

ANNUAL PRO BONO SERVICE GOAL

Attorneys in the U.S have an ethical obligation to do pro bono. The American Bar Association recognizes the importance pro bono service in the legal profession in ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 6.1, Voluntary Bono Service: “A lawyer should aspire to render at least (50) hours of pro bono publico legal services per year.”¹ Rules 6.1(a) and (b) further outline who shall receive pro bono services and what type services qualify as pro bono work.

Similarly, all fifty states and the District of Columbia also recognize the importance of lawyers engaging in pro bono service throughout their careers. All jurisdictions have adopted their own Rules of Professional Conduct (RPCs) and have included their own version of ABA Model Rule 6.1 encouraging pro bono legal services. The language of each jurisdiction’s rule varies with some setting an annual goal for pro bono service different than the Model Rule.

As of June 2023, the annual pro bono service goal in U.S. jurisdictions is as follows:

- 17 states do not include an annual aspirational goal. These 17 states are: Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and West Virginia.
- 26 states (25 states and the District of Columbia) follow ABA Model Rule 6.1 of an annual goal of 50 hours. These 26 states (including the District of Columbia) are: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
- 6 states have reduced their annual goal below 50 hours. These 6 states are: Florida, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Washington.
- Oregon is the only state that contains an annual goal of above 50 hours.
- Virginia is the only state that has an annual goal as a percentage proportionate to a lawyer’s professional time.

The chart below provides more detail on the rules governing annual pro bono service goals in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. It contains a short selection of text from the relevant rule, including any deviations from ABA Model Rule 6.1.

U.S. jurisdictions acknowledge, through their RPCs, the important purpose pro bono work serves both lawyers, who gain valuable experience by serving as advocates, and disadvantaged

¹ See American Bar Association, “ABA Model Rule 6.1” (last visited June 6, 2023), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/probono_public_service/policy/aba_model_rule_6_1/.

communities, who greatly benefit from competent legal representation that they could otherwise not afford.² Some jurisdictions have embraced the general principle that lawyers “should render public interest legal service,” while others have adopted an annual pro bono service goal, setting a standard to encourage their attorneys to maintain this necessary professional obligation. All are committed to pro bono.

Summary of State Status on Annual Pro Bono Annual Hours Goal

State	Annual Goal	State Rule	Rule Highlights ³
Alabama	No annual goal	Ala. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the Alabama Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that “lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service.”</i>
Alaska	50 hours	Alaska R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Arizona	50 hours	Ariz. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Arkansas	50 hours	Ark. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
California	50 hours	Cal. R. Prof'l Conduct 1(d)(5)	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Colorado	50 hours	Colo. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Connecticut	No annual goal	Conn. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the Connecticut Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that “lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service.”</i>
Delaware	No annual goal	Del. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the Delaware Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that “lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service.”</i>
District of Columbia	50 hours	D.C. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1, cmt. 5	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Florida	20 hours	Fla. R. Prof'l Conduct 4-6.1(b)(1)	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1, except lowers annual goal from 50 to 20 hours
Georgia	50 hours	Ga. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Hawaii	50 hours	Haw. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Idaho	50 hours	Idaho R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Illinois ⁴	No annual goal	Ill. Sup. Ct. R. 756(f)	<i>Rule 756(f) of the Illinois Supreme Court indicates that each lawyer self-report their pro bono hours during the preceding 12-month period.</i>

² See Corporate Pro Bono, “The Business Case For In-House Pro Bono” (2019), <http://www.cpbo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Business-Case-for-In-House-Pro-Bono-3.26.19.pdf>.

³ Some rules include additional restrictions. See the text of the actual rules for complete information.

⁴ Please note that Rule 6.1 of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct is reserved.

