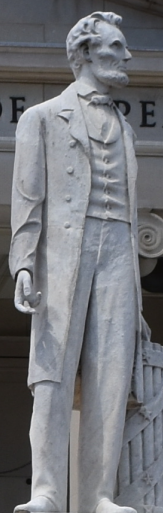




**Pro Bono  
Center**

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT OF APPEALS



LINCOLN

# D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative

## 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Report

An Overview of Pro Bono in D.C. | October 2021

# OUR MISSION

The Pro Bono Initiative's mission is to improve and expand the delivery of pro bono legal services in the District of Columbia. Signatory Firms agree to:



1.

Set a minimum pro bono goal for the firm's D.C. office (3% or 5% of total client billable hours, or alternatively, an average of 60 or 100 hours per lawyer each year).

2.

Manage to the pro bono goal.

3.

Sign up for, and/or develop, specific pro bono opportunities that help D.C.'s low-income population.

4.

Report the firm's D.C. office results to the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center.

The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative is a unique, aspirational pro bono standard for D.C. firms.

# OUR BACKGROUND



In 2001, 41 of the District's largest law firms joined the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative ("Initiative") and pledged to provide pro bono legal services at specified levels.\*



The number of Signatory Firms has varied over the years, due in part to mergers. Peak participation occurred in 2009 when all 64 Signatory Firms responded to the survey.



In April 2021, the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center circulated a survey to the (now) 69 Signatory Firms, gathered survey responses, and aggregated the statistics in this report. This reporting year, 65 Signatory Firms responded to the survey, at least in part.\*\* This response rate is six percent higher than last year, although it is not as high as pre-pandemic levels.



\*The Initiative's standards were created by, and are used with permission from, the Pro Bono Institute and modeled on the Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge®: <http://www.probonoinst.org/resources/what-counts/>. The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center thanks the Pro Bono Institute for permission to use and affiliate with the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge®. The Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® name is the property of the Pro Bono Institute and may not be further used or cited, in whole or in part, without prior written permission from the Pro Bono Institute.

\*\* Some firms have policies against providing information on their number of billable hours. As was the case in previous years, not all firms responded to all questions.

# CONTENTS

2020 Reporting Signatory Firms	Page 1
Executive Summary	Page 2
Highlights	Page 3
2020 Initiative Performance Data	Page 4
Total Pro Bono Hours	Page 4
Average Pro Bono Percentage	Page 5
Distribution of Pro Bono Percentages	Page 6
Attorney Participation	Page 7
Average Pro Bono Hours Per Attorney	Page 8
Service to D.C. Residents of Limited Means	Page 9
Innovative Pro Bono Activities	Page 10
Reflections	Page 13
Appendix: 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Survey Questions	Page 14

# 2020 Reporting Signatory Firms

The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center thanks the 65 Signatory Firms whose commitment to pro bono service is reflected in this Pro Bono Initiative Report.

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP  
Arent Fox PLLC  
Arnold & Porter  
Baker Botts LLP  
Ballard Spahr LLP  
Beveridge & Diamond  
Blank Rome LLP  
Bryan Cave LLP  
Buckley LLP  
Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP  
Cooley LLP  
Covington & Burling LLP  
Cozen O'Connor P.C.  
Crowell & Moring LLP  
Davis Wright Tremaine LLP  
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP  
Dechert LLP  
Dentons US LLP  
DLA Piper US LLP  
Duane Morris LLP  
Epstein Becker & Green  
Eversheds Sutherland US LLP  
Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath, LLP  
Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP  
Foley & Lardner LLP  
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP  
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP  
Goodwin Procter LLP  
Hogan Lovells US LLP  
Holland & Knight LLP  
Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP  
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP  
Jenner & Block LLP  
Jones Day  
K&L Gates LLP  
Kelley Drye & Warren LLP  
Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP  
King & Spalding LLP  
Latham & Watkins LLP  
Mayer Brown LLP  
McDermott, Will & Emery LLP  
Miller & Chevalier Chartered  
Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky & Popeo PC  
Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP  
Morrison & Foerster LLP  
Nixon Peabody LLP  
O'Melveny & Myers LLP  
Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP  
Perkins Coie LLP  
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP  
Reed Smith LLP  
Ropes & Gray LLP  
Shearman & Sterling LLP  
Sidley Austin LLP  
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP  
Squire Patton Boggs LLP  
Steptoe & Johnson LLP  
Venable LLP  
White & Case LLP  
Wiley Rein LLP  
Williams & Connolly LLP  
WilmerHale LLP  
Winston & Strawn LLP  
Zuckerman Spaeder LLP

# 2020 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Report examines the 2020 calendar year pro bono performance of reporting firms signing on to the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative. Signatory Firms have committed to contribute 3% or 5% (or alternatively, 60 or 100 hours per attorney) of their annual total paying client billable hours to pro bono activities and to report their performance to the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center each year.



