IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL GROUP, INC. (AIG)
July 2019

American International Group, Inc. (AIG)** has been a signatory to the **Corporate Pro Bono Challenge®** initiative since 2006. In 2012, then General Counsel Tom Russo charged Deputy General Counsel Eric Kobrick with establishing a formal pro bono program. Eric and his team spent approximately six months investing the time and resources to establish a strong foundation for the program, including conducting an internal survey, drafting a policy, forming a committee, establishing relationships with partner organizations, and setting a budget.

AIG's pro bono program enjoys a high level of support from senior management, including from Brian Duperreault, AIG's Chief Executive Officer, and Lucy Fato, AIG's Executive Vice President & General Counsel.

"We make it as easy as possible for people to get involved. You could without hesitation tell colleagues that you're going to court on a pro bono matter and say that with pride. It is our goal that all participants feel the company's support to engage in pro bono practice. There's zero stigma attached to pro bono work, and in fact, it is encouraged and profiled within the company. Participants are able to use company resources to assist them in their matters, and we have a budget available to fund the miscellaneous costs that may be associated with a matter. If you are participating, we facilitate that participation as much as possible," Kobrick explained.

AIG offers a wide variety of pro bono opportunities to ensure there is something for attorneys and legal professionals alike. The program provides ample support and training for pro bono volunteers. AIG has also innovated ways to encourage greater engagement in pro bono, such as publishing a pro bono newsletter distributed to the entire Legal Department and articles on its company-wide internal website to feature accomplishments and recognize volunteers. AIG also designates a pro bono month in which legal services organizations come to AIG throughout the month to present on pro bono opportunities.

General Program Information	
Offices with Legal Staff	HQ: New York, NY. Other offices that have participated in the program include Los Angeles, Houston, Boston, Wilmington, London, Concord, Mexico City, Singapore, Nashville, Toronto and Melbourne.
Size of Legal Department	Several hundred attorneys plus other professionals and staff. AIG also has a number of employees with law degrees who work in other areas outside of the Legal Department, such as Claims, Tax and Staff Counsel. Over the last few years, participation from professionals in these other areas, especially Claims, has increased.

Pro Bono Leadership Structure	AIG has a pro bono committee of seven lawyers, including a chairman who has served in that role since the inception of the program. There is no formal term limit or rotation. The Committee is supported by various partner organization liaisons, regional coordinators and specialists.
Pro Bono Policy	AIG adopted a pro bono policy at the outset of the program in 2012. The policy addresses issues including: • pro bono participation • the pro bono committee and supporting positions • marketing • metrics • procedures for intake, screening, and conflict checks • procedures for opening and closing pro bono matters • use of company resources • expenses • multijurisdictional practice
Mandatory Pro Bono	Pro bono is voluntary, but participation is encouraged publicly and repeatedly.
Communications	Interested volunteers can opt into a pro bono email distribution list. Opportunities are also communicated through legal department emails, newsletters, announcements at meetings, and personal recruitment.
Recognitions/Awards	A deserving pro bono volunteer receives the annual Thomas A. Russo pro bono award at one of the general counsel's departmental town halls. Other volunteers receive recognition in company-wide or department-wide newsletters or articles on AIG's intranet. Exceptional service may be recognized in performance evaluations at the individual manager's discretion. Pro bono work can only be a positive factor in an evaluation, unless it interferes with a person's job responsibilities.
Tracking Pro Bono	The pro bono committee tracks who works on pro bono matters, the time spent, the nature of the matter, who is the client, and who is the partner organization, if any. Volunteers enter this information into AIG's matter management system. A pro bono metrics specialist in the Legal Department's Global Operations Group oversees this.
Partnerships	AIG has partnered with outside firms to provide pro bono services, although not extensively. AIG also relies on outside counsel for training.

