

# **Pro Bono** **Legal Service**



## DEBEVOISE'S COMMITMENT TO PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICE

Debevoise lawyers have been dedicated to public service since our firm was founded in 1931. Pro bono legal service is a fundamental part of who we are and is critically important to those whom we assist.

Says Michael Blair, Debevoise Presiding Partner, “A strong commitment to pro bono work is a long-standing tradition at Debevoise and is deeply rooted in our firm culture. Our lawyers and staff pride themselves on providing the highest quality legal services to all of our clients, billable and non-billable alike. Pro bono work at Debevoise not only satisfies our ethical obligation to help those in need, but is part of what makes our lawyers strong leaders in our practices and in our communities.”

Others have taken note of our deep and long-standing commitment, as we are consistently ranked among the top law firms for pro bono work. We are regularly among the top firms in *The American Lawyer*'s annual pro bono survey and *The American Lawyer*'s “A-List,” which is based in part on commitment to pro bono legal service. Debevoise placed No. 1 overall in *The American Lawyer*'s “10-Year A-List,” a ranking of the law firms who have earned the highest cumulative score on the A-List since its inception in 2003.

Debevoise is a charter signatory to the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge™, and has agreed to commit at least 5% of our annual billed time to pro bono matters, as well as a signatory to the New York City Bar Statement of Pro Bono Principles. Our pro bono work ranges from landmark international and national disputes to representing low-income individuals in the communities in which we live and practice, and we take on a large number of pro bono matters each year.

Debevoise lawyers obtain pro bono work from a variety of sources. Frequently, pro bono matters are referred to Debevoise by the legal service organizations with which the firm has long-

standing relationships, including Legal Services NYC, Human Rights First, HerJustice, Start Small Think Big, The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice and LawWorks. Debevoise is also a supporting member of Pro Bono Deutschland e.V. Other pro bono projects come from proposals by our lawyers, often related to interests that they pursue outside of the firm.

Summer associates participate in a wide variety of pro bono matters. Opportunities include corporate projects for not-for-profit organizations, stand-up experience in family law and disability matters, research and writing on international human rights issues, civil rights litigation, and representations of low-income individuals.

We expect our lawyers to participate in pro bono activities throughout their careers, and we fully support our lawyers who do pro bono work regardless of whether it is within or outside of their particular practice areas. Our pro bono matters are handled like all other matters, with the dedication of all available firm resources needed for the representations.

We view pro bono work as an important element of our lawyers' professional development and work with lawyers to select pro bono matters that will help them to develop legal skills and substantive knowledge.

## CORPORATE PRO BONO

Our corporate lawyers provide a wide range of pro bono legal services. We assist not-for-profit organizations in formation, corporate governance, business operations and employee benefits matters. We have advised organizations on mergers and real estate transactions and, when necessary, on how to wind down their operations and file for bankruptcy. We also counsel nongovernmental organizations operating internationally.

Corporate lawyers advise low-income entrepreneurs on selecting the right corporate form for their businesses, assist in drafting



In 2015, Debevoise attorneys in the U.S. performed 58,628 hours of pro bono work, averaging 118 hours per attorney in the firm’s U.S. offices.

