

Debevoise  
& Plimpton

# Pro Bono Legal Service



## The Nature Conservancy



The Nature Conservancy, a Debevoise pro bono client for many years, is tackling some of the toughest problems facing people and nature today. We advise The Conservancy on a range of corporate, investment and tax matters in support of their efforts to use local experience, science, real-world solutions and partnerships to influence global decision-making and advance conservation and nature diversity in over 70 countries.



## 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.

Our partners, counsel, associates, summer associates and other professionals in the United States provided over 58,000 hours of free legal services in 2018. By providing direct representation and partnering with human rights, legal reform and other organizations, Debevoise helps underserved organizations, communities, individuals in need, nonprofits and small businesses.

Says Michael Blair, Debevoise's 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, commercial and pro bono 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 is a charter signatory to the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge™, agreeing 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.

We take on many new pro bono matters every year and 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.

Debevoise lawyers obtain pro bono work from a variety of sources. Frequently, pro bono matters are referred to us by legal service organizations with which the firm has long-standing relationships, including The Legal Aid Society, Sanctuary for Families, Human Rights First, Immigration Equality, and Start Small Think Big. Other pro bono projects come from our lawyers, who are inspired by a cause. Our lawyers make their matters count by making them their own, and our clients notice the difference.

Our lawyers participate in pro bono activities throughout their careers, and we fully support our lawyers' 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.

We staff summer associates on ongoing pro bono projects and provide special opportunities for summer associates to take primary responsibility for certain matters.

58,000+

Hours of  
Pro Bono Work

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In 2018, Debevoise attorneys in the United States performed over 58,000 hours of pro bono work, averaging 108 hours per attorney in the firm's U.S. offices.

96%

Summer  
Associates

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In 2018, 96% of Debevoise summer associates worked on pro bono matters.

78%

Associates

67%

All attorneys

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In 2018, 78% of associates and 67% of all attorneys in the firm's U.S. offices performed at least 20 hours of pro bono work.

800+

Pro Bono Matters

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In 2018, Debevoise attorneys worked on more than 800 pro bono matters.

## Corporate Pro Bono

Our corporate lawyers provide a wide range of pro bono legal services. We assist not-for-profit organizations in entity 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 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 enterprises, including organizations seeking to provide 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 around the globe.

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

## 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.

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

## Cross-Department Pro Bono

Some of our most successful pro bono efforts are not tied to a particular department and give lawyers the opportunity to work with colleagues from other practice areas. Lawyers from all departments work together on asylum applications, clemency and parole petitions, and naturalization applications.


## 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  
Start Small Think Big  
Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Urban Justice Center  
Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts  
Volunteers of Legal Services





# Pro Bono Awards and Recognition

## Immigration Equality

Immigration Equality named Debevoise a pro bono honoree at their annual Safe Haven Awards and noted that this year's honorees "have demonstrated exemplary support for Immigration Equality and our clients. They have gone above and beyond to ensure LGBTQ and HIV-positive immigrants are empowered and protected."

We have been representing clients referred by Immigration Equality since 2004. In that time, more than 100 Debevoise lawyers and staff have had the privilege of helping their clients find sanctuary in the United States after facing danger and oppression in their home countries.

## Getting Out and Staying Out

Getting Out and Staying Out (GOSO), named Debevoise its "Corporate Partner of the Year." GOSO is regarded as one of the most effective reentry programs in NYC helping formerly and currently incarcerated young men gain work experience, education and life skills. Volunteers from Debevoise have attended monthly interview skills workshops, offering hands-on support preparing GOSO clients for entrance into the workforce. Specifically, volunteers participate in mock interviews, providing each GOSO client with personalized feedback and tips.

In 2018, we were also recognized by the following partner organizations and clients for our commitment to providing access to justice and the breadth of our pro bono practice:

- **The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice.** Recognition at the Celebration of Pro Bono Excellence for two crucial submissions to the International Criminal Court.
- **The International Bar Association.** Group Member Award for outstanding pro bono contributions and dedication to the organization's eyeWitness project.
- **The Legal Aid Society.** Pro Bono Publico Award for ensuring equal access to justice through immigration work.
- **Stupid Cancer.** Named Corporate Honoree for pro bono work supporting the organization and its mission to empower, support and improve health outcomes for the young adult cancer community.
- **Washington Lawyers' Committee.** Outstanding Achievement Award for successful pro bono representation of our client, an asylee from El Salvador, in her wrongful termination suit.
- **WNYC.** Pro Bono Leadership Award in recognition of more than 15 years of extraordinary advice and legal service.

To learn more about our firm and what we're passionate about follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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