

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## RHONDA HIMES

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### ABOUT RHONDA

Rhonda Himes is a senior attorney in the Public Finance Group of the Finance Department at Ballard Spahr. She has been at Ballard for about 6.5 years. Rhonda has a strong background in community service. During law school, she worked in the school's criminal law clinic and at legal services. While raising her children and not practicing law, she volunteered for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) in Bergen County, NJ.

### PARTNERING WITH HAP

Rhonda started volunteering with HAP in 2018. She found it easy to get involved because of Ballard's strong pro bono program and relationship with HAP. Rhonda continued to volunteer because she has been able to help individuals improve their lives by obtaining their social security benefits through HAP's SOAR Project. As a non-litigator, she enjoys advocating for pro bono clients outside the courtroom through the SOAR process.

Rhonda recalls her favorite moment: "A HAP client called to thank me and he said that a social security representative told him that he was lucky to have my help with his application

"I have always felt the need to give back to the community. When I came back to Philadelphia, it was evident that homelessness was a big issue and I knew that I wanted to continue to give back."

because she did not think he would have had received the award without me - wow - that was something!"

HAP Senior Staff Attorney Pat Malley notes: "Rhonda is one of our most valued and reliable volunteers. She has represented at least six HAP clients in various stages of SOAR review, filing, and advocacy, including developing and submitting medical evidence and writing strong letters of support. She has gone above and beyond in each case. In one instance, she obtained over \$15,000 in back benefits (one of HAP's largest SOAR awards!) in addition to ongoing monthly benefits for a man with severe mental health and neurological disabilities. Rhonda's client had been sleeping in an abandoned house without heat or utilities and, as a result of her advocacy, he achieved income and stable housing." Thank you, Rhonda!