## Overall Performance

Sixty-five Signatory Firms reported more than one million hours of pro bono service for the first time in 2020. The firms reported performing an aggregated total of 1,049,139 hours of pro bono work in 2020. This is an increase of an average of more than 86 pro bono hours per firm compared to the 2019 survey results.



## Attorney Participation

The percentage of attorneys engaged in pro bono decreased in 2020. The participation rate was 81% in 2020, down from 83% in 2019. The total number of attorneys participating in pro bono increased in 2020, though, from 9,091 to 9,328 attorneys.



## Pro Bono for D.C. Residents of Limited Means

In 2020, firms devoted approximately 546,762 pro bono hours (or 46% of total pro bono hours) to serving D.C. residents of limited means or organizations that serve them.



## Innovative Activities

39 firms reported engaging in one or more new pro bono activities in D.C., including:

- Participation in D.C. Represents (16);
- D.C. office-wide signature project (12);
- Rotation/fellowship/externship program (11);
- partnership with a corporate in-house legal department (11);
- other (8).

# 2020 Highlights

Reported Average Pro Bono Hours as a Percentage of Billable Hours\*\*\*

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**5.3%**

Attorney Participation in Pro Bono

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**81%**



Average Pro Bono Hours Per Attorney

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**91**

Pro Bono Percentage Devoted to D.C. Residents of Limited Means or Organizations That Serve Them\*\*\*\*

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**52%**

\*\*\* Only 55 of the 69 Signatory Firms reported this metric.

\*\*\*\* Only 56 Signatory Firms reported this metric.

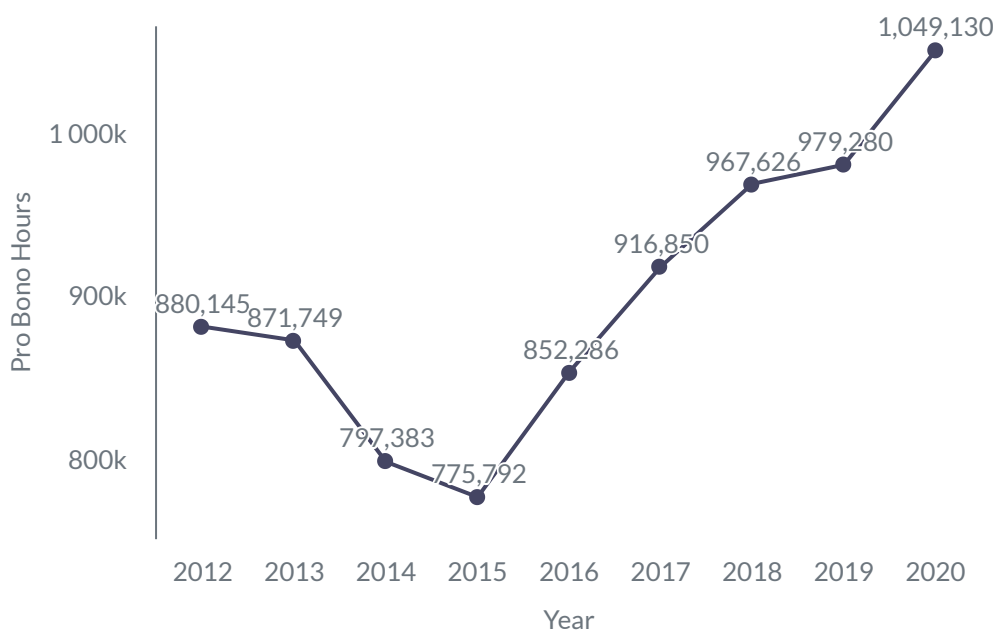
# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

## Total Pro Bono Hours

In 2020, 65 firms performed an aggregated total of **1,049,139 hours** of pro bono service—the highest total pro bono hours ever and 69,859 hours more than in 2019, when 61 firms reported an aggregated total of 979,280 pro bono hours.

Total pro bono hours **increased** in 2020.

