

## **Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Coordinators**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

1. *Who are the Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Coordinators?*

The Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Coordinators (“CCPBC”) is a group of in-house counsel that supports pro bono work by in-house counsel. CCPBC serves as a resource for corporate counsel to provide legal services in the public interest and to the underprivileged, and for companies to establish or expand in-house counsel pro bono programs and efforts.

2. *What is “pro bono” work?*

Pro bono service may include the rendering of professional legal services to persons in the public interest, without the expectation of compensation, such as by rendering direct legal services to persons with low income and/or to organizations that address the needs of such persons; legal services designed to simplify the legal process or increase the availability and quality of legal services; legal services that protect the rights of individuals or a significant segment of the public that would not otherwise secure quality legal representation; legal services to persons or groups that have been harmed by or are providing assistance to persons or groups harmed by a natural disaster or public emergency; public interest work such as providing legal counsel to not-for-profit and community groups; and legal services provided to charitable, religious, civic, governmental, artistic or cultural, educational, professional, or similar organizations. Companies may have their own policies and protocols relating to in-house counsel pro bono work, including as to definitions of such work, and lawyers and other legal staff are encouraged to consult their respective companies’ policies in this regard and as to other aspects of pro bono representations before undertaking a pro bono project.

3. *How can I become involved with CCPBC?*

If you’re employed by a company legal department, you can regularly visit the CCPBC web-site, located at <http://www.probono.net/corporatecounsel>, to learn about a wide range of matters relating to pro bono work, such as upcoming training seminars, model forms, and other resources. You also can become a member of CCPBC by clicking the "Become a Member" link on the lefthand side of the screen and completing the brief form. This will allow you to gain access to certain restricted areas of CCPBC's site, such as model forms and other resources in CCPBC's Library. In addition, you'll receive periodic mailings via email, which will help keep you informed about pro bono opportunities, upcoming training seminars, links to relevant articles, and the like. In-house lawyers, as well as legal assistants, secretaries, and other personnel employed by company legal departments, are all eligible to become CCPBC members.

If you're the pro bono coordinator for your company, you can also join the pro bono coordinators' listserv for CCPBC. This listserv is designed to further communication amongst in-house counsel who are functioning as their companies’ pro bono coordinators. The coordinator needn’t have a specific title of “pro bono coordinator” or “chair of the company’s pro bono committee” to join this listserv, but should be a person who has been designated by his/her company to coordinate pro bono initiatives. The company’s designee can participate in this listserv to liaise with other companies’ pro bono coordinators to serve as a resource and to assist in the formation and implementation of company pro bono programs and initiatives. Only one

person from each company may participate in the coordinators' listserv. To join this listserv, visit CCPBC's site, located at <http://www.probono.net/corporatecounsel>, and complete the brief form by accessing the "Join this Area if You are Your Company's Pro Bono Coordinator" link on the lefthand side of your screen.

4. *I work at a company legal department, but I'm not a lawyer. May I still participate in CCPBC?*

If you work at an in-house legal department, you may join the CCPBC listservs even if you're not an attorney. Simply indicate your status (e.g., legal assistant, secretary) in the designated spot on the form to complete.

5. *How do I undertake a pro bono project that is of interest?*

A good place to start is by visiting CCPBC's site, located at <http://www.probono.net/corporatecounsel>, where information may be found about various not-for-profit legal services providers that refer matters and even partner or co-counsel with in-house counsel on pro bono projects. We recommend that you investigate the nature of the matter to confirm that you have no actual or positional conflict, to assess whether you have the necessary expertise to assume responsibility for the matter, to confirm that you have adequate time to devote to the matter, and to otherwise evaluate the suitability of the matter. In addition, we encourage you to coordinate internally at your company to confirm that you have satisfied whatever protocols and procedures your company requires. (For example, some companies may ask you to arrange for insurance coverage or secure prior managerial approval.) CCPBC does not endorse any pro bono opportunity posted on its site, but rather serves to help identify possible projects that you may investigate.

