of the cases you have paid or owe money on. You easily know how much money you've encumbered.



When on a slip for an individual case compensated slip, pressing the *View Account Balance* Button displays the sum of all the previous slips entered and the account balance. A *Pop-up Calculator* Button exists in case you need to do some calculations.

### ***Law Firms***



Offices want to know which law firm has taken the largest number of cases. It is also possible that a law firm decides to take cases and then assigns them to different associates.

PRIME has a law firm input form. This form allows you to input your law firms, their addresses, etc. If you put the law firm number on the lawyer sheet, all the lawyers who belong to the firm will automatically show up on the law firm intake sheet. It will also show all of the cases the lawyers handled.

We've often been able to give offices a head start in entering their law firms by using an old lawyers table. It's possible to gather law firm information from these old lawyer records. This information is grouped so each firm is mentioned only once. The information is dropped into a temporary table and cleaned up. The contents of this temporary table is then transferred into the law firm table. This can save a lot of time.

### ***Tracking Volunteers***

Do your cases have people other than private attorneys or staff members associated with them? There are two ways that you can store information about volunteers in PRIME.

The first is to enter them into the lawyer table and designate their position as an accountant, a law student, etc. The second way is to enter them into the contacts table. PRIME allows you to attach contacts to a case. These contacts might be volunteers, witnesses, social workers, etc. When you enter a contact, they go into a separate table. If you need to assign that contact person to a case in the future, you just put in their number.

### ***Form Letters***

Many of the tasks we do on a day-to-day basis are repetitive. If we could automate these tasks, more time could be spent on those things that demand our full attention. Form letters are an example of this. The time saved in automatically generating letters could be spent helping more clients or doing a better job on their cases.



PRIME supports an unlimited number of form letters. There is a good selection of form letters already included, such as opening letters and closing letters to the client and lawyer. There is a warning letter to the client if they failed to contact their assigned lawyer. A tickle letter is provided to find out what the status of a lawyer's case is.

You can easily add to this list. If you don't like the wording on some letters, they are easy to change. You can even take existing form letters in Word or WordPerfect and, using a simple paste procedure, move them into PRIME. You can generate your letterhead directly or use preprinted letterhead, if you prefer. You can have multiple letterheads if your office has different projects.

### ***Notes and Canned Notes***

It is easy to add your notes to the system. Case notes allow you to store any information you need about the case. You can store virtually an unlimited quantity of notes about a case. All the notes on all the cases can be searched for information.

Do you often find yourself telling clients the same thing about eligibility, their problem or office policies? PRIME allows you to incorporate this advice into different canned notes. A push of a button puts this advice into your notes on the case. Not only this, but it also allows you to put the same information into a form letter to the client. That way you can remind yourself what to inform the client, record what you told the client and use a form letter to send the client a copy of what you told them.

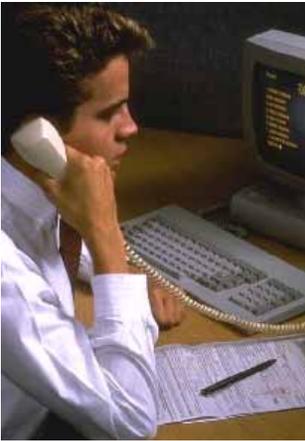


### ***Calendar Your Work***

PRIME provides a group calendar so that people in the office can share their schedules. It schedules meetings, acts as a tickle system, sets appointments and marks letters to be sent. Remind yourself to contact a lawyer three weeks after sending out a client. Put in an

appointment for a client to come in. Send out status letters on a group of cases. Multiple dates for a case can be entered at one time. There is also an individual, private to-do list.

### ***Lawyer Specialties and Special Skills***



Volunteer attorneys have specific interests and skills. They sometimes want to confine the cases that they handle to these interests or skills. Agencies handle only certain regions and types of problems. PRIME uses a subject table to track the areas of expertise for agencies and volunteer attorneys.

The system is set up so you can use the existing problem codes to assign lawyers specialties. However, the PRIME goes way beyond this. You can create your own list of specialties, such as Katrina issues. You can also use subjects to store other types of markers for lawyers, such as Consumer Mentor Panel or Japanese Speaking Lawyer. This list of specialties is also used to tag your agencies. Once marked, it is easy to bring up a list of

your volunteer attorneys who help with Katrina problems and also print out a list of agencies that deal with that subject.

### ***Contacting your Lawyers***

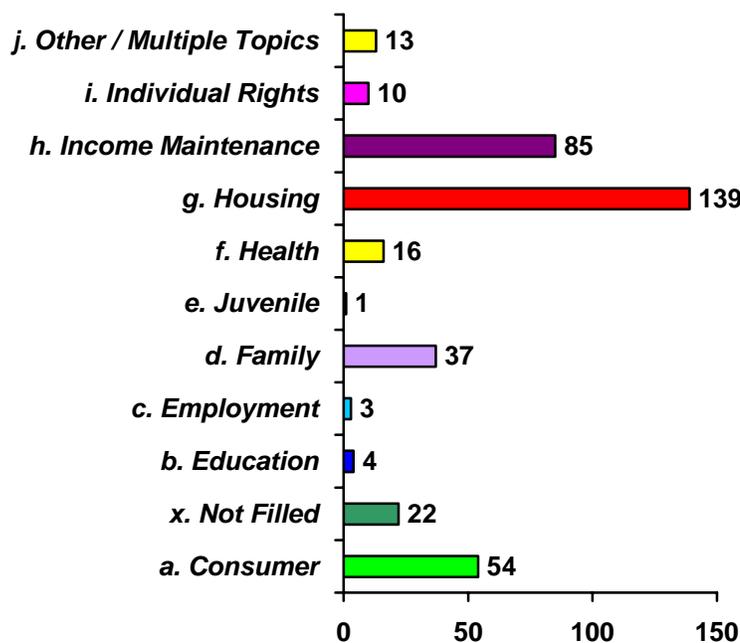
You can use the system to email attorneys, FAX them, send form letters or, if you have a modem in your computer, automatically dial your phone to call them up. PRIME uses the print drivers available in Windows, so you can FAX the intake to your private attorneys by printing to your FAX.

### ***Reports***

PRIME is filled with reports to help you get the information out about your clients, law firms, cases and lawyers. There are more than 300 reports built into the system, each one of which can be generated with a virtually unlimited number of criteria. However, if you don't find the one you want, there is no problem. Not only does the system have a customized report writer built in, but you can also use Microsoft Office Access to build any reports you want. These can be built from scratch or by using easy-to-use wizards. You can also modify existing reports.

Reports are available about lawyers, the cases they handled, the clients, the agencies you've referred clients to and just about every other piece of information you gather. The system will even automatically produce graphic reports for you. These are easily pasted into a Word document, such as this one. A fairly inexpensive add-in program, Microsoft MapPoint, allows you to put any information, such as location of clients or where your senior clients live, on a map on a county or zip code level.





## Open Cases by Subject Area

### ***Tracking Agency Referrals***

Other agencies exist in our community that can also help our clients. Sometimes the most important thing you can do for a client is to refer them for nonlegal help to another agency.

PRIME helps an office to store, find, and report on the agencies used to help clients. First you enter the agencies in your service area that help people, such as the Salvation Army and the domestic violence shelters. Often this information can be imported from lists obtained from United Way or other sources in the community. Then the agencies can be assigned types of services they provide and the region of their services. This list of specialty subjects is the same one shared and used by your list of lawyers.



To refer a client to an agency, all you have to do is push a button called Agencies/Handouts Button on the client intake sheet. This button opens a form that allows you to display a list of agencies that help the client with the type of problem that they have. You can select the appropriate agencies, push a button and generate a form letter to the client listing the agencies that can help them.

You can also search for agencies to help clients with problems other than the one they came into you office for help on.

## ***What if I Need to Gather Information Not in the Program?***

When an office has a diverse number of funding sources, there are diverse reporting requirements. The Special Programs feature in the system allows you to create custom 'mini' intake sheets that attach to the main intake sheet. These allow you to gather information specific to a particular need, such as a funding source requirement. When the need is not present, these sheets don't appear and can be ignored.



The Special Program Field is one of the most powerful features in the entire case management system, since it allows the user to create their own custom tables and intake. For one Pro Bono Program, we created thirty-nine Special Programs on every aspect of their practice. These are on our website library and can be downloaded and used by other offices.

## ***Tracking Contributions and Grants***

PRIME includes a *fund-raising* function that tracks contributions to your office, the people who make them and the organizations to which they belong. An optional Grants Tracking Package can be added to help you fill out a grant application, track the grants you receive, budget the funds and comply with the grant requirements.

## ***Where is the Flexibility?***

The short answer is everywhere. PRIME adjusts to fit your needs in many ways.

***The Ability to Customize*** - An office can go into PRIME and make important changes, such as adding fields, changing menus and even adding brand-new code. This gives you the ultimate flexibility in making the software work for you. You can add or change reports. Nothing is locked or hidden from the administrator.



***Supported Operating Systems*** - PRIME can run under any Windows version from 95' onward. Because it's based on standard Microsoft components, there is little fear that it won't run under any changes that come along.

