



IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: MAYO CLINIC

August 2014

Mayo Clinic began its pro bono program in 2004, when Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services Inc. reached out to propose a partnership with the legal department and its pro bono efforts have been thriving ever since. In 2006, Chief Legal Officer Jonathan Oviatt signed the Corporate Pro Bono ChallengeSM and Mayo Clinic expanded the reach of its program. Not only is Oviatt a big supporter of the program, but also a consistent volunteer.

According to Christopher Wendt, pro bono coordinator and immigration counsel for Mayo Clinic, pro bono work has helped to build inter-office relationships and a sense of purpose:

“Our pro bono activities have provided great opportunities to work closely with colleagues and outside attorneys whom we wouldn’t normally collaborate with on a regular basis. Pro bono has absolutely helped build working relationships. Most importantly, we are doing what we pledged to do when we were sworn in as attorneys – helping the less fortunate.”

General Program Information	
Offices with Legal Staff	HQ: Rochester, Minnesota; 4 other offices in the U.S.
Size of Legal Depart.	35 Attorneys; 50 Non-Attorney Staff
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	Initially, leadership of the Mayo Clinic pro bono program was vested in a three person work group. Currently primary responsibility rests with the pro bono coordinator.
Pro Bono Policy	Mayo Clinic has no formal pro bono policy; however local ethics rules and the Corporate Pro Bono Challenge SM serve as guidance for its attorneys. Mayo Clinic is currently in the process of drafting some written guidelines regarding malpractice coverage.
Mandatory Pro Bono	Mayo Clinic runs a “program of attraction.” In other words, Mayo Clinic encourages, but does not require, attorneys to provide service. However, Rule 6.1 of the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct states that lawyers should aspire to render at least 50 hours of pro bono per year.
Recognitions/Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers. Recognition events do not single out individual volunteers but rather acknowledge the efforts of the department. Each volunteer can discuss their individual pro bono involvement in their annual review with the Chief Legal Officer. • Clients. In addition, Mayo Clinic recognizes its clients’ successes by posting a map indicating the origin of immigration clients who

	are successful in their cases and posting on its internal website photos from naturalization ceremonies.
Tracking Pro Bono	All Mayo Clinic attorneys complete anonymous annual surveys to help the legal department track pro bono participation. Such surveys request information about the amount of time spent and details about the projects.
Partnerships	Mayo Clinic is involved in a number of partnerships, most notably with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services Inc. and Briggs & Morgan, P. A.
Non-Lawyer Involvement	Non-lawyers are encouraged to work alongside lawyers on pro bono matters.
Pro Bono Projects	
<i>Immigration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturalization Applications. For six years and counting, Mayo Clinic has teamed up with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services Inc. (SMRLS) and Briggs & Morgan, P.A. to provide ongoing representation to low-income legal permanent residents seeking to naturalize. SMRLS provides intake review. Mayo Clinic volunteers meet with the client to prepare and file all the necessary documentation with United States Citizenship Immigration Services. Once clients receive notice of an interview, the Mayo Clinic volunteers introduce them to Briggs & Morgan associates who handle interviews in Minneapolis, which addresses the travel issue.
<i>End of Life Issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wills for Heroes. Mayo Clinic attorneys and legal assistants participate in quarterly National Wills for Heroes clinics to draft wills and advance directives for local first responders and emergency personnel.
<i>Transactional Matters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Law Clinic. In partnership with Legal Corps, Mayo Clinic volunteers provide business advice to small business owners and entrepreneurs. • Landlord-Tenant Hotline. Members of Mayo Clinic's legal department, including Oviatt, other attorneys and non-attorneys, answer the phone to assist tenants and landlords with legal questions. There is a central phone line that collects messages; volunteers agree for one week a month to listen to messages and commit to return calls promptly.
<i>Veterans</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans Clinic. The Mayo Clinic legal department added pro bono to its 2012 annual meeting by hosting a clinic for local veterans in conjunction with the Minnesota Counsel for Veterans. Mayo Clinic staff conducted intake, researched public data, drafted forms and correspondence, and provided technology support, while volunteer attorneys provided advice both face-to-face and

	via Skype and FaceTime. In attendance were more than 25 veterans, whose service ranged in time from World War II to Afghanistan. Several attorneys are providing ongoing representation of clients they met with at the clinic.
Lessons Learned	
<i>Flexible Time Commitments</i>	Offer a variety of time-limited opportunities to make it easier for attorneys to commit to a project.
<i>Consider Partnerships to Address Issues</i>	Mayo Clinic is located outside of a metropolitan area and the travel time to attend hearing for immigration clients was a barrier to participation. Partnering with a law firm local to the hearings was the ideal solution.
<i>Create Clear Expectations</i>	Colleagues are more likely to volunteer if they know exactly what is expected of them and what they are committing to do.
<i>Never Give Up</i>	There is no such thing as a perfect program. You will have to come up with new ideas and adapt as you go. Don't let the perfect become the enemy of the good. Keep trying.
<i>Communicate within the Organization</i>	It is important that members of your organization know about the good work that the legal department is going. Toot your own horn. Nobody in the company will find out what you do unless you communicate it.

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