

**A CALL TO PUBLIC SERVICE**



**OUR COMMITMENT  
TO OUR COMMUNITY**

# Make a Commitment



**There is a growing need in Northeast Ohio among low-income individuals and nonprofit groups for quality legal representation.**

A recent study found only 20 percent of Ohio's poor receive legal assistance. Even more startling: Ohio has fallen behind other states in *pro bono* legal services. The Ohio rate of participation 9.6 percent, compared to 17.2 percent nationally.

That is why it is important for lawyers to give back to their community their specialized legal knowledge and skills.

Given the overwhelming need for volunteer legal services, the question lawyers should ask about **Our Commitment to Our Community** is not why participate in this effort, but why not?

# to Our Community

**There is no shortage of things that we can do through our creativity and industry to make our community better.**

**Our Commitment to Our Community** is a comprehensive new program of the Cleveland Bar Association to encourage lawyers to provide a modest number of *pro bono* and public service hours.

**Our Commitment to Our Community** seeks to expand current volunteer efforts. The program is unique. It will highlight specific commitments by lawyers and law firms; it will involve lawyers of all ages and practice types to help where they feel their particular proficiencies are best suited. Such work could include helping someone qualify for Social Security benefits, assisting a philanthropic organization or tutoring an inner-city student. There is no shortage of needs and no shortage of activities.



# A Call to Serve

The Cleveland Bar Association is calling on law firms and lawyers to commit to:

- A specific number of hours for public service or *pro bono* projects.
- A specific *pro bono* project or projects.
- Four core law firm principles:
  1. Establish a *pro bono* goal within the firm budget.
  2. Give credit toward billable hour requirements and/or bonuses for hours worked on approved *pro bono* matters.
  3. Encourage firm management and other leading partners to do *pro bono* work – personally and visibly.
  4. Promote broad-based participation in *pro bono* activities by lawyers in all practice groups.

# You can help.

There are countless ways to give back to the community through *pro bono* and public service projects.

## What Qualifies as *Pro Bono* and Public Service?

*Pro bono* means providing legal services without a fee or expectation of a fee or for a reduced fee<sup>1</sup> to:

- A person of limited means.
- Charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, and educational organizations in matters designed primarily to address the needs of those of limited means.
- Groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights.
- Charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, or educational organizations in furtherance of their organizational purposes.
- Matters and activities that improve the law.

*Public service* means providing services to organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights, or to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, or educational organizations.

<sup>1</sup>For matters taken at a reduced fee to qualify as “*pro bono*,” the reduced fee must set at a discount of at least 25 percent of the lawyer’s regular billable rate. For purposes of counting hours toward a lawyer’s or a firm’s commitment, the amount of hours worked on a “reduced fee” project should be equal to the total hours worked on the project multiplied by the discount of the rate charged.

# The Benefits of



***Pro bono* and public service affect not only the recipients, but also the committed attorneys and law firms.**

## **Job Satisfaction**

Junior attorneys can use *pro bono* projects as exceptional training. Attorneys who take on *pro bono* and public service projects fulfill an inner need to give back something of what they have been given, and they are able to preserve the highest ideals of the profession to ensure equal access to justice.

# Service

## **New Attorney Recruitment**

Young attorneys often have a heightened awareness of public need and social responsibility and are attracted to firms that support effective *pro bono* programs. These *pro bono* opportunities often influence how top-tier lawyers choose a firm.

## **Good Will**

*Pro bono* work generates credibility, visibility and improved client relations.

## **Recognition**

The Cleveland Bar Association will update the media and the community on lawyers and firms making commitments to the program. Additionally, the Bar Association will:

- Announce founding participants and pledge goals.
- Supply names of participants and their commitments.
- Distribute quarterly and annual reports on hours devoted to public service and *pro bono* projects.

# What You Can Do

**Tell us about your  
*pro bono* efforts so  
that we can spread  
the good news.**

## **Make a commitment**

Determine how much time you can commit to *pro bono* or public service.

## **Develop your own projects**

Consider any projects that will serve the greater good. Make the experience meaningful, while helping people to better their lives. The Bar Association is ready to assist you in choosing a project.

## **Check your firm's policies**

Your firm and its management should publicly commit that *pro bono* and public service are important and, as such, establish a *pro bono* goal, give credit for firm-approved *pro bono* work, and encourage all lawyers to get involved.

