

## **Eight Reasons Why Lawyers Should Provide Pro Bono Services**

- **Pro Bono Benefits Every Lawyer:** Government lawyers, smaller firm attorneys, solo practitioners, and educators can benefit from pro bono work by developing skills and expertise and creating contacts in the community. Pro bono providers often offer Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) trainings for prospective volunteers at little or no cost, malpractice coverage for volunteers, mentoring, and opportunities to network with other lawyers.
- **Pro Bono Makes Good Business Sense:** Annual law firm rankings in publications such as The American Lawyer have had a positive impact on firms' pro bono practices. Law firm corporate clients are interested in evidence of their lawyers' corporate social responsibility.
- **California Needs the Pro Bono Services of Every Lawyer:** Whether you are new lawyer, a mid-career attorney, or retired, you have specialized education, training, and skill-sets that California's low-income and vulnerable community members need right now.
- **Opportunities for Newer Lawyers:** Through Pro Bono service, newer attorneys can learn to effectively network, develop confidence, gain leadership experience, and improve communication skills. Newer attorneys can also gain transactional, negotiation, or trial experience through Pro Bono work; such opportunities are invaluable and not always available early in an attorney's career.
- **New Skill Sets:** Develop skills beyond your substantive practice area. Maybe you love your job but have always wanted to learn more about another practice area. Perhaps you are considering branching out into another area of law. Find a pro bono opportunity that interests you, test it out, make contacts, and see if this area of law might be right for you.
- **Retired and Non-Practicing Attorneys Can Maintain Their Skills:** Many attorneys are retired, others have taken a break to focus on family, and some are licensed but pursuing other passions through non-traditional legal careers. The State Bar's "Pro Bono Practice Program" affords opportunities for retired attorneys, as well as those who are taking a break from the active practice of law, to assist low-income Californians on a pro bono basis. Eligible participants receive waiver of the active State Bar membership fee and access to free and reduced rates to attend MCLE and CEB.
- **Pro Bono Benefits the Judicial Branch:** Pro bono work improves public perception of the legal profession, helps the courts operate more efficiently and effectively, and ensures meaningful access to justice to millions who need legal representation but cannot afford it. Visit the Judicial Council of California's Pro Bono Toolkit for links to additional information about California's pro bono needs. <http://www.courts.ca.gov/partners/56.htm>.
- **Personal Satisfaction:** Pro bono service is deeply rewarding. It can strengthen your connection to your community and serve as a great reminder of what initially inspired you to become a lawyer. Most lawyers find that Pro Bono service just *feels* good!

## What Does Pro Bono Service Look Like?

- **There are many different ways of performing pro bono service:**
  - Advice and counsel clinics and hotlines, and provision of legal information at court self-help centers;
  - Impact litigation and policy advocacy;
  - Community education and outreach;
  - Mediation of legal disputes;
  - Transactional legal assistance to nonprofit organizations that serve low-income people;
  - Limited Scope Representation - Provide pro bono service on an unbundled/ limited scope basis when you are unable to take on a whole case.
- **Examples of Pro Bono Service Benefitting the Client and Wider Community:**
  - Every time a pro bono lawyer is able to help a domestic violence victim, it can prevent serious injury, save lives, prevent costly county medical expenses, and alleviate already clogged courts and overworked law enforcement agencies.
  - When a pro bono lawyer helps prevent workers from wrongfully losing their jobs or from being denied earned wages, it allows for individuals to put food on their tables and pay their rent or mortgage.
  - When a pro bono lawyer helps keep a child in school, truancy and juvenile crime are reduced, saving court time and reducing the costs of incarceration.

## Finding the Right Pro Bono Opportunity

Think about your passions, interests, and personal values and you will find that there is a pro bono opportunity available that that is just right for you. The following resources are great starting places for exploring pro bono opportunities:

- CaliforniaProBono.Org – Statewide Resource on Pro Bono Opportunities for Lawyers and Students:  
<http://www.californiaprobono.org/>
- Pro Bono Practice Program for Retired Attorneys and Temporarily Non-Practicing Attorneys:  
<http://www.calbar.ca.gov/AboutUs/CenteronAccesstoJustice/ProBonoPracticeProgram.aspx>
- California JusticeCorps: College students and recent graduates helping courts serve self-represented litigants: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/justicecorps.htm>
- Finding International Pro Bono Opportunities: American Bar Association  
[http://www.americanbar.org/groups/probono\\_public\\_service/resources/international\\_pro\\_bono.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/probono_public_service/resources/international_pro_bono.html)