Illinois Pro Bono Pledge

Law firms, solo practitioners and corporate legal departments in Illinois' judicial circuits are signing the Illinois Pro Bono Pledge, recognizing their responsibility, and the responsibility of all legal professionals, to increase access to justice among low-income and underrepresented individuals and families in Illinois.

The Pro Bono Pledge calls on law firms and corporate legal departments to:

1. encourage their attorneys and legal staff to provide pro bono legal services and in doing so, provide an environment which is hospitable to the rendition of such services;
2. designate a primary pro bono point of contact within the firm or corporate law department;
3. consider adopting a written pro bono policy; and
4. recognize attorneys and legal staff who participate in pro bono services, as appropriate.

ILLINOIS PRO BONO PLEDGE

The pledge has currently been launched in five judicial circuits, and over 120 law firms, corporations, and individuals have demonstrated their commitment to pro bono by signing on. Learn more at and take the pledge at **www.ILProBonoPledge.org**.

"Because of PILI's leadership, pro bono is at the forefront, and access to justice is a reality in the Tenth Judicial Circuit"

- Judge Lisa Y. Wilson
Chair, Tenth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee

Find Pro Bono Opportunities:

For listings of pro bono opportunities at legal aid organizations throughout the state, visit Illinois Legal Aid Online: **www.IllinoisProBono.org**. Users can search based on variety of factors, including location, type of opportunity, area of law, skills, and time availability.

About PILI:

PILI's mission is to cultivate a lifelong commitment to public interest law and pro bono service within the Illinois legal community to expand the availability of legal services for people, families and communities in need.

We envision a legal community with a deeply rooted culture of service, where law students, lawyers and legal professionals at all stages of their careers engage in public interest law or pro bono work, and remain committed to addressing the unmet legal needs of the poor and underrepresented.

PILI's Law Student Internship and Graduate Fellowship Programs place law students and recent law school graduates at public interest law organizations, with PILI providing supplemental educational, networking and mentoring opportunities.

Our Alumni Network builds and maintains the connection between past PILI Interns and Fellows and the public interest law community through educational, networking and leadership opportunities.

Through our Pro Bono Initiative, PILI enhances the scope and quantity of pro bono legal assistance in Illinois for those who lack access to justice by offering a range of pro bono programming and resources, by developing innovative projects and cultivating best practices, and by celebrating ongoing pro bono contributions.

Questions? Need more information?

Visit our website at www.pili.org/pro-bono
or contact us at info@pili.org or 312-832-5127.

PILI Public Interest Law Initiative®

Pro Bono Initiative

What is "pro bono"?

Pro bono publico is a Latin term meaning "for the public good." While there are various definitions throughout the country of what constitutes pro bono, the Illinois Supreme Court has adopted a reporting requirement for pro bono legal services and qualified monetary contributions in which the Court has defined pro bono for purposes of this Rule. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 756(f) defines pro bono as:

- legal services without charge or expectation of a fee to persons of limited means;
- legal services to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental or educational organizations in matters designed to address the needs of persons of limited means;
- legal services to charitable, religious, civic or community organizations in furtherance of their organizational purpose; or
- training intended to benefit legal aid organizations or lawyers who provide pro bono services.

"Pro bono work helps to close an acute gap for clients who otherwise would receive no legal representation"

- Justice Thomas L. Kilbride
Illinois Supreme Court

PILI's Pro Bono Initiative

PILI works collaboratively with law firms, corporations, public interest law agencies, law schools, and members of the bar and bench to expand the availability of pro bono legal services across Illinois. Our resources include:

- A **Pro Bono Prospectus** to encourage pro bono participation;
- **Pro Bono Reference Guides** to help develop and enhance corporate and law firm pro bono programs;
- Pro bono **program development consultations** for law firms and corporations;
- **Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committees**, made up of members of the bench and bar from the judicial circuit working together to expand and enhance pro bono locally; and
- Our annual **Pro Bono Recognition Roster**, honoring outstanding law firm or corporate legal department pro bono programs.

PILI organizes a variety of program and events throughout the year, some of which include CLE credit. Our regular programming includes:

- The **PILI Illinois Forum on Pro Bono**, which brings together pro bono leaders and is offered annually in Chicago and around the state;
- Constituent group-specific **Pro Bono Roundtables** for law firms, corporations, law schools, and legal service agencies; and
- The **Annual Pro Bono Reception** at which we celebrate the pro bono triumphs of the Illinois legal community and to spotlight the critically-needed pro bono work being done in our state.

How can I get involved?

PILI can help connect you and your organization to pro bono opportunities at every stage of your legal career:

Attend any of PILI's annual pro bono programming sessions or events: learn more at www.pili.org/pro-bono/pro-bono-events.

Join one of PILI's Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committees or work with PILI to establish a Committee in your judicial circuit: learn more at www.pili.org/pro-bono/judicial-circuit-committees.

Nominate your law firm or corporate legal department for PILI's annual Pro Bono Recognition Roster: learn more at www.pili.org/pro-bono-recognition-roster.

Access PILI's pro bono resources or **seek** a pro bono program development consultation to start or grow your law firm or corporate pro bono program: learn more at www.pili.org/resources.

Why pro bono?

The need for pro bono legal services has never been greater, and law students and lawyers are uniquely positioned to make a difference for low-income and underrepresented individuals and families with legal needs. The number of people living in or near poverty in Illinois - one third of the population of the state, or over 4 million people - has been rising steadily, while funding for legal aid attorneys and programs continues to shrink.

Pro bono attorneys can help meet the growing demand for legal services, making access to justice not just a dream, but a reality for people and families in need. At the same time, pro bono work can be an important networking, training, and professional development tool, while helping increase job satisfaction and attorney retention. Law firms and corporate legal departments with strong pro bono programs demonstrate their good corporate citizenship and can better recruit civic-minded talent.

www.pili.org/pro-bono

"PILI has the experience, the resources and the programs to help you develop and implement world-class pro bono programs."

- John Bourke, Aon