Total Number of Pro Bono Hours by Year



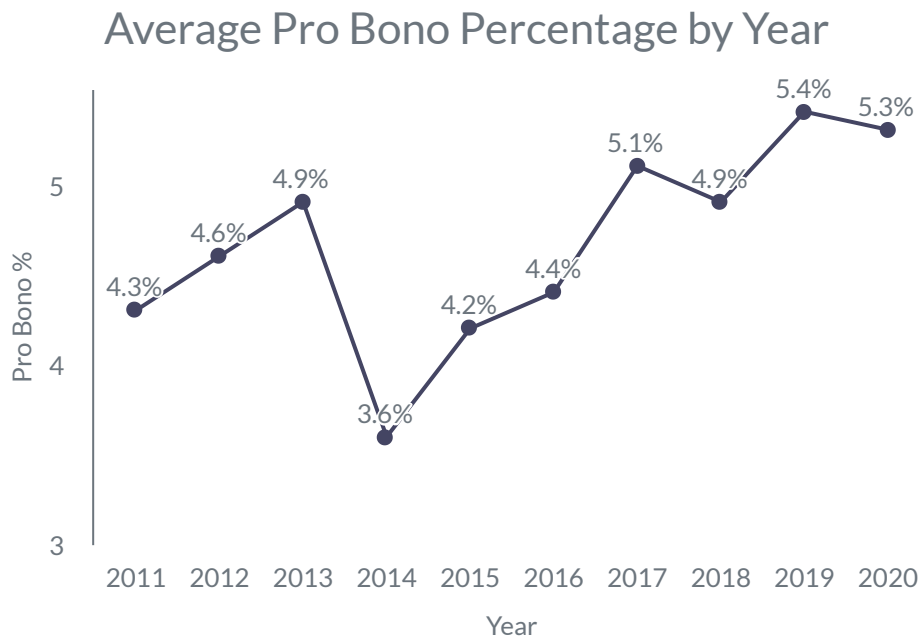
The 65 survey respondents reported a **9% increase** in pro bono service compared to the 61 survey respondents' 2019 results.

# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

## Average Pro Bono Percentage

In 2020, 55 of the 65 reporting Signatory Firms provided enough information to verify whether they achieved the 3% or 5% benchmarks set by the Initiative.

Viewed as a percentage of total paying client billable hours, the 55 Signatory Firms reporting this metric contributed an average of **5.3%** of their billable hours to pro bono work.



**24** reporting firms contributed between 3% and 4.9% of their billable hours to pro bono work in 2020—meeting or exceeding the first benchmark set by the Pro Bono Initiative. Fifteen reporting firms contributed between 3% and 4.9% of their billable hours to pro bono work in 2019.

**22** reporting firms contributed 5% or more of their billable hours to pro bono work in 2020—meeting or exceeding the highest benchmark set by the Pro Bono Initiative. Six of the firms contributed more than 10% of their billable time to pro bono work in 2020. In 2019, 21 reporting firms contributed 5% or more of their billable hours to pro bono work. Three of the firms contributed more than 10% of their billable time to pro bono work in 2019.

**9** reporting firms did not meet either benchmark in 2020, compared to 11 reporting firms in 2019.



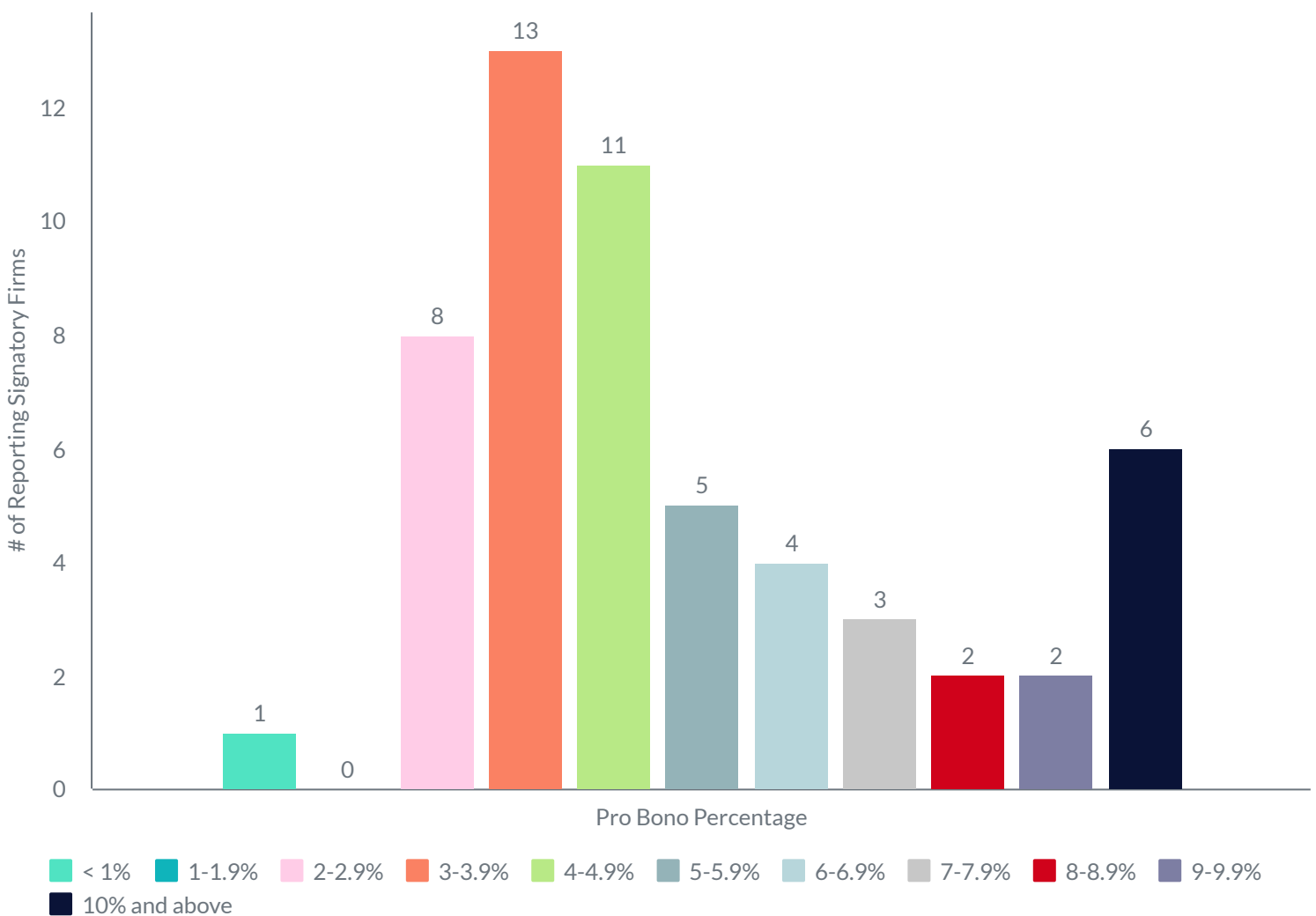
# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

