IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: MINNESOTA ACC CHAPTER
March 2014

The Minnesota Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (MNACCA) formalized its pro bono and community service efforts in 2008 when the MNACCA Community Service Committee was appointed by MNACCA's board of directors. Since then, it has provided members with opportunities to use their legal skills to help those in need, including veterans, local nonprofits, and small businesses. Reflecting on the benefits of the pro bono efforts, MNACCA Community Service Committee Co-Chair Fred Dawe notes:

> "Our pro bono and community service programs have really provided wonderful opportunities for our members to serve. It is a benefit to both the community in which we live and work, and to our members. We often see members at our pro bono events that we don't see at other events, so we clearly have been able to provide a niche these members are searching for.
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> We find that our members love the pro bono opportunities. Many of our members, especially those in smaller law departments, do not have the opportunity to do pro bono work through their companies and we are thrilled to provide them with the chance to give back in their communities using their skills and their time."

General Program Information	
Pro Bono Contact	Fred Dawe, Co-Chair, MNACCA Community Service Committee
Region Served	Minnesota
Number of Members	~ 700 members
Pro Bono Program History	Formed by the Board of Directors in 2008, MNACCA's Community Service Committee provides opportunities for members to give back to the community as well as to build and strengthen relationships within the chapter.
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	MNACCA's Community Service Committee consists of a minimum of four members (currently there are10) and is led by a chair or co-chairs, who are members of the board of directors (currently there are two co-chairs). There are no term limits. The Community Service Committee convenes at least four meetings per year. The committee organizes four to six pro bono or community service opportunities each year in which MNACCA members can participate. Each of these events is planned and led by two or three committee members. The committee co-chairs oversee all events.
Pro Bono Policy	MNACCA's Community Service Committee has a charter, which

	specifies the committee's mission: "This Committee will provide members opportunities to give back to the community and to build and strengthen relationships within the Minnesota Chapter of Association of Corporate Counsel (MN ACC)." Among other provisions, the charter lists the following activities for the committee: • offer quarterly activities, which may include pro bono opportunities and non-legal community service opportunities; • strive to have at least two committee members lead an activity; • work with the Communications Committee to periodically provide information and materials of interest to members; • encourage active participation in all events sponsored by the Community Service Committee; • build relationships with other MN ACC Committees; and • develop productive working relationships with community service and/or pro bono committees within other chapters and ACC national staff.
Communications	MNACCA events are featured on the chapter website and invitations are distributed via email listservs and personal messages. Occasionally, announcements are also made at other events. Community Service Committee members help with event promotion and recruitment.
Recognitions/Awards	• **Chapter Newsletter**. All pro bono projects are the subject of a story spotlight (with photo, when available) in the chapter newsletter. • **Chapter Volunteer of the Year Award**. MNACCA selects a Chapter Volunteer of the Year Award. This award is not specifically focused on pro bono work, but often the recipient is someone who has provided pro bono legal services.
Tracking Pro Bono	MNACCA tracks the number of pro bono events and the list of volunteers at each. It does not track other information, such as number of clients served or hours contributed.
Partnerships	LegalCORPS and the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans are the chapter's primary partner organizations. In addition to other legal service organizations, MNACCA has worked with Dorsey & Whitney to co-host **Clinic in a Box®** programs (described below).
Professional Liability	The chapter relies on partner organizations to provide professional liability insurance.
Pro Bono Projects	
Business Law Clinic	MNACCA co-hosts with LegalCORPS two business law clinics each year and commits to recruit four to six volunteers for each. At the

	clinics, members provide free assistance in non-litigation business law matters to low-income owners of small business, nonprofits, and innovators.
Clinic in a Box® Program	MNACCA has co-hosted three Clinic in a Box® programs, in conjunction with **CPBO**, Dorsey & Whitney, and a local public interest organization. At each clinic, approximately 30 MNACCA members work in teams to conduct a legal audit for ten nonprofit organizations or small businesses.
Veterans Clinic	The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans hosts periodic legal clinics for veterans. Up to 20 chapter members a clinic volunteer and meet with veterans to provide legal assistance. Matters include seeking child support, criminal expungement, responding to debt collection, and drafting wills.
Legal-Related Fundraising & Community Service	
MNACCA Winter Gala	In 2013, MNACCA held its first gala, benefiting three local organizations, including two legal services organizations: Cancer Legal Line and Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. Now an annual event, the 2014 gala was hosted in February.
Lessons Learned	
Know your membership	Understand your members' interests and tailor your program accordingly.
Be flexible with scheduling	It is important to provide a wide array of dates and times for your events. By offering some events at breakfast, some at lunch and some after work or on weekends, the chapter is better able to reach out to potential volunteers and partners.
Be innovative	Be open to different opportunities. It is beneficial to bring in new pro bono partners on a regular basis so that members have the opportunity to volunteer with different organizations.

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