

## **WHAT DO U.S. LAW FIRMS SEE AS THE ADVANTAGES OF DOING PRO BONO WORK?**

First, pro bono helps in the recruitment and retention of good lawyers.

As firms have gotten larger it has become increasingly difficult to maintain collegiality. Pro bono offers an opportunity to collaborate, which gives lawyers special satisfaction and mutual pride. A satisfied lawyer has a better chance of being a good lawyer, and that sense of satisfaction will be reflected in the totality of the lawyer's work.

For associates pro bono offers the opportunity for accelerated professional development and a chance to vary their workload, achieve greater autonomy and work in new forums. They are able to work with a wider range of lawyers at the firm and may be able to more actively participate in the life of the firm through the pro bono committee. Pro bono can make a real difference in an associate's development at a firm. It gives them an opportunity to shine and to make an early reputation for both the quality of their work and their commitment to the practice of law.

Second, pro bono work provides good training experiences for associates and can often be more challenging than much of what a junior associate does at a firm.

Third, pro bono helps to address issues of declining morale and job satisfaction that lawyers may experience during their professional lives. The pressing social issues of the day do not come up frequently in large law firm practice. As a result, many lawyers find themselves less engaged in larger public matters. Pro bono addresses the need that many lawyers have to contribute to society. It has the potential to offer constructive engagement with pressing social issues.

Fourth, pro bono work is good for the standing of the legal profession and the legal system in the eyes of the general public. As commentators in the United States have noted, episodes of anti-lawyer feeling are generally about more than lawyers, and reflect people's responses to the legal system and the broader society in which it is set. To maintain public confidence in the integrity of the legal system and the practice of law, the profession must ensure meaningful access to justice. A fair and just legal system cannot exist if large numbers of the profession have no direct contact with the problems of the poor and disadvantaged.