6. *I have some model forms or other materials that I think others might find helpful. To whom should I send them?*

Neither Library resources nor other content posted on CCPBC's web-site constitutes legal advice, but we very much appreciate the opportunity to augment and update content available to the coordinators. Please send materials for our review, cleared of all necessary permissions and in the format (e.g., Word, pdf) that you prefer to have the materials posted, to Barbara M. Knight (tel.: (212) 640-5949; e-mail: [Barbara.M.Knight@aexp.com](mailto:Barbara.M.Knight@aexp.com)). We look forward to considering the materials.

7. *As an in-house lawyer, I'm quite busy, but I'd like to take on a project. How much time should I expect to spend on a pro bono project?*

The amount of time you'll need to spend on a pro bono project varies, of course, with each project. But there are lots of options for busy lawyers and other legal professionals, and we encourage you to visit the CCPBC site regularly to explore possibilities. You also could consult with your company's pro bono coordinator, whom CCPBC will be apprising about possibilities. Note that some projects seek assistance only for a designated time period to be mutually agreed, such as brief telephonic consultation. For longer term projects, you might consider partnering with other lawyers at your company, with lawyers from other companies, and or with outside counsel. Such a "pod" approach can facilitate teamwork on both substantive matters and scheduling issues.

8. *Do I need to obtain malpractice insurance before undertaking a pro bono project?*

Before undertaking a pro bono project, we recommend that you contact your company's risk management department to ascertain the existence and scope of

malpractice insurance coverage for pro bono matters undertaken by in-house counsel. In the event such coverage does not exist, your company might consider acquiring such coverage, perhaps by inquiring about a rider to its policy from its existing insurer. Participation in pro bono projects by legal support personnel, such as by legal assistants, also deserves review when such participation is not in conjunction with an ongoing project performed by a company lawyer, because such participation may implicate the applicability of insurance coverage unless there is adequate supervision by an attorney.

Sometimes when a lawyer undertakes a pro bono representation through a legal services not-for-profit, the referring not-for-profit entity has applicable coverage. It is helpful to inquire about the existence of such coverage when you are exploring a project with such a provider. Even when you are automatically eligible for such coverage, it's possible that you'll need to complete a form or may wish to confirm the coverage in writing. When coverage exists through a not-for-profit referring entity and the company also has applicable coverage, it is important to clarify at the outset which policy is the primary and which is the excess coverage.

9. *I just concluded a pro bono representation; what should I do as I begin to explore new projects?*

We would appreciate hearing from you on the corporate counsel listserv. Sharing aspects of your experience can help inspire others to take on a project, seek your guidance about a related issue, or invite you to partner on a new project. It's also a helpful way for in-house counsel to learn about the kind of connection you may have made with a not-for-profit entity that may be in need of future pro bono support or that assists another entity with its services or compliance needs.

10. *Who organized and spearheads CCPBC?*

CCPBC was organized and is run by an Executive Committee, comprised of:

Rebecca J. Behr  
Senior Vice President and Associate General Counsel  
Citigroup, Inc.

Carol Bockner  
Director of Pro Bono Initiatives  
City Bar Justice Center

Kwanza R. Butler  
Director, Public Service Network  
City Bar Justice Center

David E. McCraw  
Senior Counsel  
The New York Times Company

Jean A. O'Hare  
Senior Corporate Counsel and Pro Bono Counsel  
Pfizer Inc

Bret I. Parker  
Chief Trademark & Copyright Counsel and  
Assistant General Counsel  
Wyeth

Madeleine Schachter (Chair)  
Vice President and Deputy General Counsel  
Hachette Book Group USA, Inc.

Wanji J. Walcott  
Group Counsel  
American Express Travel Related Services Company, Inc

Bonnie L. Yeomans  
Assistant General Counsel  
CA, Inc.