



IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: FORD MOTOR COMPANY

April 2017

Ford Motor Company (Ford), a **Corporate Pro Bono Challenge**[®] signatory, has a long history of pro bono work. Founded in 1984, Ford’s pro bono program has worked with the Legal Aid and Defender Association of Detroit, assisting in estate planning, handling consumer matters, and acting as counsel in divorce proceedings. In 1997, Ford founded the Detroit Legal Service Clinic, in partnership with General Motors Company and the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association, to serve low-income families of Detroit.

In 2008, Ford reinvigorated its program under the leadership of then general counsel, David Leitch, building new partnerships with legal services organizations and law firms, increasing participation among U.S.-based lawyers to more than 60%. In 2012, Ford and its partners received the 2012 CPBO Pro Bono Partner Award for developing two clinics to address significant unmet legal needs in its community: nonprofit survival clinic and food stamp clinic. On receiving the award, Leitch said:

One of our core values is working together, both inside the company and with our community. Ford’s partners in this effort ...have helped us to think creatively and act decisively to help our deeply needy community and its people. What we were able to accomplish together greatly exceeds our capacity and reach working alone.

Recently, the drive to accomplish more with collaboration has carried over to Ford’s international lawyers. These international lawyers face additional challenges where pro bono is less ingrained in the culture and bar rules prohibit pro bono legal services. However, led by current General Counsel Bradley M. Gayton, Ford is changing the culture by promoting pro bono accommodating bar rules and encouraging participation by all attorneys and members of the legal department.

General Program Information	
Offices with Legal Staff	HQ: Dearborn, Mich.; Washington, D.C.; 12 offices outside the U.S. with legal staff onsite
Size of Legal Depart.	102 Attorneys in the U.S.; 112 Attorneys outside the U.S.
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	A pro bono committee, consisting of a chairperson and three regional coordinators. Responsibilities are detailed in Ford’s pro bono policy. For example, the chairperson is responsible for reporting on the department’s pro bono activities to outside organizations and the committee is responsible for coordinating the pro bono activities of the department, reviewing potential pro bono matters, working with the Ford Volunteer Corps, making pro bono opportunities available during the four Accelerated Action Days throughout the year, and collecting information about pro bono activities.

Pro Bono Policy	<p>Ford adopted a formal written policy in 2008, which among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes Rule 6.1 of the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct, the Voluntary Standard for Pro Bono Participation adopted by the State Bar of Michigan (Bar), and the portion of the Bar’s Pro Bono Reference Manual that distinguishes the difference between pro bono services and public service; • lists the resources available for pro bono efforts, including a SharePoint site, and pre-approved expenses; • specifies that pro bono work may be done during normal office hours and that lawyers are expected to at least match company time spent on pro bono with equal amounts of their own time; • notes that as a CPBO Challenge[®] signatory, Ford has committed to encourage at least half of the staff to provide pro bono services and to encourage its outside law firms to participate in the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge, as well as report on such annually; • discusses the relationship between the department’s pro bono efforts and Ford’s policies, such as the ONE Ford Expected Behaviors; • establishes a process for attorneys to seek approval of individual pro bono projects of their own choosing; • details the conflicts check process; • requires employees to maintain records and track time on pro bono matters; and • lists some of the organizations that provide pro bono opportunities.
Mandatory Pro Bono	Ford does not require members of its legal staff to perform pro bono work, but encourages lawyers and non-lawyer legal staff to provide at least 30 hours each year.
Communications	Pro bono opportunities, success stories, and training information are communicated through the department’s intranet and newsletters.
Recognitions/Awards	Ford recognizes employees for outstanding pro bono work at award ceremonies and with gift cards. Pro bono service may be considered in performance evaluation.
Tracking Pro Bono	Ford tracks pro bono efforts by employees through use of the web-based tracking tool SharePoint. Information collected includes hours, matter type, and partner or referring organization name.
Partnerships	Ford regularly partners with law firms, other legal departments, and community or legal services organizations, including Dykema

