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Contact: Suzanne Takeuchi
202.737.4700 x2870
stakeuchi@dcbar.org

D.C. Lawyers Record One Million Hours of Pro Bono Service

Washington, D.C. – The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center has released its new [Pro Bono Initiative Report](#) showing that 65 law firms across the District rose to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, devoting a record-breaking 1,049,139 hours of pro bono work in 2020 to assist D.C. residents in need of legal help.

Each year the Pro Bono Center surveys participants of the Pro Bono Initiative, where signatory firms pledge to meet minimum benchmarks for pro bono legal services. In 2020, 9,328 attorneys engaged in pro bono work, with each attorney contributing an average of 91 pro bono hours.

“D.C. lawyers have increased their commitment to their neighbors in need during the pandemic, which has hit communities of color particularly hard. The economic effects of COVID-19 only worsen existing inequalities,” said Darryl Maxwell, acting executive director of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center. “We hope D.C. attorneys continue this trend of pro bono service, especially as the city and the courts prepare to confront the [coming eviction crisis](#).”

According to the report, 39 firms engaged in innovative pro bono projects, including a racial justice task force, a legal clinic staffed by female attorneys as a safe space for women veterans, and unemployment benefits counseling for workers displaced during the pandemic.

Approximately 52 percent of all pro bono time recorded in 2020 under the initiative was devoted to assisting D.C. residents of limited means or the organizations that serve them.

“Given that the pandemic had significant economic ramifications for law firms across the country, the consistency of the signatory firms’ pro bono efforts this past year was not guaranteed. While more is still needed, the signatory firms’ recognition that the pandemic demanded that their pro bono efforts continue unabated is to be commended,” the report said.

[Read the full report here.](#)

About the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center

The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the largest provider of pro bono legal services in the District. Each year, the Center recruits, trains, and mobilizes attorney volunteers to serve more than 20,000 D.C. residents living in poverty, small businesses, and community-based nonprofits. Learn more at www.dcbar.org/pro-bono