IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: MCDONALD'S CORPORATION
October 2021

McDonald's legal department first implemented a formal pro bono program in 2000. Senior Counsel Pauline Levy, chair of the McDonald's Pro Bono Committee, championed the idea to establish a pro bono program while serving on the legal department's Excellence Team. She viewed a pro bono program as a way to promote excellence within the department, as well as a great way to give back to the community. Twenty-one years later, Levy's foresight has proven correct. McDonald's, a signatory to the **Corporate Pro Bono Challenge®** initiative since November 2010, regularly has high levels of pro bono participation from legal department attorneys and staff.

McDonald's General Counsel Desiree Ralls-Morrison is a strong supporter of our pro bono program.

General Program Information	
Offices with Legal Staff	HQ: Oak Brook, IL. McDonald's subsidiaries also have lawyers throughout the world, including in Canada France, and Germany.
Size of Legal Depart.	U.S.: 92 Attorneys; 97 Legal Staff Outside U.S.: 18 Attorneys; 2 Legal Staff
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	McDonald's Pro Bono Committee (Committee) is comprised of 24 members, with no term limits. The Committee oversees projects sponsored by the department, screens projects identified by volunteers, identifies additional opportunities, and reviews training materials. Committee members also serve as leaders for each project that the program sponsors; project leaders recruit volunteers, manage day-to-day administration, monitor costs, track hours, and coordinate with partners.
Pro Bono Policy	McDonald's adopted a formal pro bono policy in 2000. The policy delineates what qualifies as pro bono, outlines the responsibilities of the Committee, describes the approval process for pro bono projects identified by volunteers, sets a departmental goal for pro bono and community service work, and addresses budgetary issues and recognition of pro bono efforts. It also specifies that attorneys and paralegals may use McDonald's supplies and equipment for pro bono work, including office space for meetings, but should identify

	themselves to their clients as volunteers for the nonprofit organization in communications.
Mandatory Pro Bono	Though McDonald's does not require pro bono work, it is strongly encouraged by the Committee with the backing of the General Counsel. In addition, the pro bono policy sets a departmental goal of two percent for its total working hours on pro bono and community service work.
Communications	The Committee introduces new hires to the program by explaining each of the department's sponsored projects. Communications to all members of the legal department include periodic activity reports, updates during legal department meetings, and a section of the department's intranet site dedicated to the pro bono program.
Recognitions/Awards	The Committee recognizes individuals who participate in the department's pro bono efforts at department meetings and hosts special events to celebrate McDonald's accomplishments and contributions. McDonald's hosts a reception every other year where employee volunteers are honored by McDonald's General Counsel and its Pro Bono Committee for their pro bono involvement. At the receptions, McDonald's invites select representatives of the legal aid provider organizations and law firms with which it partners on pro bono projects, as well as pro bono clients, to speak and have an opportunity to thank volunteers and explain to them what a valuable service they are providing and how they are making a difference in people's lives.
Tracking Pro Bono	Committee members acting as project leaders are responsible for tracking pro bono hours for each sponsored project. The Committee chair's administrative assistant tracks hours for attorneys and staff who participate in other pro bono projects.
Partnerships	McDonald's legal department has partnered with legal service organizations, schools, and law firms such as Baker & McKenzie, Jenner & Block, Goldberg Kohn, and Winston & Strawn.
Professional Liability	McDonald's partners with legal services organizations that provide insurance coverage to their volunteers.
Legal Staff Involvement	Legal staff are very active in pro bono work.

Pro Bono Projects	
Assisting Low Income Chicagoans	• **Legal Aid Chicago.** Legal Aid Chicago is the largest provider of free legal services for low-income individuals in the metropolitan Chicago area. McDonald's Legal Department partners with Legal Aid Chicago and the law firm DLA Piper to staff a walk-in legal clinic in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood, providing low-income individuals direct access to lawyers and legal advice. • **Prairie State Legal Services.** Prairie State Legal Services provides free legal civil legal aid to individuals who cannot afford an attorney and have a legal problem affecting their basic human needs. Through McDonald's pro bono project with Prairie State, McDonald's attorney volunteers provide legal advice and counseling telephone services to Prairie State clients experiencing landlord-tenant issues, such as evictions.