### **Log your hours**

Keep careful records of your *pro bono* and public service hours so the Bar Association can tally the progress of Our Commitment to Our Community. We will ask participants to report quarterly the total hours worked on public service and *pro bono* projects.

### **Report your success stories to the Cleveland Bar Association**

We want to hear about your exceptional efforts and unique experiences. We intend to let others know about your good works.



# The Cleveland Bar Wants To Help You Help Others



## Contact Information:

Cleveland Bar Association  
1301 East Ninth Street  
Second Level  
Cleveland, OH 44114

Visit our website at  
[www.clevelandbar.org](http://www.clevelandbar.org)

Contact Mary Groth  
Director of Pro Bono and  
Community Programs  
(216) 696-3525 ext. 5004

The Bar Association has a variety of established public service and *pro bono* programs. These are listed in supplementary materials. Our staff will be glad to further discuss opportunities.

## How to Make Your Commitment

To make your commitment, please complete the enclosed forms and return them to the Cleveland Bar Association.

**Thank you.**

# Association



“Providing help to the homeless has been extremely rewarding both personally and professionally. There are many people in our community — mothers, fathers, children, and the elderly — who need the help and special expertise that only a lawyer can give. In helping those in need, we receive not only the opportunity to give back to the community, but also to gain valuable experience and skills that translate into our traditional legal practice.”

**Robert D. Anderle, Partner,**  
Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur;  
Chair, Committee on  
the Homeless



“Members of the legal profession are uniquely qualified by education and experience to lead and participate in public service projects for the betterment of our community. The Cleveland Bar Association’s Public Service Initiative is an excellent way of marshaling the tremendous potential of our profession to improve our community.”

**Honorable Paul R. Matia**  
Chief Judge, U.S. District Court  
for the Northern District of Ohio



“While handling complex litigation has its benefits, doing *pro bono* provides legal services to “real” people, often in desperate need, and makes you feel good. Try it; I guarantee you’ll like it.”

**David C. Weiner**  
Partner, Squire Sanders &  
Dempsey, LLP;  
Board President, Ohio Legal  
Assistance Foundation



# You Can Make a Difference



**Our Commitment to Our Community** is a comprehensive program of the Cleveland Bar Association to encourage all lawyers in Greater Cleveland to provide a modest number of hours for *pro bono* legal services or other public service.

There are countless ways to give back to the community through *pro bono* projects that will help foster access to justice and improve the quality of life in our community.

**I want to volunteer for Our Commitment to Our Community.**

**I am interested in the following types of *pro bono* or public service project(s):**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pro Bono</i> Representation | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Programs<br>(i.e. Tutoring and mentoring) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):<br>_____<br>_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Law-Related Education   |  |   |

**I am interested in the following areas of practice:**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Law<br><input type="checkbox"/> Divorce<br><input type="checkbox"/> Adoption<br><input type="checkbox"/> Paternity<br><input type="checkbox"/> Custody<br><input type="checkbox"/> Support<br><input type="checkbox"/> Abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord-Tenant<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Mediation<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit<br><input type="checkbox"/> Organizational and Corporate Structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Transactional Matters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Estate Planning<br><input type="checkbox"/> Simple Wills<br><input type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney/<br>Medical Directives   | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Disability   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Rights   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Administration  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing/Real Estate  | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration/Naturalization  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____<br>_____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities  | <input type="checkbox"/> Juveniles   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination<br><input type="checkbox"/> Employment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Housing |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS  |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless  |  |   |

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FIRM \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form to:**

Cleveland Bar Association, 1301 East Ninth St., Second Level, Cleveland, OH 44114  
Attention: Mary Groth, Director of Pro Bono and Community Programs  
You can also fax this form to (216) 696-2413

For information or questions about Our Commitment to Our Community,  
contact Mary Groth at (216) 696-3525 ext. 5004 or via e-mail at [mgroth@clevelandbar.org](mailto:mgroth@clevelandbar.org)

**Individual Sign-Up Form**



# Your Firm Can Make a Difference

**Our firm is committed to Our Commitment to Our Community.**

**We will commit to \_\_\_\_\_ hours for *pro bono* and/or public service projects.**

**We will commit to the following *pro bono* project(s):**

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Please contact me to discuss other available projects for our firm's participation.

**We will commit to the four core principles as part of our firm's management.**

CONTACT NAME

FIRM

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

FAX

E-MAIL

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**Firm Sign-Up Form**