

2020\*

# Report on the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® Initiative

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\*The predecessor to this report is titled the *2018 Report on the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® Initiative*. With this issue, PBI is revising the name of the Report to reflect the year the Report is issued, rather than the year of the most recent statistics contained in the Report. This style change better aligns with other naming conventions used by PBI.

Pro Bono Institute (PBI), established in 1996, provides research, consultative services, analysis and assessment, publications, and training to a broad range of legal audiences.

## **Mission**

PBI is mandated to explore and identify new approaches to and resources for the provision of legal services to the poor, disadvantaged, and other individuals or groups unable to secure legal assistance to address critical problems. We do so by supporting, enhancing, and transforming the pro bono efforts of major law firms, in-house legal departments, and public interest organizations in the U.S. and around the world.

## **Law Firm Pro Bono Project**

PBI's Law Firm Pro Bono Project® program is a global effort designed to support and enhance the pro bono culture and performance of major law firms in the U.S. and around the world. The Project's goal is to fully integrate pro bono into the practice, philosophy, and culture of firms so that large law firms provide the institutional support, infrastructure, and encouragement essential to fostering a climate supportive of pro bono service and promoting attorney participation at all levels.

## **Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® Initiative**

PBI's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® initiative, launched in 1993 and implemented in 1995, is a unique, aspirational pro bono standard. Developed by law firm leaders and corporate general counsel, the Challenge articulates a voluntary, single standard for one key segment of the legal profession – major law firms. (A copy of the Challenge statement is included in the Appendices.) Challenge signatories publicly acknowledge their institutional, firm-wide commitment to provide pro bono legal services to low-income individuals and nonprofit groups that serve them. The Challenge includes a narrow, but thoughtful, definition of pro bono that has become the industry standard for large law firms and others, as well as an accountability mechanism and measurement tool through its performance benchmarks and annual reporting requirement.

Download additional copies of this Report at  
<http://www.probonoinst.org/wpps/wp-content/uploads/2019A-Challenge-ReportV7june15.pdf>.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Report on the 2020 Pro Bono Institute Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® initiative examines the pro bono performance of signatories to the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge statement during the 2019 calendar year. Challenge signatories have committed to contribute 3 or 5% (or at a few firms, 60 or 100 hours per attorney) of their annual total client billable hours to pro bono activities as defined by the Challenge and report their performance to PBI's Law Firm Pro Bono Project each year.

## Overall Performance

One hundred twenty-seven firms reported performing an aggregated total of **4,993,397.85 hours of pro bono work in 2019**, a slight decrease in total pro bono hours from 2018 when 128 law firms reported their pro bono hours. Pro bono hours represented 4.0% of total paying client billable hours in 2019.

## Pro Bono for Those of Limited Means

In 2019, firms reported performing more than **3.3 million pro bono hours for those of limited means** and organizations serving them. 71.4% of all pro bono time was devoted to those of limited means and organizations serving them.

