

Chief Justice's Invitation to Participate in Pro Bono Commitment and Annual Recognition of the Commitment's Achievement

I invite your firm or in-house practice group to participate in the Colorado Supreme Court's pro bono legal services recognition program. Participation in this program includes the following two-part commitment.

Pro Bono Commitment, Colorado Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1

1. We commit to an annual goal of performing 50 hours of pro bono legal service by each Colorado licensed attorney of our firm, pro-rated for part-time attorneys, primarily for indigent persons and/or organizations serving indigent persons.
2. We commit to valuing at least 50 hours of such pro bono service per year by each Colorado licensed attorney of our firm per year for all purposes of attorney evaluation, advancement, and compensation in our firm as the firm would value compensated client representation.

I also invite you to inform the court whether your firm or in-house counsel group would like to be recognized as having fulfilled this commitment during the previous calendar year.

The court will recognize on an annual basis beginning in 2007 those law firms and solo practitioners who voluntarily advise the court by February 15th each year that their Colorado licensed attorneys, on average, during the previous calendar year, performed 50 hours of pro bono legal service, primarily for indigent persons or organizations serving indigent persons.

Please inform me by letter, or Justice Hobbs by e mail, that your firm would like to make the pro bono commitment and/or be recognized for achieving the goal of the commitment on average for the previous year. We will hold a reception at the court and a press release to recognize those firms who achieved the goal of the commitment on average during the preceding calendar year.
gregory.hobbs@judicial.state.co.us.

Chief Justice Mary J. Mullarkey

Explanation of Pro Bono Recognition Program

Commitment

The Colorado Supreme Court recognizes on its web page and through *The Colorado Lawyer* those law firms, solo practitioners, and in house counsel groups who inform the court of their voluntary commitment to achieving the goal of 50 hours of pro bono legal services per year by Colorado licensed attorneys primarily for indigent persons and/or organizations that serve indigent persons, pro-rated for part time attorneys. This commitment includes valuing at least 50 pro bono hours per year per attorney for all purposes of attorney evaluation, advancement, and compensation as the firm would value compensated client representation. This does not mean that a pro bono hour must necessarily be counted as a billable hour; rather, that the firm embraces performance of pro bono legal services as a core value and provides for a realistic billable hour expectation that encourages the performance of pro bono legal services as well. The recommended Model Pro Bono Policy the court has included in the R.P.C. 6.1 Comment is intended to serve as a guide for consideration by the firm in formulating its policies.

Annual Achievement of Commitment

The Colorado Supreme Court also recognizes annually those law firms, solo practitioners, and in house counsel groups who inform the court by February 15 that they achieved the Commitment's goal during the previous calendar year averaged among the Colorado licensed attorneys within the organization, pro-rated for part time attorneys.

What “Primarily” and “Indigent Persons” Mean

For purposes of the recognition program, “primarily” is the equivalent of a “substantial majority” under R.P.C. 6.1(a) of 50 hours of legal services per year, without fee or expectation of fee, benefiting persons of limited means or organizations that serve persons of limited means. “Persons of limited means” are those persons who would qualify for waiver of court filing fees under Chief Justice Directive 98-01, as amended, were the matter a court case. This is only a reference means for identifying the persons to be benefited by the pro bono services. Transactional and/or court matters for such persons and/or organizations serving such persons are fully within the court’s recognition program.

“Primarily” does not mean “exclusively.” The 50 hours of pro bono service per Colorado licensed attorney per year can also include pro bono legal services described under R.P.C. 6.1(b), so long as a substantial majority of the 50 hours of services performed benefits persons of limited means or organizations that serve persons of limited means.

What Qualifies as Pro Bono Legal Services For Purposes of Commitment and Annual Achievement of Commitment

Pro Bono Services for purposes of the Commitment and Annual Recognition is defined in the R.P.C. 6.1 Comment, Recommended Pro Bono Policy for Colorado Licensed Attorneys and Law Firms, Section III, which addresses: A. Representation of Low Income Persons; B. Civil Rights and Public Rights Law; C. Representation of Charitable Organizations; D. Community Economic Development; E. Administration of Justice in the Court; F. Law-Related Education; and G. Mentoring of Law Students and Lawyers on Pro Bono Matters.

Who Determines

Each law firm, solo practitioner, or in house counsel exclusively determines whether it has made the Commitment and has performed the Annual Achievement warranting the Supreme Court’s recognition.