

## MODEL PRO BONO POLICY TEMPLATE

### COMMITMENT TO PRO BONO

#### **Firm's Commitment to Pro Bono**

The law firm of \_\_\_\_\_ believes that pro bono service is an essential element of every attorney's professional responsibility. Lawyers possess unique skills and abilities to serve persons of limited means and to promote the public interest in ways that no other profession can. Lawyers have a duty, as professionals, to contribute to the welfare of the community, to assist in the development of the legal profession, and to broaden the overall commitment to access to justice for all people. Furthermore, in a society governed by the rule of law, lawyers have an obligation to ensure that the legal system works, especially for persons of limited means.

Pro bono benefits individual attorneys, law firms, and communities. The personal satisfaction that comes from changing people's lives by rendering free legal services cannot be overstated. Lawyers receive invaluable training and experience that broadens their professional development and expands their community awareness. Active community involvement presents opportunities for lawyers to attract individual and corporate clients. Pro bono reaches the diversity of people in the community and offers creative solutions to their legal problems.

#### **Pro Bono Standards**

[Question 2]

This firm supports the Pro Bono Aspirational Standard adopted by the Oregon State Bar in 1989 for all lawyers:

*Pro bono publico* or pro bono service includes all uncompensated services performed by lawyers for the public good. Such service includes civic, charitable and public service activities; as well as activities that improve the law, the legal system and the legal profession. The direct provision of legal services to the poor, without an expectation of compensation, is one type of pro bono service. Each lawyer in Oregon should endeavor annually to perform 80 hours of pro bono services. Of this total, the lawyer should endeavor to devote 20 to 40 hours or to handle two cases involving the direct provision of legal services to the poor, without an expectation of compensation. If a lawyer is unable to provide direct legal services to the poor, the lawyer should endeavor to make a comparable financial contribution to an organization that provides or coordinates the provision of direct legal services to the poor.

This firm also supports the following national pro bono standards:

**Firm's Pro Bono Expectations**

*[Questions 3-4]*

Pro bono is a firm-wide commitment. The firm expects each partner and associate to help fulfill this obligation. An associate's involvement in pro bono activities is an important factor in this firm's ongoing evaluation of the associate. A willingness to serve and become involved with the community evidences a level of maturity and professionalism that is highly prized by the firm.

The firm, therefore, expects each of its lawyers to complete \_\_\_ hours of pro bono service, \_\_\_ of which must be in direct representation of low-income people.

**Pro Bono Defined**

*[Questions 5-8]*

This firm recognizes that attorneys perform a wide variety of public service activities. We applaud and encourage such efforts.

Our pro bono commitment focuses on particular types of service, including: *[Question 5]*

The following activities will not be considered to fulfill the firm's pro bono requirements: *[Question 6]*

Lawyers may contribute to organizations that coordinate legal services to persons of limited means in lieu of direct pro bono services. The firm encourages lawyers to contribute a minimum of \$\_D5a\_ per year. *[Questions 7 & 8]*

**PRO BONO STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

**Addressing Pro Bono Expectations in the Hiring Process**

Pro bono service is an integral part of this firm's practice. This should be highlighted in the hiring process. Hiring authorities should discuss pro bono service when interviewing job applicants. Each new attorney will be given a copy of this firm's Pro Bono Policy and encouraged to seek pro bono opportunities. Each summer associate will be expected to participate in the firm's pro bono program.

**Coordination of Pro Bono Work**

*[Questions 9-17]*

This firm's pro bono program is coordinated by \_\_\_*[Questions 9-12]*

Pro bono work is assigned by the following process: *[Question 13]*

Pro bono hours are monitored and tracked by the following process: *[Questions 14-18]*

**Staffing and  
Supervision of Pro  
Bono Activities**

The firm provides the same quality of representation to all clients regardless of their ability to pay. Pro bono projects will be given the same staffing, attention, and resources as any other project. Pro bono matters are to be supervised by partners with the full resources of the firm available in support.

Attorneys should possess the knowledge and experience required for success on any project. Pro bono matters are no exception. Attorneys working on pro bono matters outside their area of expertise are expected to seek advice, training, and if necessary, supervision from attorneys in that specialty. Partners and experienced attorneys should consider mentoring on pro bono projects as an option for fulfilling the firm's requirements.

**Recognition of Pro  
Bono Work**

*[Questions 18-20]*

The firm will produce an annual pro bono report for either internal use or for distribution to clients, the bar, or other destinations. The report will include the following components:

The firm encourages and recognizes the pro bono contributions of partners and associates in several ways: