

PRO BONO FILE INTAKE: MANAGING PRO BONO

Deciding at the outset of a file that it will be a *pro bono* case involves a number of considerations ranging from “do I have time for this” to “how much will it cost”? Prior to accepting a *pro bono file*, it may be helpful to reflect on the following:

For lawyers individually:

- What is your personal *pro bono* target?
How many *pro bono* files do you currently have open?
Do you have room for more?
- Do you like the client?
Is the client reasonable?
What are the client’s motivations?
- Is the file interesting to you?
- Is the file a worthy cause?
Is the file something you are passionate about?
- Do you have the competency to do the work?
Will you have to invest a lot of outside time learning competencies?
- Do you have the necessary resources to do the work:
 - o Time?
 - o Disbursements?
- Will this file affect your other work and clients?
- Can the client pay for part of your services at a reduced rate?

For lawyers and firms:

- Is there support for *pro bono* work from the top management of the firm?
 - o Are mentors available for consultation and do other members of the firm demonstrate why *pro bono* and public service work are important to the firm?
 - o Does the firm have internal communication to support *pro bono* work?
 - o Are individuals active in the program recognized and celebrated internally?
 - o Is the success of the *pro bono* program recognized externally?
- Are *pro bono* files supported by the business rationale of the firm?
- Where does *pro bono* work fit – marketing, write-off?
- Is there an assessment mechanism in place for *pro bono* files?
- Are partnerships with available external entities used to enhance the firms *pro bono* program?