IN-HOUSE PRO BONO IN PRACTICE PROFILE: ZURICH NORTH AMERICA
January 2024

Zurich North America (ZNA) launched its pro bono program in 2011 to provide members of the Legal Services department with opportunities to enhance their legal skills and assist disadvantaged clients in their communities. Chief Legal Officer Laura Lazarczyk provides leadership and support to the department's pro bono activities.

"One of the things that sets Zurich apart is our commitment to creating a brighter future together, and our pro bono program is a shining example of that," said Laura. "Our pro bono program has been recognized as a best-in-class example of strong corporate citizenship by external audiences. I am very proud to be working with such dedicated colleagues who give back so much in the communities where we live and work."

ZNA's Legal Services team, including attorneys, paralegals and professional staff, participate in diverse pro bono work such as advising on special education issues, immigration, estate planning, representing the elderly and veterans, counseling non-profits and assisting with matters related to housing and homelessness. From the inception of its pro bono program, ZNA has used technology to track its activities, ensuring recognition for participants as well as communication regarding available pro bono opportunities.

In 2023, 100% of the attorneys in legal roles in the U.S. Corporate Law Department volunteered to participate in the pro bono program. In 2023, ZNA staffed 150 volunteer shifts totaling approximately 500 volunteer hours. Over the last twelve years, ZNA has volunteered more than 2,200 hours supporting the Equip for Equality Special Education Hotline.

General Program Information	
Offices with Legal Staff	Schaumburg, Illinois (HQ); New York City
Size of Legal Department	United States: 33 attorneys and 59 legal staff Canada: Five attorneys and one legal staff
Pro Bono Leadership Structure	ZNA's pro bono program is managed by a pro bono committee, led by a chair and vice chair who also serve as the pro bono coordinators.

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Pro Bono Policy	ZNA has adopted a formal pro bono policy which among other things: • Establishes a pro bono committee that: o Administers the pro bono program and reports on the status of pro bono activities and solicits feedback. o Adopts and maintains a set of policy guidelines for the pro bono program. o Recommends pro bono matters and clinics that will encourage the largest participation of employees as possible and designate pre-approved pro bono referral agencies. o Evaluates and resolves any conflicts arising under pro bono matters. o Ensures that malpractice insurance is provided for all pro bono matters in which a member participates. o Arranges and publicizes training opportunities for participating in the pro bono program. • Permits pro bono work to be undertaken during work hours. • Provides for an approval process for pro bono projects members want to undertake that are not pre-approved. • Encourages non-lawyers to volunteer for pro bono projects. • Provides for timekeeping and reporting of pro bono projects for the purpose of assessing the time required of certain tasks and not to track individual performance.
Mandatory Pro Bono	Pro bono participation is not required but strongly encouraged.
Communications	Pro bono coordinator sends out emails to a volunteer distribution list.
Recognitions/Awards	Articles are published on a regular basis on the company intranet.
Tracking Pro Bono	The ZNA database tracks the number of activities, volunteers and hours spent providing pro bono legal services.

Partnerships	ZNA partners with local Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) chapters as well as law firms and legal services organizations in its pro bono efforts.
Professional Liability	In some instances, pro bono organizations cover professional liability. In other instances, ZNA provides this coverage for licensed attorneys.
Legal Staff Involvement	ZNA encourages professional staff in the Corporate Law Department to participate in its pro bono program. In addition, ZNA has expanded its program to include other company departments, including, Claims Legal, Staff Legal and Business Product Development.
Key Pro Bono Projects	
Special Education Helpline	ZNA has provided pro bono support for **Equip for Equality's Special Education Helpline** since 2012, with dozens of volunteers staffing a weekly three-hour shift. Pro bono volunteers consult with families of children with disabilities, providing a legal resource for parents who are searching for special education options for their children. (Chicago)
Criminal Records Relief	**Legal Aid Chicago Criminal Records Relief Clinic.** ZNA volunteers assist individuals in gaining access to housing and employment by applying to having their criminal records sealed or expunged. (Chicago)
Civil Law	**Legal Aid Chicago Virtual Quarterly Clinic.** Volunteers assist clients in a virtual setting across a broad spectrum of civil law issues, including landlord tenant disputes, protective orders, custody disputes and others. **Center for Disability and Elder Law.** Volunteers assist in the preparation of Powers of Attorney for Healthcare and Property, as well as Living Will Declarations for low-income seniors.
Immigration	**Asylum Applications.** In partnership with the National Immigrant Justice Center ("NIJC") and law firm partners, ZNA attorneys helped prepare I-589 Asylum Applications for *pro se* filing, providing assistance to asylum seekers and their families. **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Clinic.** In partnership with NIJC and law firm partners, ZNA volunteers assisted clients in preparing their DACA renewal applications seeking to maintain their status.

	Asylum Full Representation Cases. ZNA attorneys have taken on full representation asylum cases in partnership with law firms, helping clients navigate the application and hearing process.
Public Interest Law Initiative	**Illinois Free Legal Answers Online.** Illinois Free Legal Answers is a secure website where low-income Illinoisans can ask a lawyer for help with a civil legal issue. ZNA volunteer lawyers log onto the site and answer questions waiting in the queue. It is a virtual walk-in legal clinic. A project of the American Bar Association, Free Legal Answers was created to increase access to advice and information about non-criminal legal matters for those who cannot afford legal assistance. **Sponsorship of Public Interest Law Initiative Summer Interns.** ZNA has sponsored a summer intern through PILI's Internship Program each year since 2021. PILI's Law Student Internship Program connects law students with legal aid agencies in Illinois. Interns work 400 hours full-time during the summer, with PILI ensuring quality supervision by experienced attorneys and providing extra educational, networking and mentoring opportunities. Through this program, ZNA helps legal service agencies increase their impact while also helping law students develop their legal skills and strengthen their commitment to public interest law and service.
Chicago Bar Foundation	**Chicago Bar Foundation's Corporate Leadership Circle.** ZNA has signed on to the CBF Corporate Leadership Circle, contributing time to strategically advance pro bono and equal access to justice in Illinois. The CBF Leadership Circle and its accompanying statement of principles underscore the critical role that corporations and their legal departments play in ensuring equal access to justice in the Chicago area. The leadership circle is intended to embody best practices for corporate legal departments on pro bono, giving, and related issues.
Lessons Learned	
Utilize available technology to encourage involvement and improve delivery of services	By utilizing the Zurich database to track pro bono efforts, ZNA is able to analyze progress and manage pro bono opportunities for its staff members.
Legal departments can be company leaders with regard to service	While ZNA has a companywide dedication to service, the ZNA Corporate Law Department's pro bono program has paved the way for other departments to get involved in their communities across the U.S.

Leadership from the top to support our communities	Chief Legal Officer Laura Lazarczyk started the formal pro bono program at ZNA and fully supports employees doing pro bono work on company time and is committed to the communities where we live and work to make a lasting impact.

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