



What about conflicts?

Of course, your pro bono work must not present a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict. You should carefully check your employer's conflict of interest rules. You cannot work on a pro bono case involving your agency. Moreover, you may be restricted from pro bono cases involving other related agencies. In doing pro bono work, you must not appear to use the power or prestige of your office. Your office may have pre-approved pro bono programs or approval procedures to address any conflicts concerns.

Do government lawyers do pro bono?

Yes. The Departments of Law of both New York City and New York State have strong policies that encourage attorneys to do non-litigation pro bono work. Other New York State agencies have pro bono policies. A comprehensive rule applies to attorneys in the Unified Court System. In the federal government and many other states, there is a long tradition of pro bono service by government attorneys. By doing pro bono, you'll become part of that great tradition.



Do the Public Good • Do Yourself Good • Volunteer For Pro Bono



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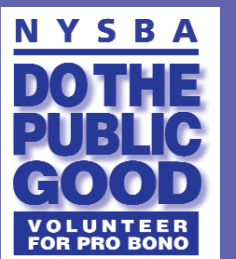


NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

NYSBA

Pro Bono For Government Attorneys

Share Your Unique Legal Skills. Volunteer for Pro Bono.





We need you.

You have a unique contribution to make. Your government experience has given you valuable training, expertise and perspective. You are committed to public service. That service can include pro bono work. Both private and public attorneys are called to action by the Code of Professional Responsibility (EC 2-25), which says all attorneys should "render public interest and pro bono legal service," and by the New York State Bar Association, which asks all attorneys to do 20 hours a year of pro bono.

What is pro bono?

"Pro bono publico" literally means "for the public good." In your job, you do the public good. But "pro bono" means something else. It means providing legal services, for free, to poor persons or nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving legal services to the poor.

What work can I do?

It depends on the policy in your office and the pro bono programs in your area. Pro bono programs in your locale provide varied opportunities. If you seek non-litigation work, you can address community groups, do legal research, draft literature, handle mediation and much more. Many programs can accommodate your schedule by offering service opportunities on evenings and weekends.



Do I need training?

It depends on the project you choose. You may be able to use your existing expertise in new ways or you may learn something new. Actually, doing something different can be a big plus. Pro bono can introduce you to new topics and new perspectives. Pro bono programs can teach you, in a short time, what you need to know in critical areas of need, such as bankruptcy, family law, landlord-tenant disputes and wills. You can participate in programs that provide malpractice insurance and CLE credit for training and pro bono service.

How can I start?

Talk to your supervisor and contact the Department of Pro Bono Affairs of the New York State Bar Association at (518) 487-5640 or at cfeathers@nysba.org. We will answer your questions and send you our guide on pro bono opportunities for government attorneys.

