



IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: CHICAGO ACC CHAPTER

September 2014

The Chicago Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC Chicago) created its pro bono program in 2010, when it realized that members were eager to volunteer and provide essential pro bono services. Since its inception, the ACC Chicago Pro Bono Committee has been dedicated to achieving its mission to provide opportunities and information related to Chicago area pro bono involvement for in-house counsel. The committee has worked assiduously with partners to provide pro bono opportunities that are substantive yet flexible enough to meet each ACC Chicago member's needs and schedule.

Each of the past four years, ACC Chicago has hosted a **Clinic in a Box[®]** program, which allows pro bono attorneys to conduct a legal audit and provide legal advice to nonprofit organizations. Recently, the Pro Bono Committee has worked to expand its offerings, developing a listserv for those interested in learning more about pro bono opportunities, and coordinating with partner law firms, legal services organizations, and other groups to share resources and expertise. According to Pro Bono Committee Co-Chair Claire Battle, the pro bono program has greatly benefited ACC Chicago as it has allowed members to better connect with one another, with other members of the local legal profession, and with the larger Chicago community.

General Program Information	
Pro Bono Contact	Claire Battle, Co-Chair, Pro Bono Committee Catherine Smith, Co-Chair, Pro Bono Committee
Region Served	ACC Chicago serves Chicago and the surrounding suburbs.
Number of Members	More than 2,000 members
Pro Bono Program History	<p>The ACC Chicago Pro Bono Committee was formed in 2010, when a chapter board member was exploring volunteer opportunities. The board recognized that many members were also looking for ways to become involved in pro bono and would benefit from ACC Chicago providing and/or screening appropriate pro bono opportunities.</p> <p>The Committee's first activity was co-hosting a Clinic in a Box[®] program with CPBO in 2011. Since then, the pro bono program has expanded and the Committee continues to actively fulfill its mission to identify and facilitate legal pro bono service opportunities for its members.</p>
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	The ACC Chicago Pro Bono Committee has historically had one chair that works in conjunction with the board of directors. In 2013, two co-chair positions were created to better meet the needs of the expanding program. The co-chairs share responsibilities for outreach, as well as developing and implementing proposals for

	<p>events. They have periodic conference calls to discuss strategy and ways to connect with members. The Pro Bono Committee now organizes four major events per year, with one co-chair each serving as the point person for two events.</p> <p>Currently, the co-chairs are looking to increase committee membership and provide more pro bono opportunities to members of ACC Chicago. As the program continues to expand, their goal is to have one person in charge of each event and one person dedicated to member outreach and communications. The chapter is also considering having a suburban-based member involved in the Pro Bono Committee in order to be more responsive to the needs of members working outside of the city.</p>
Pro Bono Policy	ACC Chicago does not have a pro bono policy.
Communications	Events are featured on the chapter website and invitations are distributed via email. ACC Chicago also implemented an opt-in listserv for members interested in additional pro bono opportunities beyond those formally sponsored by ACC Chicago.
Recognitions/Awards	ACC Chicago does not formally recognize or provide awards to volunteers at this time.
Tracking Pro Bono	ACC Chicago tracks the number of sponsored events and the number of participants at each event. It does not track other information, such as number of clients served or hours contributed.
Partnerships	<p>ACC Chicago has had multiple successful partnerships. Generally, the chapter partners with at least one legal services provider each year. In 2012, it collaborated with the National Immigration Justice Center and DLA Piper to assist young people who came to the U.S. as children in applying for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. In the spring of 2014, ACC Chicago partnered with Morgan Lewis and Lawyers Committee for Better Housing to train volunteers to provide legal counseling to low-income tenants in foreclosed buildings. They have also received support from various law firm sponsors.</p> <p>ACC Chicago is currently looking to expand its partnerships and take advantage of the wide variety of established, impactful legal services organizations in Chicago.</p>
Professional Liability	ACC Chicago relies on partner organizations to provide professional liability insurance.
Pro Bono Projects	
<i>Clinic in a Box[®] Program</i>	Since 2011, ACC Chicago has been partnering with DLA Piper, CPBO, The Law Project, and others to provide a Clinic in a Box [®]

	program for chapter members. The program is half-day legal audit that allows in-house counsel to advise nonprofit organizations or small businesses. On average, approximately 45 ACC Chicago members provide legal counseling to 12 local non-profits each year. The project has been very successful, and some members elect to provide follow-up counseling beyond the day of the event.
<i>Ladder Up Tax Assistance</i>	ACC Chicago has received great support in partnering with McDermott, Will & Emery (MWE) and local non-profit LadderUp to offer free tax assistance preparation services to low-income families across the Chicagoland area. This year, approximately 10 ACC Chicago members participated in the training at MWE's offices and subsequent volunteer sessions around the city. Although training for this event is extensive, members who participate are active and engaged in the process. A similar event is being planned for 2015.
<i>Ethics of Corporate Pro Bono</i>	ACC Chicago partners with CPBO and DLA Piper to provide CLE on ethical issues relating to pro bono work. Last year, more than 130 in-house counsel (in person at DLA Piper's offices, and remotely, throughout Illinois) listened to experts discuss ethics and other issues including recent changes to the Illinois rules relating to pro bono services provided by in-house counsel and ways to implement a pro bono program in a corporate law department. A similar event is planned with DLA Piper for fall of 2014.
Lessons Learned	
<i>Seek out and build on successful partnerships.</i>	Partnerships have been a win-win for ACC Chicago. The chapter can provide visibility to legal services organizations and advocacy projects, while partners can provide knowledge, resources and opportunities to serve.
<i>Be creative.</i>	ACC Chicago strives to identify opportunities that are flexible for members, such as short-term clinics. They also incorporate CLE into events when appropriate, as it garners member interest in the pro bono program. This can be done through volunteer training or sponsored events providing CLE on issues related to pro bono.
<i>Play the long game.</i>	It is important to recognize that certain activities will be more successful than others. However, by increasing the visibility of the pro bono program and consistently providing a range of opportunities for members, the Pro Bono Committee builds a foundation for success.

Developed by Corporate Pro Bono
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