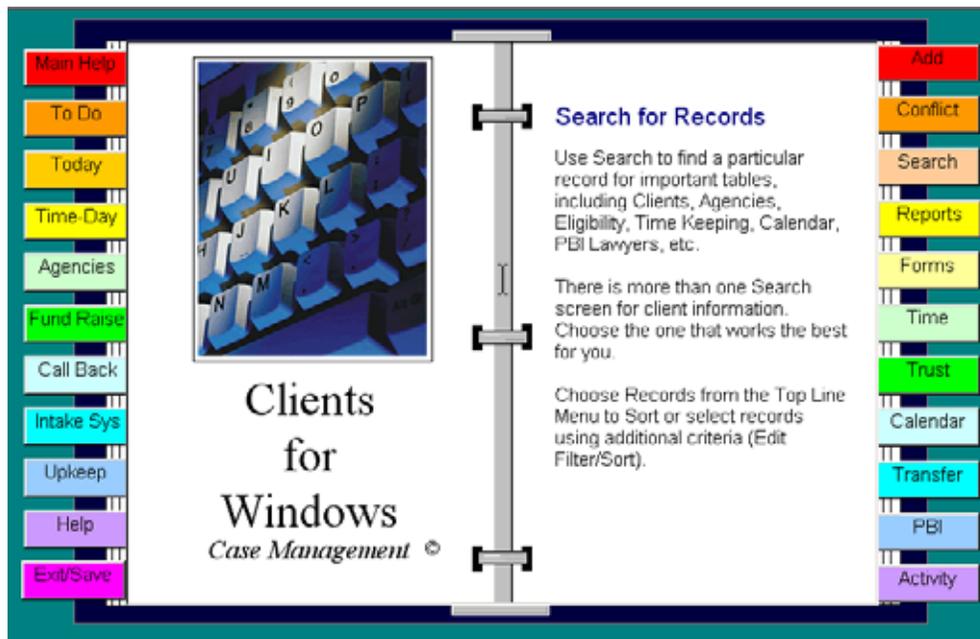
***Standard Software Easily Understood*** - PRIME is based upon Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications, Access and SQL. It includes built-in custom query and report writing features. Since it is based on Microsoft Office, books and courses are plentiful.

***Usage Flexibility*** - PRIME lets you begin the intake sheet with or without filling out an intake sheet. It allows you to fill out a simple callback record to track simple advice calls. Needed features, such as the calendar, are available throughout the system.

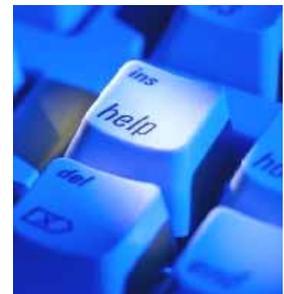
**Widespread Use** – PRIME is in widespread use. It's likely that someone nearby your office is using it. It is also likely that an office is using it for exactly the same things you need.

### **How Can I Learn to Use the System?**

PRIME is set up like an easy-to-use book with tabs. Click the tab you need and another page is displayed with your selections. For example, if you want to add a client, you click the Add tab and choose to add a client. If you want to find something, you click on the Search tab, then click on what you're looking for. This opens full featured Search Screen.



Help is available from many sources. There is a comprehensive manual that's included. An optional computerized tutorial disk has 57 different lessons that instruct users on using the many features in the system. Some of the tutorials also help the person managing the system. Online help includes the "Advocate's Guide", a short narrative on how to use the case management system. The "Search Help" button gives you a keyword or subject search system of 145 articles on using the software. The website, [www.kempscaseworks.com](http://www.kempscaseworks.com), has a knowledge base. Kemp's Case Works offers on-site, regional, and bi-annual national trainings dealing with using and modifying the system.



Others sources of help include phone support. We can answer specific questions and even make the changes remotely to your software. Because PRIME uses standard Microsoft components, many books are available to assist you in both writing special reports and customizing the program. Local courses in community colleges can give you a jump on making the program work for you. The system has a menu-based documentation system. This allows you to generate your own technical documentation in as much detail as needed.

## ***What are the Different Versions that are Available?***

The *Standard Version* uses Access databases on both the workstation and the Server. It is good for a standalone computer or a LAN (local area network) in a smaller office.

The *SQL or Clients/Server* version of clients is for larger offices or for use across a wide area network. It can be used with or without Citrix or Terminal Services. It uses the industrial strength Microsoft SQL Server database and supports hundreds of users.



The *ASP/SQL* version is used on the web and is an outsourcing of whole challenge of case management. Users can concentrate on what case management does, instead of worrying what type of computers and software it uses. Monthly usage fees keep the cost of your software down. It uses the powerful SQL version of PRIME. We handle all of the setup and maintenance tasks for the user.

## ***Pricing***

The cost of PRIME varies. It depends on the edition of the program, whether it is a new purchase or an upgrade, and the numbers of users. Contact us for more information.

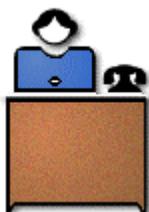
## ***Background***

John Paul Kemp owner and CEO of KCW, was in legal services for fourteen years as a Vista Attorney, Staff Attorney, Managing Attorney and Project Director. During that time he supervised both Pro Bono and Judicare components. He has been a lead trainer for NLADA, LSC and the ABA in conferences dealing with pro bono, computers and technology. He brings day-to-day experience in legal aid to the design and implementation of case management. His involvement in technology and computers in legal aid dates from 1982.

## ***How Do I Order or Get More Information?***

PRIME is flexible, secure, economical, powerful and easy to use. It's what you need to manage your cases, your lawyers and your law firms. We can provide you more information or even give you a live demonstration over the web if you wish.

## ***Contact us at:***



Kemps Case Works, Inc.  
2304 Sherbrooke Drive  
Atlanta, Georgia 30345  
(404) 320-7126 or (404) 636-7767  
Email: [jpkemp@kempscaseworks.com](mailto:jpkemp@kempscaseworks.com)