Professional Liability	AIG, as an insurance company, has an insurance policy with a member company covering work on the pro bono program. The legal department only relies on that policy for coverage if the pro bono matter is not covered by a partner organization's malpractice insurance.
Involvement of Paralegals and Staff	The department encourages attorneys and staff alike to participate in pro bono programs.
Pro Bono Projects	
Special education	Volunteers represent special needs children to help them receive the educational services to which they are entitled, in cases referred by New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.
Veterans	Volunteers have served veterans through the New York City Bar Justice Center.
Domestic violence	Volunteers partner with Her Justice and Sanctuary for Families to represent low-income women and women in crisis who are survivors of domestic violence.
Mentoring	Volunteers partner with the New York State Mentoring Program (NYSMP) and mentor school children between the ages of 9 and 13 at a local school. Volunteers partner with Street Law, Inc., a non-profit organization that matches corporate legal departments with a local, diverse high school to teach students about civil law and legal career options, in schools in Los Angeles, Houston and New York. Volunteers in London support the African Prisons Project, an organization that teaches prisoners skills to promote access to justice. Volunteers serve as mentors to prisoners and prison officers in Uganda and Kenya. Volunteers in London help kids develop financial literacy through the Business Enterprise and Employability (BEE) Program.
First Responders and Senior Citizens	Volunteers have handled estate planning matters.

Low-income individuals	Volunteers from AIG Canada participated in Pro Bono Ontario's Free Legal Advice Hotline, which addresses five areas of law: civil litigation (not family or criminal law); consumer issues such as consumer debt/protection; corporate law for charities, non-profits and small businesses; housing matters; and employment law. Volunteers in NY participate in an access to benefits helpline through the Legal Aid Society.
Nonprofits and small businesses	Volunteers act as de facto general counsel to a nonprofit helping with contracts, bylaws, trademark protection and other legal matters. Volunteers assist nonprofit organizations in partnership with New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. Volunteers provide advice to small businesses through the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project of the New York City Bar Justice Center.
Immigration	In partnership with the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), AIG attorneys and para-professionals in the U.S., working in teams of three and four with the assistance of colleagues in Germany and the United Arab Emirates, provided more than 650 hours of legal assistance to Afghan nationals who have aided the U.S., often as interpreters, and who are now targets of anti-American violence. The AIG teams represented individual clients and assisted in the process of gathering information and completing the forms and procedures necessary to navigate the complex bureaucratic system and successfully obtain Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) for at-risk individuals. In addition, AIG has assisted IRAP with the appeal of an SIV rejection, has donated funds for the effort, and has offered its government relations expertise. In partnership with Catholic Migration Services (CMS), AIG volunteers assist clients to prepare their naturalization applications to become U.S. citizens. In partnership with Legal Services NYC and a private law firm, AIG volunteers help clients who have suffered verbal and physical abuse, economic hardship, isolation and other forms of discrimination in their home countries because they are members of the LGBTQ+ communities or are HIV positive. In partnership with Safe Passage, AIG volunteers help children through the immigration process.

Lessons Learned	
It takes a village.	It requires a group of dedicated individuals to build and grow a pro bono program.
Offer both short- and long-term opportunities.	To ensure volunteers can find an opportunity that matches their interests and availability, provide a mix of clinics or "one and done" pro bono opportunities as well as longer-term representations.
Request a budget.	Having a generous pro bono budget is helpful for program expenses as well as supporting partner organizations.
Seek support from the top.	Support from the general counsel and other senior leaders in the department is necessary (although not sufficient) to work towards motivating the entire department to do pro bono work.
Pro bono improves morale.	The pro bono program has improved morale because participants get to meet more of their colleagues, learn new areas of the law, obtain experience with clients and in court, and feel better about themselves, the legal department, and the company.

denotes a **Corporate Pro Bono Challenge® signatory

Developed by Corporate Pro Bono
A project of Pro Bono Institute
www.cpbo.org
Copyright 2019 Pro Bono Institute
CPBO® is a registered trademark of Pro Bono Institute

1001 G St., NW, Suite 305 West ● Washington, DC 20001
(202) 729.6699 Phone ● (202) 296.0303 Fax
cpbo@probonoinst.org ● www.cpbo.org