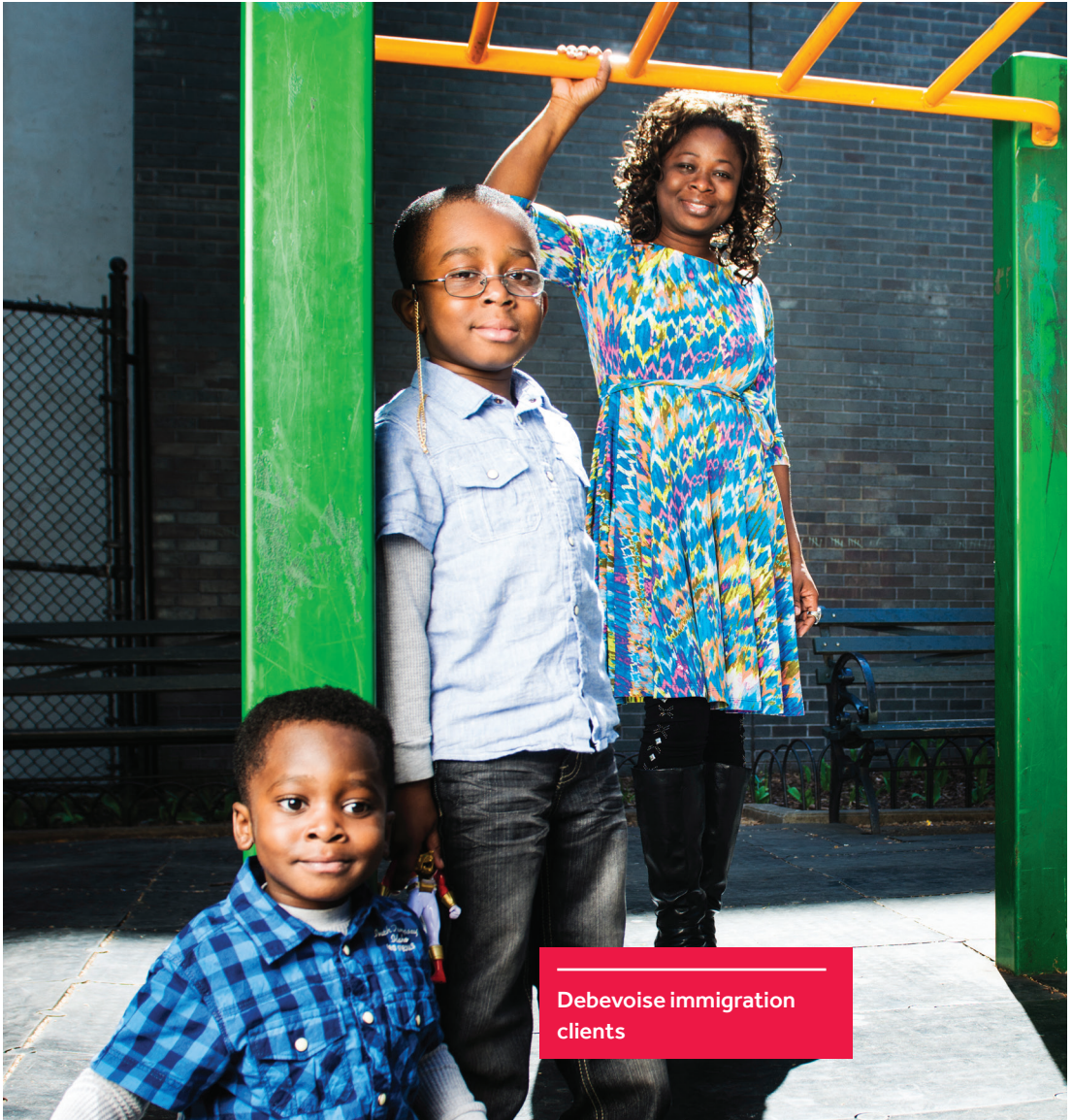


In 2015, 75 percent of Debevoise summer associates participated in pro bono matters.



In 2015, 73 percent of partners and 94 percent of associates in the firm’s U.S. offices performed pro bono work, and 59 percent of all attorneys performed at least 20 hours of pro bono work.





#### Debevoise immigration clients

governance documents and contracts, and review leases and negotiate with landlords. Debevoise lawyers also assist low-income New York residents in seeking relief from overwhelming student debt.

When appropriate, we provide pro bono services to impact investment vehicles, benefit corporations, and social enterprise entities, including organizations providing banking and financial services to underserved communities.

#### LITIGATION PRO BONO

Debevoise litigators engage in a full range of pro bono activity, from representations of individuals who cannot afford legal counsel to high-impact litigation that is changing the law and the status of low-income or marginalized communities across the country and across the globe.

We represent clients, file amici briefs, conduct research and issue reports on matters of civil and human rights, education equality, international human rights, the death penalty, criminal defense, immigration and asylum, and employment and wage and hour violations, among other issues.

#### TAX PRO BONO

Lawyers in the Tax Department provide advice on a range of issues to not-for-profit organizations and to low-income entrepreneurs. We also represent low-income litigants in Tax Court and provide advice through tax clinics.

#### CROSS-DEPARTMENT PRO BONO

Some of our most successful pro bono efforts are not linked to a particular department and give lawyers the opportunity to work with colleagues across practice areas. Lawyers from







all departments work together on asylum applications, clemency petitions, legal clinics, and name change petitions.

**BROAD PARTNERSHIPS**

The firm has ongoing relationships with a wide variety of legal services organizations, including those listed below.

- Access to Justice Foundation
- Advocates for Children
- Bronx Defenders
- Center for Constitutional Rights
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- City Bar Justice Center
- Free Representation Unit
- Her Justice
- Human Rights First
- Immigration Equality
- iProBono
- Lambda Legal
- LawWorks
- Lawyers Alliance for New York
- Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
- The Legal Aid Society
- Legal Services NYC
- National Pro Bono Centre
- New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
- Office of the Appellate Defender
- PILnet
- Pro Bono in the London Muslim Community
- Sanctuary for Families
- Scenic Hudson
- Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund
- Urban Justice Center
- Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts
- Volunteers of Legal Services



  
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Photo Courtesy of Start Small Think Big

**In 2015, Debevoise attorneys represented more than 20 microentrepreneurs in New York City and conducted small business legal clinics in the Bronx.**

“As a summer associate, I was asked to join a pro bono matter because someone saw that I had worked with this organization on my resume in the past, and I started working with this client as a summer associate, and I still call this organization a client today.”

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