



Introduction

Since its founding in 1977, the [Public Interest Law Initiative \(PILI\)](#) has cultivated a lifelong commitment to public interest law by creating opportunities for law students and lawyers to provide public interest and pro bono work in Illinois. At every stage in the life cycle of a legal career, PILI guides attorneys in actualizing their professional responsibilities and personal commitments to equal access to justice through a continuum of public interest law and pro bono opportunities. PILI's programs first capture emerging lawyers when they are law students and new law school graduates, and then extend into legal practice to reach new associates, seasoned lawyers, and senior attorneys working in every sector of the legal community – private, academic, government and nonprofit.

PILI, through its [Pro Bono Initiative Program](#), is a resource for Illinois law firms and corporations developing or enhancing pro bono programs. This pro bono consulting program fosters business cultures and legal careers that feature a commitment to public interest law and pro bono work. PILI works collaboratively with law firms, corporations, public interest law agencies and law schools to create and promote work environments, programs and opportunities that help new associates and seasoned attorneys actualize their commitment to pro bono work. By cultivating best practices, ensuring effective communication and serving as a clearinghouse for pro bono issues, PILI enhances the scope and quantity of pro bono work in Illinois for those who lack access to justice.

PILI, in conjunction with [The Chicago Bar Foundation](#), has compiled the *Pro Bono Reference Guide*, which is intended to provide you with guidance in developing or enhancing a formal pro bono program at your law firm. A variety of sample documents and individualized and in-person technical assistance are available as a supplement to the Guide.

In addition to the *Pro Bono Reference Guide*, PILI also has a variety of other resources to aid you in your efforts:

- **PILI E-newsletter:** PILI's e-newsletter is published every other month and provides the latest news about PILI's programs, events and the latest public interest law and pro bono news. Visit the PILI website to subscribe to the newsletter and to view past editions;
- **PILI Pro Bono Consultations:** PILI will organize a consulting team of pro bono leaders from law firms similar in nature to yours who will meet with you and other leaders at your law firm to share their experiences and perspectives regarding each of their pro bono programs. The members of these teams often share samples of relevant materials to further assist you in your efforts. Based on your needs and interests, we will also help you identify the legal aid agencies that would be appropriate partners for your law firm; and
- **PILI Pro Bono Programming:** PILI organizes and hosts the Pro Bono Forum on a semi-annual basis, which brings together pro bono leaders from law firms, corporations, law schools and legal aid agencies to discuss timely pro bono issues and share pro bono best practices.

These services are provided at no cost to firms and corporations interested in establishing or enhancing a pro bono program. If you are interested in learning more about the services provided by PILI, visit our website at www.pili-law.org, or contact PILI's Program Manager, Sheila Simhan, at ssimhan@pili-law.org or 312-832-5128.