## Distribution of Pro Bono Percentages

46 of the 55 Signatory Firms providing this metric devoted at least 3% of their client billable hours to pro bono service. Six of those firms reported dedicating more than 10% of paying client billable hours to pro bono work, demonstrating outstanding commitment to pro bono service.

46 of the 55 Signatory Firms providing this metric devoted at least 3% of their client billable hours to pro bono service. Six of those firms reported dedicating more than 10% of paying client billable hours to pro bono work, demonstrating outstanding commitment to pro bono service.

### Pro Bono Percentage Distribution



# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

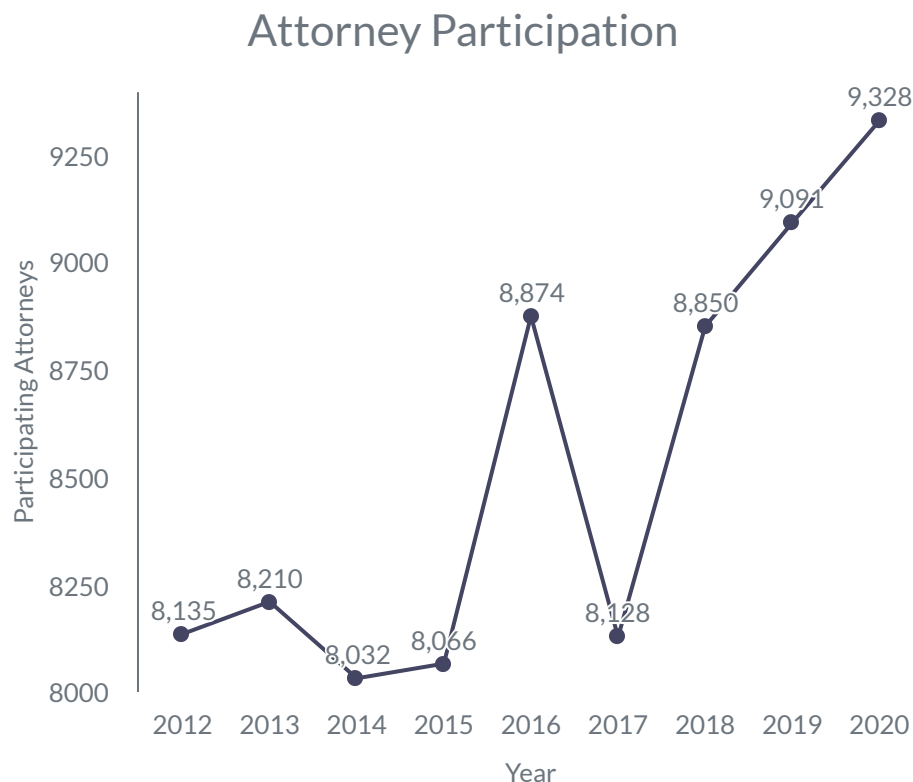
## Attorney Participation in Pro Bono Service

In 2020, Signatory Firms reported 11,481 attorneys in their D.C. offices, a slight increase from 10,933 attorneys in 2019. The number of attorneys participating in pro bono legal work also increased between 2019 and 2020.

