IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: CHICAGO ACC CHAPTER

October 2018

The Chicago Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC Chicago) created its pro bono program in 2010, when it realized that members were eager to volunteer and provide essential pro bono services. Since its inception, the ACC Chicago Pro Bono Committee has been dedicated to achieving its mission to provide opportunities and information related to Chicago area pro bono involvement for in-house counsel. The Committee has worked assiduously with partners to provide pro bono opportunities that are substantive yet flexible enough to meet each ACC Chicago member's needs and schedule.

Each of the past eight years, ACC Chicago has hosted a **Clinic in a Box®** program, which allows pro bono attorneys to conduct a legal audit and provide legal advice to nonprofit organizations. The Pro Bono Committee has worked to expand its offerings, developing a listserv for those interested in learning more about pro bono opportunities, and coordinating with partner law firms, legal services organizations, and other groups to share resources and expertise. New for next year will be a program highlighting ACC Chicago's sponsoring law firms' pro bono opportunities, which our members can attend. The pro bono program has greatly benefited ACC Chicago as it has allowed members to better connect with one another, with other members of the local legal profession, and with the larger Chicago community.

General Program Information	
Pro Bono Contact	Catherine Smith, Chair, Pro Bono Committee
Region Served	ACC Chicago serves Chicago and the surrounding suburbs.
Number of Members	More than 2,000 members
Pro Bono Program History	The ACC Chicago Pro Bono Committee was formed in 2010, when a chapter board member was exploring volunteer opportunities. The board recognized that many members were also looking for ways to become involved in pro bono and would benefit from ACC Chicago providing and/or screening appropriate pro bono opportunities. The Committee's first activity was co-hosting a Clinic in a Box® program with CPBO in 2011. Since then, the pro bono program has expanded and the Committee continues to actively fulfill its mission to identify and facilitate legal pro bono service opportunities for its members.
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	The ACC Chicago Pro Bono Committee has historically had one chair that works in conjunction with the board of directors. The Chair shares responsibilities for outreach, as well as developing and implementing proposals for events. The Pro Bono Committee endeavors to organize several major events per year.

	Currently, the committee is looking to increase committee membership and provide more pro bono opportunities to members of ACC Chicago. As the program continues to expand, the goal is to have one person in charge of each event and one person dedicated to sponsor coordination. The chapter is also considering having a suburban-based member involved in the Pro Bono Committee in order to be more responsive to the needs of members working outside of the city.
Pro Bono Policy	ACC Chicago does not have a pro bono policy.
Communications	Events are featured on the chapter website and invitations are distributed via email. ACC Chicago has an opt-in listserv for members interested in additional pro bono opportunities beyond those formally sponsored by ACC Chicago.
Recognitions/Awards	ACC Chicago does not formally recognize or provide awards to volunteers at this time.
Tracking Pro Bono	ACC Chicago tracks the number of sponsored events and the number of participants at each event. It does not track other information, such as number of clients served or hours contributed.
Partnerships	ACC Chicago has had multiple successful partnerships. Generally, the chapter partners with at least one legal services provider each year. ACC Chicago is currently looking to expand its partnerships and take advantage of the wide variety of established, impactful legal services organizations in Chicago.
Professional Liability	ACC Chicago relies on partner organizations to provide professional liability insurance.
Pro Bono Projects	
Clinic in a Box® Program	Since 2011, ACC Chicago has been partnering with DLA Piper*, Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO), The Law Project, and others to provide a Clinic in a Box® program for chapter members. The program is a half-day clinic that allows in-house counsel to advise nonprofit organizations or small businesses. On average, approximately 45 ACC Chicago members provide legal counseling to 12 local non-profits each year. The project has been very successful, and some members elect to provide follow-up counseling beyond the day of the event.
Disability and Elder Law	ACC Chicago, partnering with Drinker Biddle & Reath* and the non-profit Center for Disability and Elder Law (CDEL), since 2016, has sponsored an annual Senior Legal Assistance Clinic in high-needs communities to provide Powers of Attorney for Healthcare and Property and execution of simple wills.

Lessons Learned	
Seek out and build on successful partnerships.	Partnerships have been a win-win for ACC Chicago. The chapter can provide visibility to legal services organizations and advocacy projects, while partners can provide knowledge, resources and opportunities to serve.
Be creative.	ACC Chicago strives to identify opportunities that are flexible for members, such as short-term clinics. They also incorporate CLE into events when appropriate, as it garners members' interest in the pro bono program. This can be done through volunteer training or sponsored events providing CLE on issues related to pro bono.
Play the long game.	It is important to recognize that certain activities will be more successful than others. However, by increasing the visibility of the pro bono program and consistently providing a range of opportunities for members, the Pro Bono Committee builds a foundation for success.

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