



**PILI Corporate Pro Bono Roundtable**

Wednesday, April 23, 2014, 12:00 – 1:45 p.m.

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

10 South Dearborn Street, Chicago IL 60603

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Pro bono leaders from various corporations including Accenture LLP, Aon plc, AT&T Services, Inc., Exelon Business Services Company, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, Career Builder, Deere & Company, JPMorgan Chase & Co., McDonald's Corporation, Northern Trust, State Farm, United Airlines, Inc., Walgreens Co. introduced themselves. Representatives from area organizations including Center for Disability and Elder Law, The Chicago Bar Foundation, LAF, National Immigrant Justice Center, and Prairie State Legal Services were also in attendance.

**II. Intersection of Corporate Citizenship and Pro Bono Work**

Michael Lipsitz of JPMorgan Chase & Co shared that staff are in the early stages of developing a cohesive program that strategically aligns corporate citizenship with their corporate legal department pro bono work. The effort involves working with the JPMorgan Chase Foundation to identify a cohesive program around the world that the Foundation can fund, the legal department staff can support through pro bono work, and through which ultimately the clients benefit.

Michelle Mancias of State Farm discussed the various ways that pro bono work has become institutionalized as part of the legal department staff's professional career development. Michelle shared that pro bono is now part of the corporate law department's mission statement and strategic plan.

One attendee raised the challenges in building a national pro bono program, stating that concentrating on local opportunities which match legal staff where they live and work seems to be the most successful.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association representatives discussed how they make the national efforts more local through their Legal Department Cooperative, centralizing all legal volunteer work through list serves, developing pro bono opportunities across the country, and organizing activities at its annual conference.



### **III. Corporation and Legal Aid Partnership in Partnership in Practice: Replicable Pro Bono Opportunities**

Pauline Levy of McDonald's Corp. and Melissa Katt of LAF discussed their partnership and how it began with a single medical assistance project that lasted for years but eventually yielded fewer pro bono opportunities. The partners brainstormed new projects, taking into consideration geography and opportunities available to all legal staff, attorneys, assistants, paralegals, etc., and developed a pro bono project focused on SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. Pauline discussed their process to create the all the documents needed to distribute to all participants with step-by-step instructions, the importance of partnering with an organization that is readily available to answer all questions, and the lesson learned that it is best to wait until the complete infrastructure is in place before launching the program.

Dolores Ayala of Walgreens Co. discussed the program that was organize for their legal department, inviting area legal aid organizations to describe their organizations and pro bono opportunities. Walgreens partners with the National Immigrant Justice Center with a focus on limited engagement opportunities. Vanessa Esparza-Lopez of NIJC explained that they provide the four hour training, identify a law firm host, which provides the pro bono lawyers of record, and assists on the day of the clinic. Some Walgreens legal staff have also filed appearances. Vanessa shared that NIJC also has another project available working with U-Visas for victims of crime, and are currently partnering with McDonald's Corp. on this project.

Peter Ross of Accenture LLP and Mark Hellner of Center for Disability and Elder Law discussed their partnership. First, Peter shared that challenge of developing an ongoing pro bono partner, since Accenture has a large corporate responsibility initiative "Skills to Succeed", where money and efforts are funneled. However, the partnership with CDEL has been going on for eight years, and provides Accenture attorneys their only volunteer opportunity to practice law. CDEL partners with many corporations and is always looking for more partners to participate in the Senior Center Initiative and the Senior Tax Opportunity Program.

### **IV. Prairie State Legal Services Pro Bono Partnerships and Available Opportunities**

Marisa Wiesman of Prairie State Legal Services discussed their longest standing partnerships with Caterpillar Inc., State Farm and Deere & Co. Caterpillar and State Farm legal department staff most often handle individual cases as well as participate in some clinic opportunities, and Deere & Co. staff have worked with the local office and the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee to develop an eviction clinic. Marisa stated that Prairie



State is very interested in building partnerships with corporations located in Chicago's collar counties. There is a new Social Security pro bono program in Waukegan and an intake hotline project in Waukegan and Wheaton in need of pro bono volunteers.

#### **V. Questions and Strategies**

United Airlines, Inc. representative observed the trend that the pro bono programs discussed involve limited engagement and one session pro bono opportunities, and asked whether any corporations are moving towards partnerships with long-term engagement. JPMorgan Chase & Co. shared the example of their long-lasting partnership with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, which offers a variety of pro bono opportunities ranging from discreet work to drafting letters, litigation, and working at outreach events. They suggested staying flexible with the types of opportunities offered to accommodate varied interests.

Another topic discussed was the value of pro bono partnerships between law firms and corporate legal departments, where law firm staff can act as the lawyer of record, provide resources, and additional volunteers.

AT&T representatives discussed the scholarship program in place where AT&T sponsors Pro Bono Excellence scholarships, and provides money to the community organization and a law student for tuition payment.

#### **VI. Illinois Legal Aid Online Company Profile Feature on Illinoisprobono.org**

ILAO staff shared the new Law Firm/Corporation Profile feature, which allows pro bono leaders to (1) select particular pro bono volunteer opportunities for corporate legal department staff to view; and (2) to view staff activity on ILAO. ILAO staff is available for personal trainings, by request. Contact Stephanie Villinski or Kevin Zickterman for a training.