In 2020, a total of **9,328 attorneys** participated in pro bono at reporting Signatory Firms, including 3,205 partners, 4,560 associates, 1,133 counsel, and 430 staff and other attorneys. By comparison, a total of 9,091 attorneys at reporting Signatory Firms participated in pro bono in 2019.

The number of attorneys participating in pro bono legal work between 2019 and 2020.

**increased**



Approximately **81%** of attorneys in the reporting firms participated in pro bono work in 2020, an increase of 2% from attorney participation in 2019.

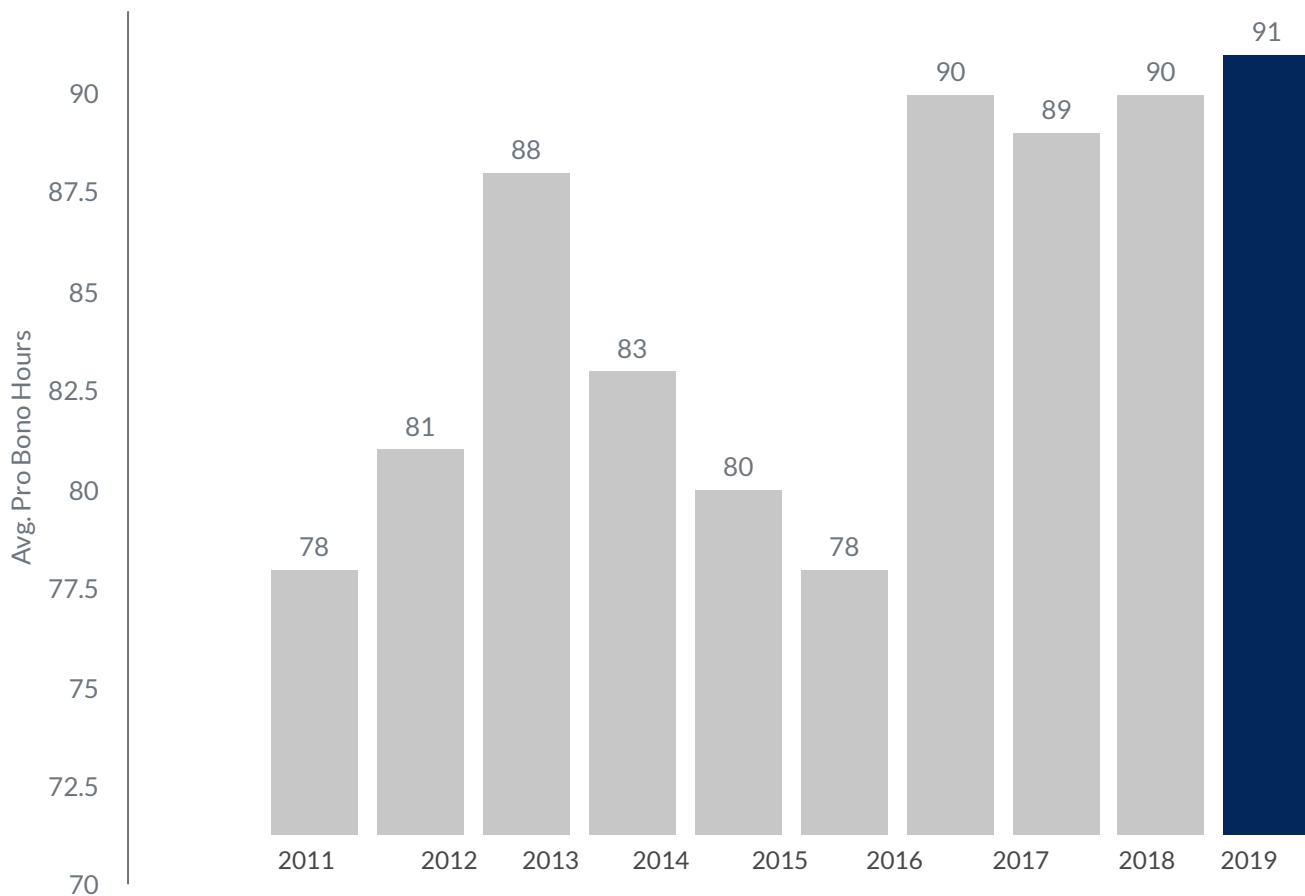
# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

## Average Pro Bono Hours Per Attorney

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In 2020, the average number of pro bono hours was **91 hours** which is a slight increase from last year's average of 90 pro bono hours per attorney.