State	Annual Goal	State Rule	Rule Highlights ³
Indiana	50 hours	Ind. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1, cmt. 1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Iowa	50 hours	Iowa R. Prof'l Conduct 32:6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Kansas	No annual goal	Kan. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the Kansas Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that "lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service."</i>
Kentucky	50 hours	Ky. R. Prof'l Conduct 3.130(6.1)	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Louisiana	50 hours	La. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Maine	No annual goal	Me. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1, cmt. 11 of the Maine Rules of Professional Conduct explicitly states "this rule does not express a minimum of pro bono legal hours . . ."</i>
Maryland	50 hours	Md. R. Prof'l Conduct 19-306.1(b)	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Massachusetts	25 hours	Mass. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1, except lowers annual goal from 50 to 25 hours
Michigan	No annual goal	Mich. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that "lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service."</i>
Minnesota	50 hours	Minn. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Mississippi	20 hours	Miss. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1(b)(1)	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1, except lowers annual goal from 50 to 20 hours
Missouri	No annual goal	Mo. R. Prof'l Conduct 4-6.1	<i>Missouri Supreme Court Rule 4-6.1 does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that "lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service."</i>
Montana	50 hours	Mont. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Nebraska	50 hours	Neb. Sup. Ct. R. § 3-506.1, cmt. 1	Cmt. 1 of the Neb. Sup. Ct. R. § 3-506.1 includes the 50-hour annual goal set forth by ABA Model Rule 6.1.
Nevada	20 hours (or 60 at reduced fee)	Nev. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1, except lowers annual goal from 50 to 20 hours or 60 hours at a reduced fee per R. 6.1(a)(3)(i).
New Hampshire	30 hours	N.H. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1, except lowers annual goal from 50 to 30 hours
New Jersey	No annual goal	N.J. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>The New Rules of Professional Conduct indicates that "every lawyer has a</i>

State	Annual Goal	State Rule	Rule Highlights ³
			<i>professional responsibility to render public interest legal service.”</i>
New Mexico	No annual goal	N.M. R. Prof'l Conduct 16-601	<i>A 2008 amendment approved by Supreme Court Order 08-8300-05 removed “a lawyer should aspire to render at least fifty (50) hours of pro bono publico legal services per year.”</i>
New York	50 hours	NYSBA N.Y. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1(a)(1)	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
North Carolina	50 hours	N.C. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
North Dakota	No annual goal	N.D. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the North Dakota Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that “lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service.”</i>
Ohio	50 hours	Ohio R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>As per R. 6.1 of the Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct, “The Supreme Court of Ohio has deferred consideration of Model Rule 6.1 . . .”</i>
Oklahoma	No annual goal	Okla. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the Oklahoma Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that “lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service.”</i>
Oregon ⁵	80 hours	OSB Pro Bono Aspirational Standard Bylaw 13.1	<i>Of the 80 pro bono service hours, Bylaw 13.1 also includes that 20-40 of the 80 hours or 2 cases must involve the “direct provision of legal services to the poor, without an expectation of compensation.”</i>
Pennsylvania	No annual goal	Pa. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that “lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service.”</i>
Rhode Island	50 hours	R.I. Disciplinary R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
South Carolina	No annual goal	S.C. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the South Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that “lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service.”</i>
South Dakota	No annual goal	S.D. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of the South Dakota Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify</i>

⁵ Please note that Rule 6.1 of the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct is reserved.

State	Annual Goal	State Rule	Rule Highlights ³
			<i>numerical hours and rather maintains that “lawyer[s] should render public interest legal service.”</i>
Tennessee	50 hours	Tenn. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Texas	No annual goal	Tex. Disciplinary R. Prof'l Conduct	<i>There is no rule in the Tex. Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct that includes pro bono service. The 2014 Pro Bono Policy had an annual goal of 50 hours that modeled ABA Rule 6.1.⁶</i>
Utah	50 hours	Utah R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Vermont	50 hours	Vt. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Virginia	At least 2% of lawyer's professional time	Va. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1, except 2% of lawyer's professional time
Washington	30 hours	Wash. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1, except lowers annual goal from 50 to 30 hours.
West Virginia	No annual goal	W. Va. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	<i>Rule 6.1 of The West Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct does not specify numerical hours and rather maintains that “every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay.”</i>
Wisconsin	50 hours	Wis. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1
Wyoming	50 hours	Wyo. R. Prof'l Conduct 6.1	Similar to ABA Model Rule 6.1

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⁶ See Texas State Bar “Pro Bono Policy – FAQ” (2014), <https://www.texasbar.com/Content/NavigationMenu/LawyersGivingBack/LegalAccessDivision/ProBonoFAQ.pdf>.