Localized Resources for Promoting Pro Bono Opportunities

There are many different tools available for promoting pro bono opportunities. One of them is making connections with legal organizations that also service your area. Because children’s immigration cases are often long and complicated, having established relationships and an expansive network of potential pro bono attorneys can help with placing new or existing cases that arise.

This resource stems from lessons learned from CILA’s work with the American Bar Association’s (ABA) Commission on Immigration to identify practitioners across the country that might be interested in taking children’s pro bono cases from CILA’s Pro Bono Matters for Children Facing Deportation platform. We wanted to provide some tips for organizations interested in conducting a similar outreach project. Please contact CILA at probono@abacila.org if your organization would like additional details about CILA’s research project.

INFORMATION GATHERING

RESEARCH ONLINE POTENTIAL ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTACT AND TAILOR SEARCH STRATEGIES TO THE TYPE OF ORGANIZATION.

○ Law Firms: Law firms come in different sizes and specialties, with larger firms potentially having more resources available to assist with pro bono cases. National law firms also have multiple offices throughout the country that can vary in size and specialty. Third-party sites such as Vault, Chambers, and U.S. News can be used to find potential pro bono partners. These sites provide data on office size and rank law firms and their pro bono programs nationwide and regionally.
  ○ Pro bono counsel: Many big law firms have a pro bono program led by full time pro bono counsel, a pro bono partner, or attorneys on a pro bono committee. Most firm’s website have pro bono pages with information about their programs. Attorney bios provide contact information and may also identify who is in charge of pro bono.

○ Bar Associations: Most state bars encourage members to take pro bono cases. Many even post pro bono opportunities on their website. Cities or regions in larger states also often have bar
associations that encourage pro bono work, and some state bars maintain a list of these local organizations, such as this listing by the Texas State Bar.

- **Practice area:** Lawyers practicing in certain fields may be more interested in taking pro bono immigration cases. For children's immigration cases, consider focusing on immigration lawyers, family law lawyers, and litigators, especially those practicing at the trial level. Litigators may be more interested in cases that involve state court experience (such as those seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status) or proceedings in immigration court. Most state bars have an immigration section, and most cities have bar associations for trial lawyers.

- **Affinity Groups:** Some organizations promote pro bono opportunities or public service on their websites. Larger cities often have a young lawyers association that encourage pro bono work in some way. Other organizations for women lawyers, Hispanic bars, or Asian American bar associations may be good potential partners for immigration nonprofits.

- **Law Schools:** Law schools may be a source of volunteers if an organization has projects appropriate for students, such as research or drafting projects, or they may be able to take on cases themselves through their clinic programs. The ABA Center for Pro Bono maintains a list of law school pro bono programs that is organized by state. Clinic information is available on the school's website, as well as contact information for public interest career offices or immigration law student organizations that may be a starting point for trying to recruit law student volunteers.

**OUTREACH TO DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS**

**CONSIDER DIFFERENT WAYS TO PARTNER WITH ORGANIZATIONS AND DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE.**

Even if your organization does not have immediately available cases, building relationships can make it easier to place cases in the future. As firms, bar associations, and/or law schools learn more about volunteer opportunities they are likely to recommend additional partnerships in the future.

For many, the most daunting task may be reaching out to the organizations for the first time. Email can be a great starting point followed by calls with organizations that express interest. Other networking options may include attending in person or virtual meetings to present on the type of work being done and the impact of pro bono in general and at your organization. This may be a great time to also present on access to counsel issues and the difference representation can make in children's immigration cases.
In advance of any call, think through what pro bono opportunities are available, how does your organization partner on cases or in which ways are you hoping to expand partnerships at your organization, and are there ways to collaborate beyond taking on individual cases. Organizations may be interested in attending trainings or other events to learn more. They may also be interested in learning about how your program specifically works and what support, if any, is provided to pro bono attorneys working with your organization. Be prepared to explain how your organization’s pro bono program operates.

Perhaps the easiest way for organizations to get involved initially is by using their platform to share opportunities. Consider asking if an organization can post opportunities on its website, through social media, or if they have other ways to share them directly with employees or members. If your organization is on CILA’s platform, Pro Bono Matters for Children Facing Deportation, or another digital platform, online postings can link directly to opportunities to avoid having to create multiple entries for the same case. You may also want to read CILA’s resource, “CILA Q&A with Cheryl Zalenski: An Expert on Everything Pro Bono” to get more ideas on starting outreach with law firms and working with law students.

CONCLUSION

CILA hopes this resource on localized research and outreach projects helps non-profit organizations and pro bono programs initiate their own outreach to potential new partners in children's immigration cases. CILA also offers numerous written materials and presentation recordings on its website, which can be shared with current and potential pro bono attorneys to support their advocacy efforts on behalf of immigrant children.

Check out CILA's webpage on Creative Pro Bono Models for more ideas for pro bono programs. If your organization has a creative model for pro bono engagement or ideas and resources to support and train pro bono attorneys, please contact CILA at probono@abacila.org to share your experience.
APPENDIX: SAMPLE TABLES

These templates can be used as a starting point for formatting your tracking table during the information gathering and outreach processes. We have also included additional tips on the type of information to include or look for in your research.

Law Firms

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<tr>
<th>Law Firm</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Additional Contact(s)</th>
<th>Prior Connection</th>
<th>Initial Contact</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<td>*Begin with the firm’s pro bono page online. If that does not have contact info, look elsewhere on the website for any pro bono counsel, pro bono partners, members of any pro bono committee, or any attorneys who state in their bio that they oversee pro bono programs at the firm.</td>
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*Consider if you or anyone at your organization has a personal connection or prior work history related to a potential contact.

*Add details for other members of the pro bono team at the firm.

Bar Associations & Law Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Org Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Communication Log</th>
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<td>Name</td>
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*To help organize, note in the “Org Type” column if the org is a law school, national, statewide, regional, or local.

*Some organizations use Facebook as their primary website.

*Some organizations may provide a general inbox and not identify and specific contact person.

*For law schools, look for immigration clinics or other public service programs focused on immigration.

*For bar associations, consider their mission, their membership, the activities they sponsor, and if their website discusses pro bono or volunteering.