Average Pro Bono Hours Per Attorney



# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

## Service to D.C. Residents of Limited Means or Organizations that Serve Them

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In 2019, 56 firms reported **546,762**

actual or estimated hours of pro bono service to D.C. residents of limited means or the organizations that serve them. That compares to 448,742 actual or estimated hours from 43 firms in 2019.

Approximately **52% of all pro bono time** in 2020 was devoted to D.C. residents of limited means or organizations serving them.

**38 out of 56** Signatory Firms reporting this number dedicated at least 50% of their pro bono hours to D.C. residents of limited means or organizations that serve them.

Nine of the 65 reporting firms did not report this number, so we cannot discern whether Signatory Firms on the whole devoted a majority of their pro bono time to D.C. residents of limited means.

# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

## Innovative Pro Bono Activities

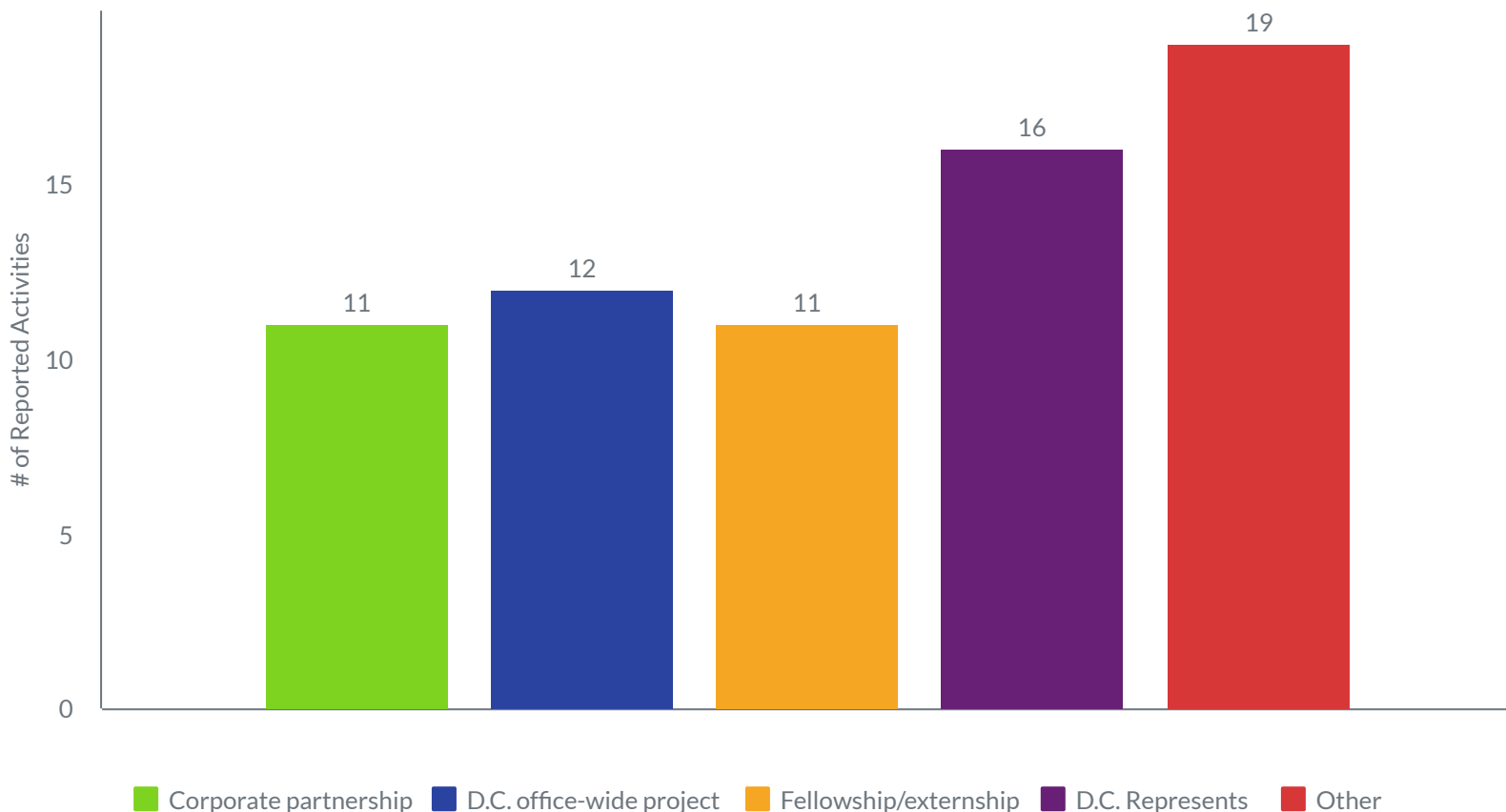
In 2020, 39 Signatory Firms reported meeting the Initiative goal of undertaking or increasing their involvement in