Education in Public Schools	• **Street Law Program.** McDonald's Legal Department partners with Street Law to provide low-income high school students with information about the law relevant to their daily lives and professional goals, to encourage young people of diverse backgrounds to consider careers in law. The Legal Department hosts most years at McDonald's headquarters an all-day Street Law Program and has partnered with Chicago public schools to expose high school students to a corporate legal setting and to provide practical, participatory education about law, democracy and human rights. McDonald's also hosts a Shadow Day to provide an opportunity for a select number of students to shadow attorneys and paralegals throughout the work-day. • **Chicago Bar Association's Media and Civic Education, Inc.** McDonald's attorneys and staff partner participate in a Lawyers in the Classroom Program at Chicago public elementary schools guest teaching 5th through 8th grade Social Studies classes to help students understand the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. legal system. Attorney volunteers provide students with knowledge based on their own real-life experiences. Also, using hypothetical scenarios, attorneys encourage students to examine all sides of an issue and to wrestle with complex questions that don't have simple answers. The classroom lessons remedy some common misconceptions students have about the legal system while helping students develop critical thinking skills and the ability to make arguments that support opposing points of view.
Advocacy for Children	**Equip for Equality.** Since 2012, McDonald's legal staff have volunteered with the Equip for Equality Pro Bono Project (EFE) to assist parents in advocating for their disabled children's rights in different settings, including ensuring that their children receive educational, extra-curricular, and other opportunities available to other children. McDonald's volunteers regularly staff EFE's hotline on designated days, accepting intake calls at their desks from parents who have children with disabilities and are seeking assistance in working with their local schools to obtain the benefits to which their children are entitledunder the law. The volunteers follow an interview format for the intake call which was developed by EFE and McDonald's. Thereafter, McDonald's volunteers support the parent by advising the parent of their rights under the law, providing relevant reading materials, explaining their rights, and, in some cases, providing support at school meetings where intervention plans are established or reviewed.

Legal Aid to the Elderly	**Pro Bono Center for Disability and Elder Law (CDEL).** CDEL provides free legal services for low-income elderly and disabled Cook County residents, and McDonald's Legal Department has worked closely with CDEL on a variety of matters. McDonald's regularly partners with CDEL on its Senior Center Project which brings CDEL staff and McDonald's attorneys and staff to independent senior citizen facilities in low-income neighborhoods to prepare powers of attorney for healthcare and property and living wills.
Representing Immigrants	• **U-Visas.** McDonald's legal department partners with National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) to assist immigrants who are victims of or witnesses to violent crimes obtain U-Visas, which afford legal status for up to four years and provide a path to citizenship. The visas are intended to encourage victims of violent crimes, who as noncitizens may be fearful of speaking out against their assailants, to help in the investigation and prosecution of criminals. McDonald's typically staffs one clinic each year with fifteen or more volunteers at each clinic. However, a significant amount of work must be done after the clinic, including multiple client interviews, drafting affidavits, preparing ancillary documents, completing multiple applications, and thus, this project is relatively time intensive. • **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.** Also in conjunction with NIJC, McDonald's volunteers help young immigrants who were brought to this country as children and educated in the U.S. avoid deportation and apply for deferred action and work authorizations. McDonald's first clinic was held in June, 2015 at the offices of Winston and Strawn. McDonald's volunteers were trained at the clinic and then immediately interviewed the applicants and assisted them with preparing the necessary paperwork associated with the application, as well as the application itself. Additional documents must be prepared after the clinic. The clinic is four hours. • **Asylum Cases.** NIJC is dedicated to ensuring human rights protections and access to justice for all immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, providing direct legal services to and advocating for these populations through policy reform, impact litigation and public education. In addition to the partnership on asylum cases for which McDonald's is receiving the CPBO Pro Bono Partner Award with its law firm partners, McDonald's also works with NIJC representing victims of violent crimes in the United States secure U-Visas, on naturalization representations and on other important work.

Lessons Learned	
Plan Ahead	It is important to do thorough planning upfront, including screening projects and providing training for staff volunteers.
Do not reinvent the wheel	There is no need to create a pro bono project from scratch - it is better to retool a project that has already proven to work well or to borrow ideas from other successful projects.
Care about volunteers as well as clients	If volunteers have a positive experience participating in pro bono, they will continue to engage in pro bono. It is important to pay attention to the interests of volunteers as well as clients.
Carefully consider pro bono project selection	The McDonald's Pro Bono Committee screens pro bono projects to ensure that they match the interests and skills of the legal department staff and meet the following criteria: ▪ receive strong support from partner organizations that provide malpractice insurance, ▪ are non-controversial in terms of subject matter, ▪ speak to the company's overall goals with regard to community involvement, and ▪ do not require an indefinite, long-term commitment from volunteers.

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