

**UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**



An Overview of the Patent Pro Bono Program

Office of Enrollment and Discipline

Patent Pro Bono Program

June 2018

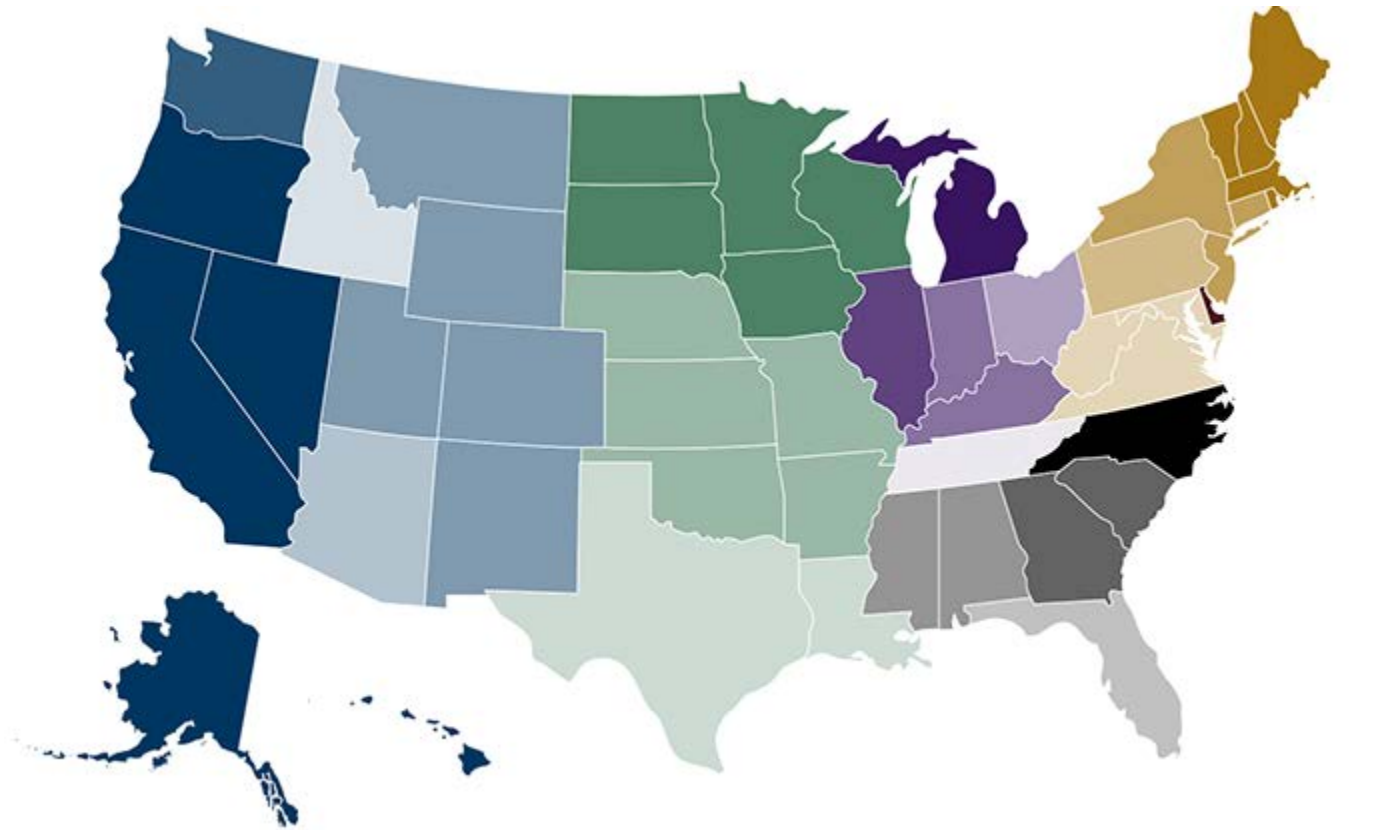
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Patent Pro Bono Program

- **Matches financially under-resourced inventors and small businesses with registered patent attorneys to file and prosecute patent applications.**
 - 22 regional programs across the country provide matching services.
- **Benefits**
 - Helps ensure that no deserving invention lacks patent protection because of a lack of money for IP counsel.
 - Educates inventors.
 - Creates a path for inventors to become job creators.
 - Patent practitioners can volunteer in their area of expertise.
- **Inventor Qualifications**
 - Income below 3X federal poverty guidelines.
 - Show knowledge of the patent system by taking intro course: <https://www.uspto.gov/video/cbt/certpck/index.htm>.
 - Have more than an idea.
 - Pay all USPTO filing fees.
- **Practitioner participation**
 - Practitioners are the linchpin of the Program!
 - To date, more than 1,800 attorneys have signed on to volunteer.

