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ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Pro Bono Partnership: A Trusted Resource for Discrete and Meaningful Transactional Pro Bono Opportunities

By LISA BRODER

For nearly three decades, Pro Bono Partnership has made it simple, rewarding, and impactful for attorneys to provide quality transactional pro bono legal services to local nonprofit organizations. In 2025, Pro Bono Partnership staff, volunteers, and supporters assisted nearly 1,000 nonprofit clients on more than 2,200 legal matters, contributing over $32 million in value to nonprofits in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York.

Supporting Nonprofits That Strengthen Communities

Pro Bono Partnership, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, serves charitable organizations that address critical community needs. Our clients feed the hungry, house the homeless, protect the civil rights of individuals, promote the arts, protect the environment, and provide essential programs to, among others, children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, the unemployed, survivors of domestic or sexual abuse, immigrants, and veterans.

Like for-profit companies, nonprofits face complex business legal issues, but many lack the resources to obtain legal counsel without diverting funds from their mission and may not recognize when legal guidance is needed. By connecting these organizations with skilled volunteer attorneys, we help nonprofits navigate legal challenges, reduce risk, and operate more effectively.

Meaningful, Manageable Pro Bono Work Designed for Busy Attorneys

Our volunteers are matched with projects that align with their expertise so that they can focus on what they do best. There is no substantive training required. Opportunities include contracts, corporate governance, employment law, real estate, intellectual property, privacy and HIPAA compliance, tax-exempt and nonprofit matters, mergers, dissolutions, and other transactional legal projects. Many engagements can be completed in a few hours yet deliver lasting value to organizations.

Our volunteer opportunities are tailored to suit the talents and needs of busy attorneys.

Efficient: Matters are screened, discrete, manageable, and generally not time-sensitive

Flexible: Work can be completed remotely

Support: Model documents and other resources are available

Expertise: A Pro Bono Partnership staff attorney experienced in nonprofit law oversees every matter

Teamwork: When appropriate, we can pair counsel to work together

Peace of Mind: We provide liability insurance coverage for all volunteer attorneys

Earn MCLE Credit While Volunteering with Pro Bono Partnership

Connecticut now allows attorneys to earn minimum continuing legal education (MCLE) credit for qualifying pro bono service through organizations such as Pro Bono Partnership. Our volunteers may receive one hour of MCLE credit for every three hours of pro bono legal work performed, up to a maximum of six MCLE credit hours per calendar year.

Image credit: simpson33 | Getty Images

Image credit: Art Wager | Getty Images

Pro Bono Civil Litigators Protect Tenants

By GIOVANNA SHAY

When McCarter & English attorneys Snigdha Mamillapalli and Jane Warren agreed to take on a housing conditions case pro bono from Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA) in fall 2025, the rat infestation in the client's Hartford apartment was so bad that the young mother and her children had taken refuge in their car. The McCarter team litigated the case for about nine months while the City of Hartford continued to cite the landlord for the poor conditions. McCarter succeeded in defeating an attempt by the landlord to exclude evidence of damage to the tenant's personal property. Ultimately, the case settled and the client was overjoyed.

Hartford tenants face rising housing costs and conditions problems, often involving out-of-state landlords. This year the *Hartford Courant* reported that Hartford has one of the state's highest rates of tenant displacement by fire, in part due to conditions issues that are not addressed by landlords, such as faulty wiring. See Angela Eichhorst & Mariana Navarette Villegas, Hartford Courant, *Thousands Displaced by Fires in One CT City in Less Than 6 Years*, May 31, 2026.

Connecticut's housing conditions statute, Section 47a-14h, provides an important tool to address poor conditions, permitting tenants to file streamlined actions and pay their rent into court while they mediate and/or seek court orders to improve conditions. The rent paid into court can then be disbursed pursuant to the parties' agreement or court's order.

Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA) attorneys advise tenants and handle payment into court actions for Hartford tenants with the support of a grant from the City of Hartford. As part of its Hartford conditions initiative, GHLA provides training and support to civil litigators from McCarter & English, who have accepted conditions cases pro bono. These cases are a good fit for civil litigators, who can use their skills in discovery and mediation to improve housing conditions and protect tenants.

McCarter & English partner Attorney Jane Warren says of the pro bono experience: "It was so gratifying on two fronts: First, to see this client's life transformed from the despair of being homeless for months because her apartment was unlivable due to the rat infestation and so many other hazards that the landlord had ignored despite repeated pleas. And second, to watch our associate blossom while learning to interact compassionately with our client, and at the same time, sternly and effectively with opposing counsel; writing compelling briefs; and persuasively arguing in court. Her win on the Motion in Limine resulted in the first offer of settlement, which she then negotiated upwards almost 40%, thereby helping our client start a new chapter."

Law firms interested in similar training in payment into court actions are welcome to contact Litigation & Advocacy Director Giovanna Shay at Greater Hartford Legal Aid at 860-541-5061 or gshay@ghla.org. ■

Giovanna Shay is the Litigation & Advocacy Director at Greater Hartford Legal Aid.

How to Get Involved and Help Expand Access to Transactional Pro Bono Services

- Apply to become a volunteer attorney by completing our online form: probonopartner.org/attorneys volunteers/become-a-volunteer-attorney. Signing up does not obligate you to volunteer; it enables you to receive our bimonthly email of volunteer opportunities.
- View the current list of Volunteer Opportunities on our wesite: probonopartner.org/attorneys-volunteers/volunteer-opportunities. Filter by location, practice area, and organization type to find opportunities that match individual interests and expertise.
- Follow us on social media.
- Learn more about Pro Bono Partnership at probonopartner.org/attorneys-volunteers/become-a-volunteer-attorney ■

Lisa Broder is the Pro Bono Manager at Pro Bono Partnership, Inc. As Pro Bono Manager, Lisa's primary areas of focus are cultivating and managing Pro Bono Partnership's relationships with corporations and law firms and recruiting volunteer attorneys to assist the Partnership's nonprofit clients. She also coordinates volunteer recognition and develops strategies to improve the Partnership's pro bono program.