# one or more pro bono activities or projects in D.C.

to increase their pro bono legal service to our community. The following reflects the number of innovative pro bono activities undertaken in 2020:

- Participation in D.C. Represents (16);
- A D.C. office-wide signature project (12);
- A rotation/fellowship/externship program (11);
- A partnership with a corporate in-house legal department (11);
- Other (19)

## Innovative Pro Bono Activities



# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

## Innovative Pro Bono Activities

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The following are examples (reprinted with permission from each firm) of innovative pro bono activities addressing the needs of our community that the Signatory Firms undertook in 2020:



As part of its efforts to counter systemic racism, in June 2020 Crowell & Moring launched its Racial Justice Pro Bono Task Force and committed to provide \$1 million in pro bono legal services in 2021 to advance racial equity and justice. The Task Force focuses on four primary areas: police misconduct; voting rights; ending mass incarceration; and socioeconomic equality – homelessness and housing.

Crowell & Moring has pledged participation in the D.C. Represents effort, committing to meet the increased needs of its Washington neighbors by doubling the number of matters that it undertakes in the following areas in which it currently handles pro bono work: (1) assisting survivors of domestic violence through staffing local domestic violence clinics or in pursuing civil protection orders; (2) representing D.C. prisoners, many of whom are facing increased health risks from the coronavirus, in pursuing compassionate release motions; and (3) representing tenants in affirmative housing conditions cases.

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- [Crowell & Moring LLP](#)



In partnership with The Veteran's Consortium, Duane Morris launched a new, Free Legal Clinic for Women Veterans providing an opportunity for female veterans to speak to female attorneys in a safe space. The clinic started in response to female veterans' feedback that they felt unsafe obtaining medical care at the D.C. VA Medical Center. Now, female vets may meet attorneys in the special women's clinic at the V.A. The first clinic was held on March 10, 2020, at the D.C. VAMC Women's Center. Due to COVID-19, the clinic now is virtual, and is held the second Tuesday of every month. The clinic builds on Duane Morris and TVC's prior legal clinics at the D.C. VAMC, which we started in 2016 and serves veterans every Friday with legal advice, referrals, and representation.

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- [Duane Morris](#)

# 2020 Initiative Performance Data

## Innovative Pro Bono Activities

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At the outset of the COVID-19 crisis in early 2020, the firm conceived of a special project to provide pro bono unemployment benefits counseling to displaced workers in the restaurant and hospitality industries. The scope of this project, however, soon mushroomed far beyond its original focus to include the unemployed from many other industries, including hotels, parking garages, retail, childcare, taxis, hair salons, the arts, sports facilities, and universities, among others.

The work has covered the full spectrum of issues, from counseling individuals through the unemployment benefits application process to helping resolve regulatory holds on claims, to appealing the denial of claims, to defending individuals against government claims of overpayment resulting from government error. Over 55 attorneys in D.C. have helped more than 800 individuals.

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- [Arnold & Porter](#)



We participated in the transition to remote operations for several ongoing D.C.-based pro bono programs, including Legal Counsel for the Elderly's Schedule H Clinic and the Pro Bono Center's Landlord Tenant Resource Center; we also were an early supporter of the D.C. Represents project.

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- [Miller & Chevalier Chartered](#)

# REFLECTIONS

Pro bono trends were generally positive for D.C. law firms amid the pandemic. D.C.'s legal community stepped up in the face of an unprecedented health crisis.

## Notable Trends in 2020

- For the first time in this survey's history, D.C. law firms topped one million hours of pro bono service. Survey participation increased also, with 65 firms reporting compared to 2019's 61. These firms reported 69,859 hours more than in 2019.
- In the face of the pandemic, there was only a slight decrease in the average pro bono percentage, from 5.4% (2019) to 5.3% (2020), and 55 of the 69 Signatory Firms provided this metric in 2020, while only 47 firms provided this metric in 2019.
- Again, despite the pandemic, the average pro bono hours per attorney remained consistent with recent years: 89 in 2018, 90 in 2019, and 91 in 2020.
- An increase in the absolute number of attorneys participating in pro bono work (9,328 – up from 9,091) and a two-percentage point decrease in the percentage of attorneys devoting time to pro bono service (81% -- down from 83%).

## Key Takeaways

This report found that the pro bono efforts of the 65 Signatory Firms that reported their 2020 results improved on their 2019 efforts. The total number of pro bono hours increased to an all-time high of 1,049,139 in 2020. Given that the pandemic had significant economic ramifications for law firms across the country, the consistency of the Signatory Firms' pro bono efforts this past year was not guaranteed. While more is still needed, the Signatory Firms' recognition that the pandemic demanded that their pro bono efforts continue unabated is to be commended.

