

PRO BONO BENEFITS EVERYONE

The State Bar recognizes that an active pro bono program is one of the major benefits a local bar association can provide while meeting the legal needs of the low-income members of the community. Pro bono enhances the reputation of the legal profession and can serve as a strong recruitment incentive for new members.

Benefits to the Community

- Nearly 1.5 million families in California live below federal poverty guidelines, struggling daily to maintain shelter, food, clothing, health care, and education.
- Pro bono work can help prevent homelessness, help women and children escape violent relationships, help foster parents adopt children, and bring hope of a better future and financial stability to poor and low-income people throughout California.

Benefits to the Bar and Attorneys

- Pro bono assists the courts to operate more efficiently and fairly.
- Pro bono work creates valuable networking opportunities.
- New attorneys can gain new areas of expertise and improve their legal skills.
- Experienced and retired attorneys can use their experience to mentor new attorneys and to explore new areas of practice.
- Pro bono attorneys may receive free MCLE credit for pro bono trainings.

Bar Association Support for Pro Bono

- Bar association support for pro bono is crucial in expanding services. Bars can help promote pro bono through: annual articles in bar publications or letters from the President; voluntary add-on donations to membership dues; fund drives; establishment of bar foundations; donating proceeds of membership events such as banquets, auctions, and golf tournaments; and listings of pro bono opportunities in newsletters, mailings, and at membership events, including new lawyer orientations.
- Bar associations can adopt a resolution, based on the State Bar Resolution, encouraging a minimum number of pro bono hours annually. Bar Presidents and local Presiding Judges can send letters encouraging members to volunteer.
- Local bars can co-sponsor pro bono trainings and other legal services events.
- Bar associations can encourage members to bring their expertise to local legal services programs by joining boards, conducting trainings, and mentoring staff and volunteers.