

Debevoise  
& Plimpton

**Pro Bono**  
Legal Service



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## **Environmental Justice**

Scenic Hudson, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Hudson River and Hudson River Valley of New York State, is a longtime pro bono client of the firm. We represent the organization with respect to internal governance questions, program support and corporate transactions designed to further its mission of maintaining the natural beauty around the Hudson River.



# 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'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 a large number of pro bono matters each 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 Legal Services NYC, Human Rights First, Her Justice, 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 our lawyers, often related to their interests outside of the firm.

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.

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



2017



Averaging 102 hours per attorney in the firm's U.S. offices.

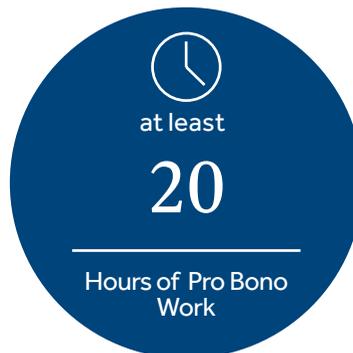
2017



Participated in pro bono matters.



Performed pro bono work in the firm's U.S. offices.



67 percent of attorneys in our U.S. offices performed at least 20 hours of pro bono work.

“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.”



## 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.

## 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 regardless of practice area. Lawyers from all departments work together on asylum applications, clemency petitions 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  
 Getting Out and Staying Out  
 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  
 Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund  
 Urban Justice Center  
 Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts  
 Volunteers of Legal Services



# 42

In 2017, Debevoise attorneys represented more than 42 micro-entrepreneurs in New York City.



## Getting Out and Staying Out

### Corporate Partner of the Year

In 2018, Debevoise received Getting Out and Staying Out's Corporate Partner of the Year award for commitment to volunteerism and pro bono work supporting GOSO's mission to successfully reenter formerly incarcerated young men into the workforce, school and daily life.

## Immigration Equality

### Safe Haven Awards

Debevoise was recognized at Immigration Equality's 2018 Safe Haven Awards for the firm's dedication to upholding the organization's mission to help LGBTQ+ immigrants find freedom and safety in the United States.

## Her Justice

### 2018 Law Firm Award

In recognition of Debevoise's long-standing commitment to providing pro bono service for survivors of domestic violence, the firm has received the 2018 Law Firm Award from Her Justice, which provides free legal help to women living in poverty in New York City.

## Sanctuary for Families

### Above & Beyond Pro Bono Achievement Award

In 2017, Debevoise received an "Above & Beyond Pro Bono Achievement Award" from Sanctuary for Families, an organization dedicated to the safety, healing and self-determination of victims of domestic violence and related forms of gender violence.

## Legal Aid Society

### 2017 Pro Bono Publico Award

Debevoise received the 2017 Pro Bono Publico Award for outstanding service to the Legal Aid Society.

## British Legal Awards

In 2017, Debevoise was recognized as "highly commended" in the CSR/Diversity Initiative of the Year. The Debevoise team worked alongside the Center for Reproductive Rights to draw international attention to the unjust and harmful effects of El Salvador's absolute ban on abortion in all circumstances.

## Law Works—London

### 2017 Law Works Pro Bono Award

Debevoise received the 2017 Law Works Pro Bono Award for the Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership (alongside the Haringey Law Centre). The awards judges commended Debevoise for being "both inventive and resilient" and for providing "a high quality much-needed service for local people."

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

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