In 2020, the average pro bono hours per attorney (91) broke the 2017 and 2019 record of 90 pro bono hours.

The total number of D.C. office attorneys devoting time to pro bono service also reached a new high at 9,328.

The pro bono metric tracking the percentage of total pro bono hours devoted to D.C. residents of limited means or organizations broke the 2019 record of 46%. The 56 firms that responded to this question directed more than half of their pro bono time to those in our community.

As the long-term ramifications of the pandemic become more apparent, we urge Signatory Firms to continue to concentrate their pro bono resources on those who need it most. Our community was especially hard hit by the pandemic and its economic effects and the need for pro bono volunteers will only increase in the coming months. The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center can offer a variety of pro bono opportunities for those firms aiming to achieve this goal.



# 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Survey Questions

## Pro Bono Initiative Survey: Calendar Year 2020

This survey is intended to measure the level of pro bono activity of law firms with offices in the District of Columbia. For purposes of this survey, we use the definition of "pro bono work" in the Pro Bono Institute's® Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge, Statement of Principles No. 7:

[http://www.probonoinst.org/wpps/wp-content/uploads/law\\_firm\\_challenge\\_commentary.pdf](http://www.probonoinst.org/wpps/wp-content/uploads/law_firm_challenge_commentary.pdf)  
([http://www.probonoinst.org/wpps/wp-content/uploads/law\\_firm\\_challenge\\_commentary.pdf](http://www.probonoinst.org/wpps/wp-content/uploads/law_firm_challenge_commentary.pdf)).

\* Required

### Firm Information

1. Firm Name \*

2. D.C. Street Address \*

3. Address 2

4. Zip Code \*

5. Phone Number \*

# 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Survey Questions

6. Primary Pro Bono Initiative Contact \*

7. Primary Contact Email \*

8. Secondary Pro Bono Initiative Contact

9. Secondary Contact Email

## Pro Bono Hours

10. Please state the total hours the attorneys in your firm's D.C. office devoted to pro bono work in 2020. Please do not use commas, percentage signs, or decimals when entering your values. \*

The value must be a number

# 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Survey Questions

## Pro Bono Metrics

In addition to the number of pro bono hours, please provide one of the following metrics. Enter "N/A" in the question you do not answer.

11. % of total paying client billable hours your firm's D.C. office dedicated to pro bono work (from 0 to 100) in 2020 \*

12. Total client billable hours for your firm's D.C. office, including hours dedicated to pro bono clients, in 2020 \*

## Pro Bono Metrics: Continued

13. Of the total number of attorney pro bono hours performed during the reporting period, how many hours were devoted to D.C. residents of limited means or organizations that serve them? If you do not track this metric, please provide an estimate. \*

14. Does your firm's D.C. office track the number of pro bono hours dedicated to D.C. residents of limited means or organizations that serve them, or is this an estimate? \*

Tracked

Estimated

# 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Survey Questions

## Pro Bono Participation

Enter 0 if there are no attorneys in a particular category.

For purposes of Questions 18 and 22, "staff/other attorneys" refers to practicing attorneys who are firm employees but are not on a partnership track.

15. Number of partners in your firm's D.C. office as of December 31, 2020. \*

The value must be a number

16. Number of associates in your firm's D.C. office as of December 31, 2020. \*

The value must be a number

17. Number of counsel in your firm's D.C. office as of December 31, 2020. \*

The value must be a number

18. Number of staff/other attorneys in your firm's D.C. office as of December 31, 2020. \*

The value must be a number

# 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Survey Questions

19. Number of partners in your firm's D.C. office who participated in pro bono legal work in 2020. \*

The value must be a number

20. Number of associates in your firm's D.C. office who participated in pro bono legal work in 2020. \*

The value must be a number

21. Number of counsel in your firm's D.C. office who participated in pro bono legal work in 2020. \*

The value must be a number

22. Number of staff/other attorneys in your firm's D.C. office who participated in pro bono legal work in 2020. \*

The value must be a number

# 2020 Pro Bono Initiative Survey Questions

## Pro Bono Innovation

23. Did your firm develop or participate in any innovative pro bono activity or project dedicated to pro bono efforts in D.C. during the 2020 calendar year? (Please check all that apply.)

- Participated in DC Represents
- A D.C. office-wide signature project
- A rotation/fellowship/externship program
- Other D.C.-based activity or project
- A partnership with a corporate in-house legal department

24. Describe your office's D.C.-based innovative pro bono project or activity.

## GET IN TOUCH WITH US



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Washington, D.C. 20001



[www.dcbbar.org/pro-bono](http://www.dcbbar.org/pro-bono)



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