Integrating In-House Pro Bono With CSR

To increase impact and provide more comprehensive services, companies are taking a fresh look at how their pro bono activities can be integrated with or complement their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts and charitable contribution practices.

Aligning CSR and Pro Bono

Many companies operate their CSR efforts independently from their legal departments’ pro bono programs. However, there are potentially great benefits from aligning pro bono and CSR. Companies integrate legal pro bono efforts with CSR programs in a number of ways, including:

- **Direct Services and Support**
  Providing pro bono legal services to the beneficiaries of the company’s CSR program.

- **Thematic Alignment**
  Identifying projects that support or are consistent with the focus of the CSR program.

- **Structural Integration**
  Coordinating the management of the pro bono efforts with the CSR initiatives.

- **Financial Support**
  Funding organizations that support the department’s pro bono efforts.

- **Partnering on Projects**
  Working together on a skills-based volunteer project.

“GE has a strong tradition of giving back as part of the GE foundation, and our employees volunteer all over the world. Pro bono work that lawyers do is something that we’re uniquely qualified to be able to do, and we’re uniquely able to provide that kind of help.”

**Alex Dimitrief**, General Counsel and SVP
General Electric Company
CLO and Pro Bono Podcast Series, Pro Bono Institute

“More and more for those who operate at the intersection of law and business, pro bono is both a humane act and a wise investment that strengthens our ties to communities and consumers.”

**David Leitch**, Global General Counsel
Bank of America Corporation
Chief Legal Officers Perspectives and Resources, Pro Bono Institute

Internal Pro Bono Partnerships

Legal departments partner on pro bono matters internally with multiple entities. 2018 CPBO Benchmarking Survey respondents report they partner with their:

- **Corporate Foundation**: 48%
- **CSR Staff**: 67%
- **Community Service Team**: 68%

**Company Spotlights**

- **Allstate**
  Runs the Economics Against Abuse Program which engages Allstate’s foundation and CSR and legal departments to empower survivors of domestic violence through charitable contributions, pro bono legal assistance, and financial literacy classes.

- **Salesforce**
  Aims to use 1% of Salesforce’s technology, people, and resources to improve communities around the world, including through pro bono by legal department staff.

- **Thomson Reuters**
  Works closely with its foundation to leverage resources, report on unaddressed legal needs, connect company volunteers to clients around the globe, as well as provide pro bono legal services.