	Gossett (Dykema), Legal Aid and Defender's Association, Inc. (LAD), and Michigan Community Resources (MCR).
Professional Liability	Ford added an endorsement to an existing insurance policy to provide coverage to its employees for approved pro bono work.
Non-Lawyer Involvement	Non-lawyer staff members are encouraged to participate in pro bono projects.
Pro Bono Projects	
<i>Food Stamp Clinic</i>	In 2010, Ford partnered with LAD to pilot a program to identify people who qualify for food stamps, but were not receiving the benefits for which they qualify. At each clinic, 20–50 men and women turn out to get assessed for analysis of the benefits they deserve. In the first two years of the clinics, which are held in neighborhood schools in the communities in need, food stamp benefits of participants increased by almost \$142,000. Since then, the clinic has grown, enlisting the help of Detroit-area law schools and partnering with the Department of Human Services, which streamlines the process and ensures follow-ups for participating individuals.
<i>Nonprofit Survival Clinic</i>	Ford partnered with Dykema and MCR, a Detroit-based nonprofit, in 2008 to develop a clinic to aid nonprofits with legal matters during the economic crisis in Detroit. By May 2009, they hosted their first clinic. During the clinics, nonprofit attendees spend roughly 90 minutes in one-on-one sessions with volunteer lawyers who assess legal issues that may affect their financial stability. During these meetings, lawyers evaluate the issues' impact on the organization and identify strategies for addressing them. The clinics are hosted four times each year and serve about five nonprofits each time. In March 2012, the partnership launched a Contract Review Clinic to further aid nonprofits in the community.
<i>Efforts to Grow Pro Bono Globally</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro Bono in Mexico. In partnership with DLA Piper, Appleseed Mexico, and Latin American Corporate Counsel Association (LACCA), Ford worked to bring a culture of pro bono service to Mexico. In 2013, Ford and LACCA hosted a roundtable session for in-house counsel on the topic of in-house pro bono. In 2014, Ford, Appleseed Mexico, and DLA Piper brought together 40 in-house attendees from the earlier roundtable to form committees and promote a formalization of pro bono culture in Mexico. Ford continues to be a leader in pro bono in Mexico, including the active support of Diego Valdovinos, Legal Affairs Director for Mexico, on the board of Appleseed Mexico. • Pro Bono in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In Brazil, private pro bono was not permitted until June 2013. Ford, law firm partners, and other corporations, in partnership with the Sao Paulo bar association

	reformed the local bar rules to allow private pro bono. Following this change, Ford, Appleseed Foundation, and DLA Piper partnered to conduct a gap analysis to identify the need for legal services in Sao Paulo.
<i>Local Pro Bono Assistance Projects</i>	<p>Ford volunteers provide a variety of pro bono services in Michigan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Salute. Attorneys represent veterans in federal disability and pension benefits claims through Project Salute, a program run by the University of Detroit Mercy Law School that provides training for handling appeals of denial of benefits to veterans. • Unaccompanied Minors. Ford attorneys work with the Michigan Poverty Law Program to assist children taken into custody by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They assist these children in gaining relief under Special Immigrant Juvenile Status to avoid deportation and pursue lawful permanent resident status. • Violence Against Women Act Cases. Ford lawyers spend 10 to 20 hours working on individual cases to assist immigrant women petition for immigration status that will keep them from being dependent on an abusive partner. • Small Business Legal Clinic. Ford hosted a small business clinic with 66 attorneys, three legal assistants, and two business professionals that served 29 small businesses. • Other Clinics. Hosted 11 clinics in 2016, including the newly created Personal Protection Order clinic at the Wayne County Circuit Court and the Flint Water Crisis clinic.
Lessons Learned	
<i>Management support is critical to program growth and development.</i>	Having support from the general counsel, practice group leaders, and senior managers is vital to creating a culture that is encouraging and supportive of pro bono service.
<i>New opportunities and variety ensure growth.</i>	Offering a variety of pro bono projects and identifying new pro bono opportunities afford attorneys the opportunity to work on projects that interest them. This increases volunteer engagement and retention.
<i>Pro bono mentors add value.</i>	Matching volunteers with others interested in similar pro bono work builds cross-departmental and inter-office relationships. It also increases the effectiveness of a pro bono program by pairing those experienced in a subject area with those new to that area.
<i>Partnerships accelerate growth.</i>	Connecting with local firms, legal services organizations, and nonprofits provides access to pro bono opportunities and resources when questions arise.

<i>Working with CSR department and community leaders on locally aimed projects increases impact.</i>	By working with its CSR department and local community leaders, Ford was able to develop pro bono projects that served high areas of need in its local community and make a greater impact. Local community leaders were able to identify and advise Ford about key client needs, such as meeting in their communities and translators.
--	---

Developed by Corporate Pro Bono
A global partnership project of [Pro Bono Institute](#) and the [Association of Corporate Counsel](#)
www.cpbo.org

Copyright 2017 Pro Bono Institute
CPBO[®] is a registered trademark of the Pro Bono Institute