IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY
March 2019

In 2016, following fifteen successful years of pro bono participation, the American Express General Counsel's Organization ("GCO") refreshed and relaunched its pro bono program with the establishment of a committee to create meaningful opportunities for GCO attorneys. Following on a long tradition of and commitment to pro bono, the GCO Pro Bono Committee sought to expand the pro bono program through partnerships with both outside counsel and non-profit organizations to enable broader participation across the GCO. This approach has met with great success through a focus on identifying opportunities for service that are at the same time high impact for clients and manageable for GCO attorneys.

For the GCO, pro bono service is an extension of American Express' "Blue Box Values" that guide the approach to corporate citizenship. Specifically, it is a core value of American Express "to make a difference in the communities where we work and live" and thus "strengthening our connections." As General Counsel Laureen Seeger notes, "It is extremely important for me and the lawyers and legal professionals who work with me to help make an impact in the communities around us. Whether it is New York City; Washington, DC; Miami; or Chicago; members of the GCO are committed to strengthening our connections with our communities. It is particularly meaningful to me that this commitment is demonstrated both by our senior leaders and their teams alike."

General Program Information	
Offices with Legal Staff	HQ: New York; Other offices: Sunrise, FL, Washington DC, Chicago, IL, and virtual employees in numerous locations. International GCO offices sponsor their own pro bono activities.
Size of Legal Department	The legal department is comprised of more than 400 colleagues worldwide.
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	American Express' program is led by a Pro Bono Committee of approximately eight members, comprised of a diverse group of attorneys, paralegals, and other staff members from across the GCO. There is senior level executive sponsorship and two co-chairs. Committee positions do not have term limits, but new co-chairs are to be named every few years.
Pro Bono Policy	American Express does not have a formal pro bono policy.
Mandatory Pro Bono	American Express does not require its attorneys to perform pro bono, though all are encouraged to do so. It is the mandate of the Pro Bono Committee to ensure that all who are interested in performing pro

	bono have an opportunity to perform relevant work that is both compelling and socially beneficial.
Communications	The Pro Bono Committee disseminates information about pro bono opportunities through presentations at GCO meetings and regular emails. In addition, the committee works closely with each practice group to develop opportunities for each group to participate.
Recognitions/Awards	GCO pro bono participants are recognized at the year-end GCO Town Hall meeting for their commitment to pro bono. In addition, participants have presented at GCO Town Halls on various pro bono projects.
Tracking Pro Bono	A designated member of the Pro Bono Committee tracks pro bono participation on an ongoing basis.
Partnerships	American Express works closely with outside counsel and pro bono partner organizations to create opportunities for GCO attorneys. The GCO Pro Bono Committee develops, in partnership with outside counsel and non-profit organizations, a diverse array of opportunities for attorneys to be involved. Examples of successful partnerships include: • Legal Advice Clinic with the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project of the City Bar Justice Center and Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton* • Naturalization Clinic with Her Justice and Cravath, Swaine & Moore* • Food Business Incorporation Clinic with Start Small Think Big and Debevoise & Plimpton* • Election Day Phone Banking with Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and Election Protection In addition, American Express sustains relationships with legal services partner organizations to provide opportunities for GCO attorneys to pursue direct pro bono representation for clients. These arrangements allow attorneys, individually and through group events, to pursue their passions and seek out pro bono projects that match their interests. American Express attorneys are able to work in partnership with attorneys from other law firms on individual matters when additional expertise and support may be useful. Examples of successful opportunities include providing contract advice to nonprofit organizations through Lawyers Alliance, representation of individual clients in immigration proceedings through Catholic

	Charities and Kids in Need of Defense, Inc. (KIND), and providing corporate governance legal advice to Voices of 9/11.
Professional Liability	Pro bono matters are covered under American Express' professional liability insurance policy for corporate counsel.
Non-Lawyer Involvement	GCO paralegals often staff pro bono matters and clinics with GCO attorneys, working as part of the legal teams representing pro bono clients. They draft documents, coordinate filings, and serve as project managers for cases. Members of the GCO administrative staff have served as translators on matters where clients are not fluent English speakers.
Representative Pro Bono Projects	
Micro-entrepreneurs	In partnership with Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, American Express attorneys have participated in small business clinics held by the New York City Bar Justice Center's Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project (NELP), an initiative that provides financial advice to low-income micro-entrepreneurs. The American Express Foundation provided the seed money for NELP and, in support of the company's larger corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, attorneys from the GCO volunteer their time and legal expertise supporting clients seeking legal advice at these clinics.
Small businesses	In partnership with Debevoise & Plimpton, American Express attorneys participated in a Food Business Incorporation clinic sponsored by Start Small Think Big and the New York City Housing Authority. At these clinics, participating attorneys provide legal advice and assistance to clients with home-based food businesses so they can incorporate and ultimately grow their businesses. In addition, since 2017, American Express attorneys have participated in monthly Small Business Office Hours consultations sponsored by Start Small Think Big and Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, providing legal advice on a range of topics to small business owners.
Immigration	In partnership with Cravath, Swaine & Moore and Her Justice, American Express attorneys participated in a Naturalization Clinic, assisting clients with the completion and submission of their naturalization applications. When the clients' naturalization

	interviews are scheduled, the joint Amex-Cravath teams will work with their clients to prepare them for successful interviews. In partnership with Cravath, Swaine & Moore and Sanctuary for Families, American Express attorneys participated in a T-Visa adjustment clinic, assisting clients who are survivors of human trafficking to apply for a green card. This successful adjustment allows clients who were granted T-Nonimmigrant status based on their position as a trafficking victim to become permanent U.S. residents.
Election Protection	A record number of American Express attorneys volunteered to do phone banking and field work on Election Day 2018 through Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and Election Protection. Attorneys from the GCO offices in NYC, Washington, DC, and Sunrise, FL, as well as virtual employees in Chicago, participated in this successful event.
Corporate Governance	American Express attorneys provided corporate governance advice and support to assist Voices of 9/11 refresh their governance structure, review contracts, and provide copyright advice. The governance work culminated in the presentation of the results of this work by two American Express attorneys to the Voices of 9/11 Board of Directors.
Lessons Learned	
Work with partners.	Partnering with outside counsel firms and non-profit organizations together has been key to the success of American Express' pro bono program. Together, we can provide clients with legal advice and representation, as well as the organizational and administrative support to complete the projects.
Offer short-term engagements ("make it easy").	For some attorneys, time constraints present the biggest obstacles to doing pro bono. The most successful way American Express has mitigated this issue is to offer shorter-term pro bono engagements like one-time clinics for which continued representation is not required.
Pro bono connects volunteers to the company.	Legal departments can add value and breadth to a company's CSR profile by engaging in pro bono that supports the company's larger community efforts. By doing so, volunteers gain a deeper sense of connection to the company as a whole.

Pro bono builds relationships.	Engaging in pro bono work can effectively address concerns about workplace isolation. It allows volunteers to make connections and work with those in their department or company with whom they normally do not interact. It also helps to build relationships with those in the community.
Sustain engagement.	Sustaining attorney participation in pro bono efforts can be more challenging than initial implementation. Care and attention need to be paid to maintaining momentum and engagement. The American Express GCO pro bono program has found the most success sustaining momentum by creating opportunities for involvement by practice groups individually, as well as receiving public encouragement for involvement from senior practice group leaders.

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