Current Coverage



- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ■ Washington Pro Bono Patent Network | ■ Gateway Venture Mentoring Service | ■ New England Program |
| ■ Idaho Patent Pro Bono | ■ TALA | ■ New York Tri State Program |
| ■ CIAP | ■ Chicago-Kent Patent Hub | ■ Delaware Program |
| ■ ProBoPat | ■ PatentConnect for Hoosiers (IN KY) | ■ FCBA (Mid-Atlantic) |
| ■ Arizona Public Patent Program | ■ IP Venture Clinic (OH) | ■ PA Patent |
| ■ LegalCorps | ■ LAVPA (TN) | ■ NC Leap |
| ■ Pro Bono Patent Project (MI) | ■ BBVLP Patent Program (MS AL) | ■ Georgia Patents |
| | | ■ Patent Pro Bono FL |



Admission Requirements

- Gross household income of < 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines*
- Responsible for all USPTO fees
- Have a provisional application on file and/or complete a certificate training course
 - <http://www.uspto.gov/video/cbt/certpck/index.htm>.
- More than an idea
- Apply directly to regional program (preferred) or Federal Circuit Bar National Clearinghouse
 - <http://www.fedcirbar.org/Pro-Bono-Scholarships/PTO-Pro-Bono/Overview-FAQ>

*Regional partner may vary income threshold

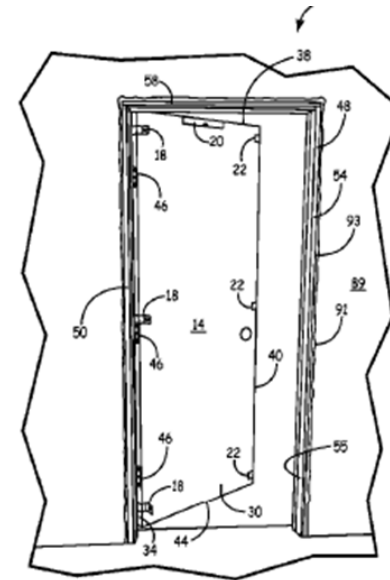


Practitioner Recruitment

- **Practitioners are the Linchpin**
 - Demand for services always outpaces supply
 - To date, more than 1,800 attorneys are available to volunteer
- **Improved patent quality - a pro se inventor is now a represented inventor**
- **Greater access to professional advice**
 - The inventor is educated about the patent system
 - “No” may be what the inventor needs to hear
 - Advice by a patent professional may help the inventor make better decisions
- **Gives financially under-resourced inventors an opportunity to be job creators and, possibly, paying clients.**

Examples of Inventors Commercialized through the PPBP

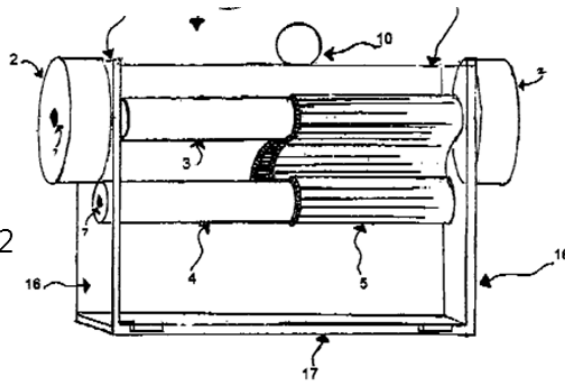
U.S. 8,677,636 B2



Door Installation Tool
and Method

Sushi Machine

U.S. 9,345,265 B2



Practitioner Recognition

- Patent practitioners critical to success
 - USPTO has recognized more than 85 practitioners that provided 50+ hours of patent pro bono service in CY 17.
- Certificate Recognition Award Program for 2018
 - Recognize volunteers that provide 50 or more hours of patent pro bono service in CY 18
 - Volunteers report hours to regional program administrators
 - Administrators notify the USPTO of qualified volunteers
 - USPTO issues certificate to practitioner recognizing achievement
 - Patent practitioner name, firm, and regional program are posted on USPTO website
 - Signed by Commissioner for Patents and Director of OED



Law Firm/Corporation Recognition

- New in 2018!!
- Expansion of Individual Achievement Certificate to Law Firms/Corporations
- Based on cumulative hours/firm and firm size
- Same reporting procedure as Individual
- Signed by Commissioner for Patents and Director of OED



More Information

- Visit www.uspto.gov/probonopatents.
- Email probono@uspto.gov
- Contact

John Kirkpatrick

john.kirkpatrick@uspto.gov, 571-272-4097 or

Grant Corboy

grant.corboy@uspto.gov, 571-272-4097 or

Tara Ho

tara.ho@uspto.gov, 571-272-9962

