

How to Give Back and Get More— The Benefits of Transactional Pro Bono



By Priya Morganstern

Priya Morganstern is a program director at Pro Bono Partnership. She provides direct legal services to Connecticut nonprofit groups, recruits volunteer attorneys to provide legal services, supervises client outreach, lectures on nonprofit and tax-exempt law, and coordinates nonprofit educational programs in Connecticut.

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If you're like me, National Volunteer Week (April 15-21, 2018) was a reminder to find more ways to "live your values." By that, I mean actionable ways to demonstrate your commitment to making the world, and your community, a better place to live without taking too much time out of your day. There are lots of opportunities to donate your time and money to causes you believe in. As a lawyer, you might be under the impression that there aren't many ways to donate your professional talents, especially if you're not a litigator.

One-stop Resource for Transactional Pro Bono Opportunities

Pro Bono Partnership is a 501(c)(3) organization that was founded 20 years ago with the goal of making it easy and enjoyable for in-house and law firm attorneys to provide valuable pro bono services to nonprofits in their communities.

Nonprofit Clients

Pro Bono Partnership clients are charitable organizations that serve the disadvantaged and enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods by feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, promoting the arts, protecting the environment, and providing essential programs to children, the elderly, the disabled, and the unemployed. These nonprofits have the same business legal needs as for-profit entities. However, many choose to forego legal advice because they are unable to pay for legal services without significantly impacting resources for programs. Additionally, small nonprofits may not recognize the need for counsel. When these clients have attorneys on their boards, those attorneys might not have the legal expertise required to address the full spectrum of business legal needs that a nonprofit organization may face.

The partnership addresses the legal needs of its nonprofit clients by partnering with volunteer attorneys who provide top-notch pro bono business legal services to these organizations. Together, the partnership and our pool of volunteers help area nonprofits increase their effectiveness and eliminate risks. This work has an enormously positive impact for our clients, their constituents, and communities.

Keeping Transactional Pro Bono Meaningful and Manageable

Volunteer attorneys are not asked to handle all of a client's legal needs. Rather, a volunteer takes on an individual project that is typically within their existing area of expertise. Pro Bono Partnership

volunteers handle the same types of matters that they deal with in their daily practice: contracts; corporate formation and ongoing governance; employment law; real estate; intellectual property; HIPAA and privacy; bankruptcy, merger, and dissolution; nonprofit and tax exempt issues; and other non-litigation based projects. Many projects take a few hours or less to complete, and the benefit it has for these amazing organizations is lasting and immeasurable.

Making It Easy to Volunteer

The partnership's volunteer opportunities are uniquely structured to satisfy not only the volunteers' area of expertise, but also the needs of busy in-house and law firm lawyers:

- Clients and matters are thoroughly screened
- Because we do not handle litigation, most projects are discrete, manageable, and not time-sensitive
- Projects can be completed remotely
- Every project is coordinated and overseen by a partnership staff attorney experienced in non-profit law
- Model documents, training, and other resources are available as needed
- Where appropriate, counsel can work together as a team—with colleagues and/or with lawyers from outside firms
- The partnership provides liability insurance coverage for our volunteer attorneys as needed

You can view current volunteer opportunities at probonopartner.org/attorneys-volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/ or e-mail volunteer@probonopartner.org to receive opportunities in your inbox bi-weekly. You can sort opportunities by location, practice area, or type of organization to quickly find what interests you most.¹

Spread the Word about Accessible Transactional Pro Bono

Please join me in raising awareness among our colleagues about transactional pro bono opportunities. Whether you pass along the probonopartner.org website to a few friends, sign up for our e-mails, complete the form to become a volunteer attorney, or share our posts on social media, take action today to live your values! **CL**

Notes

1. Learn more about becoming a Pro Bono Partner volunteer at: <https://www.probonopartner.org/attorneys-volunteers/become-volunteer-attorney/>