IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: AT&T
August 2024

AT&T has a long history of pro bono partnership, and formalized its pro bono program in 2009, and became a **Corporate Pro Bono Challenge®** 100 signatory in 2010. Since then, the program has grown under the leadership and direction of David McAtee, Senior Executive Vice President and General Counsel of AT&T Inc. AT&T's pro bono program is well-organized, with a national pro bono committee and regional groups dispersed both domestically and internationally. This structure allows AT&T to set companywide goals and to tailor efforts to the needs of each region. The pro bono program also uses online resources to track pro bono hours and circulate information about pro bono projects among AT&T's large legal team of more than 200 attorneys and approximately 400 legal staff.

AT&T attorneys participate in more than 20 approved programs, including representing clients in immigration matters, participating in will preparation clinics, representing prisoners in civil rights cases, and staffing legal services hotlines and intake clinics. Over the years, AT&T has learned valuable lessons about increasing attorney engagement and staff participation in pro bono programs, which include offering diverse projects and partnering with law firms or other organizations to collaborate on longer term projects.

General Program Information	
Offices with Legal Staff	HQ: Dallas, TX; Other U.S. offices: Atlanta, GA; Bedminster, NJ; Chicago, IL; El Segundo, CA; Bothell, WA; St. Louis, MO; and Washington, DC. International offices include Mexico and the UK.
Size of Legal Department	200+ attorneys and ~400 legal staff
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	AT&T's national Pro Bono Committee, led by two co-chairs, administers the department-wide pro bono program. The national Pro Bono Committee is responsible for managing the overall budget, coordinating with regional offices, serving as liaison to the general counsel and senior leadership team, and guiding the direction of AT&T's pro bono efforts.
Pro Bono Policy	AT&T's formal pro bono policy supports and encourages attorneys and legal staff to volunteer to provide direct legal services to persons of limited means, to take on human rights and public rights law matters, and to provide legal services to charitable, religious, civic, governmental, artistic, educational, professional, or similar organizations. The policy does not set an hourly goal. The policy provides that volunteers may perform pro bono work during their regular work hours. The policy also explains the approval process for pro bono projects.

Mandatory Pro Bono	Pro bono participation is encouraged but not required.
Communications	AT&T has a dedicated pro bono email account and an intranet site to publish opportunities and track RSVPs. The AT&T Legal Department publishes a regular newsletter, which highlights pro bono efforts, including past activities and future opportunities.
Recognitions/Awards	At the annual AT&T legal conference, the national Pro Bono Committee recognizes attorneys and legal staff with the AT&T Excellence in Pro Bono Award. Additionally, one attorney or legal staff member is selected as the AT&T National Pro Bono Award Winner. Attorneys and legal staff also have the opportunity to highlight external representation, including pro bono and community engagement efforts, in their annual evaluation process.
Tracking Pro Bono	Volunteers can track pro bono hours on the AT&T Community Engagement portal.
Partnerships	AT&T and Akin Gump have co-sponsored 4 Equal Justice Works Fellowships. Working with Akin and AT&T attorneys, these Fellows have created programs designed to assist veterans, asylum seekers, and small business owners, as well as provide assistance in other public interest areas. AT&T also collaborates with numerous other law firms and legal aid organizations to, for example, provide representation to incarcerated individuals with civil rights complaints.
Professional Liability	AT&T purchases malpractice insurance through the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) program.
Legal Staff Involvement	Administrative staff, legal assistants, paralegals, and other managers work alongside attorneys in delivering pro bono services. Legal staff are part of the national Pro Bono Committee.
Pro Bono Projects	
Veterans	AT&T has sponsored programs with the Veterans Consortium to help veterans obtain a discharge upgrade when they have received an other than honorable discharge due to post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury.
Immigration	AT&T attorneys, paralegals and assistants provide pro bono representation in immigration-related cases in various locations, including, for example, through the National Immigrant Justice Center in Chicago.
Nonprofits	AT&T Lawyers provide legal advice to nonprofits in Dallas, Los Angeles, Washington DC, and Atlanta regarding issues including employment, real estate, corporate law, and contracts.
Legal Clinics	AT&T lawyers and paralegals staff telephone hotlines in New Jersey, Chicago, Dallas, and other locations, answering callers' questions in areas such as debt relief, school/student educational accommodation, estate planning, or small business dispute matters.

Lessons Learned	
Leadership Support Drives Engagement	When leadership sends the message that pro bono is supported, members of the department feel empowered and encouraged to take time away from their busy schedules to engage in pro bono efforts.
Value In Pro Bono	Pro bono opportunities provide attorneys, paralegals, and staff with opportunities to volunteer their unique legal and professional services. These efforts help individual clients receive better access to justice or make legal services available to non-profits from lawyers trained and experienced in the support of for-profit corporations.
Offer Opportunities With Defined Time Commitments	Offering discrete projects such as clinics, staffing hotlines, or transactional projects increases attorney pro bono engagement, because volunteers can plan to provide pro bono service during a defined time period.
Recognize Pro Bono Efforts	Recognizing employees for their pro bono efforts, both as part of overall attorney evaluation and engagement and through the Pro Bono Awards, goes a long way towards increasing participation.
Seek Partnerships	Partnering with law firms or other legal aid organizations to take on pro bono cases and share the workload helps to drive attorney engagement in pro bono.

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