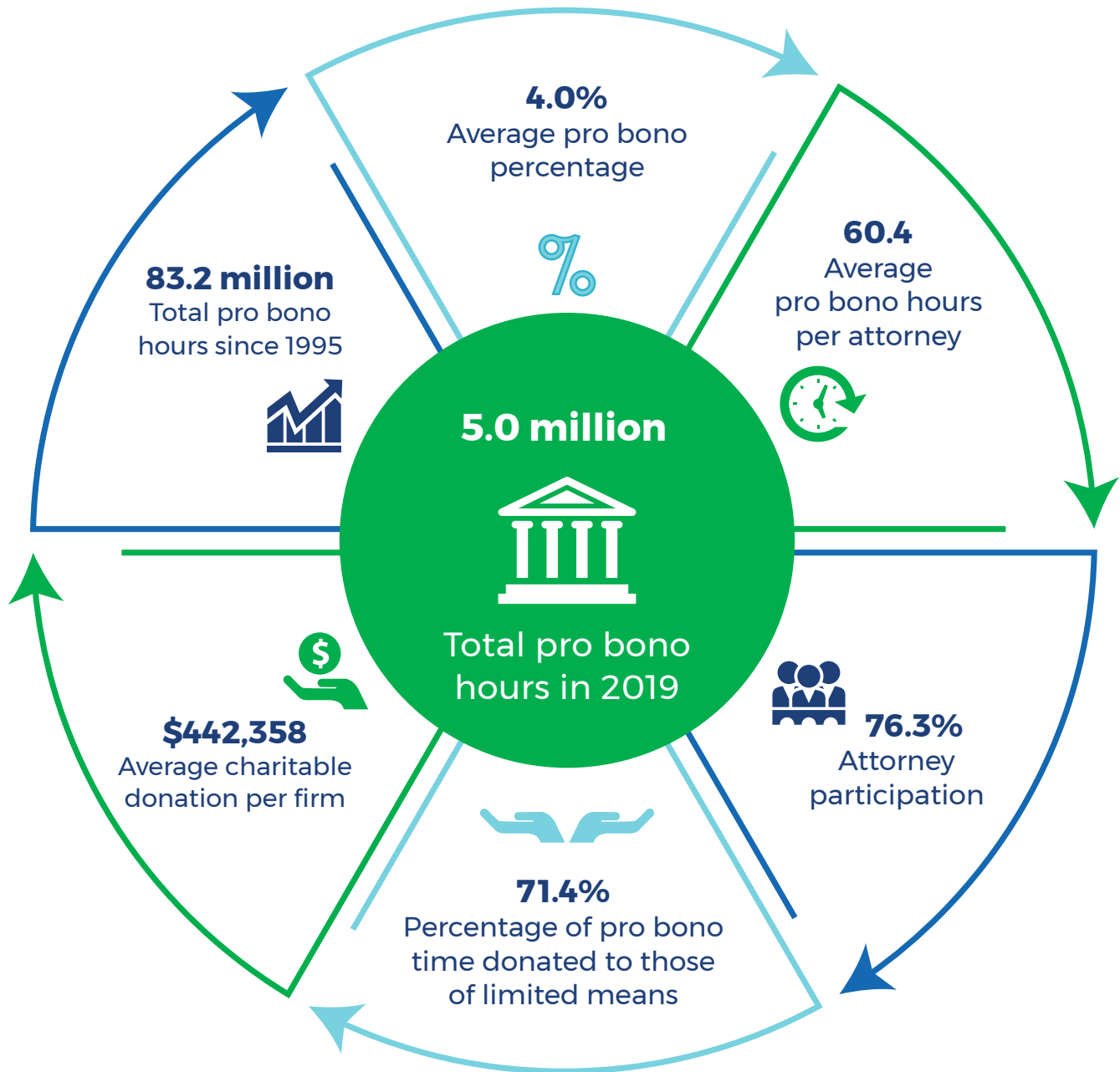
## Participation

The percentage of attorneys engaged in pro bono was stable in 2019. The percentage of **partners participating in pro bono was 67.6%** compared to 67.4 % in 2018, and the percentage of associates participating in pro bono was 90.1% compared to 85.1% in 2018. The combined participation rate was 76.3% of attorneys in 2019, compared to 76.6% in 2018.

## Charitable Donations

In 2019, the total amount of **charitable giving to legal services organizations decreased to \$19,906,087** from \$25,891,604 in 2018 (when 6 more firms reported on giving). The average firm donation in 2019 was \$442,358, which represents a 12.9% decrease over the average firm donation in 2018, which was \$507,679.

# SNAPSHOT



# INTRODUCTION

In 2019, signatories to the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® initiative contributed approximately 5.0 million hours of pro bono service, a decrease (1.5%) in total pro bono hours from 2018 when one additional firm reported.

“[L]awyers cannot claim membership in a learned profession if they work simply as fee-charging artisans. One can claim that membership, and gain the large satisfaction it brings, only by regularly contributing to the public good. ... As Talmudic sage Rabbi Tarfon said: ‘the day is short, and the task is much, but the reward is great.’”

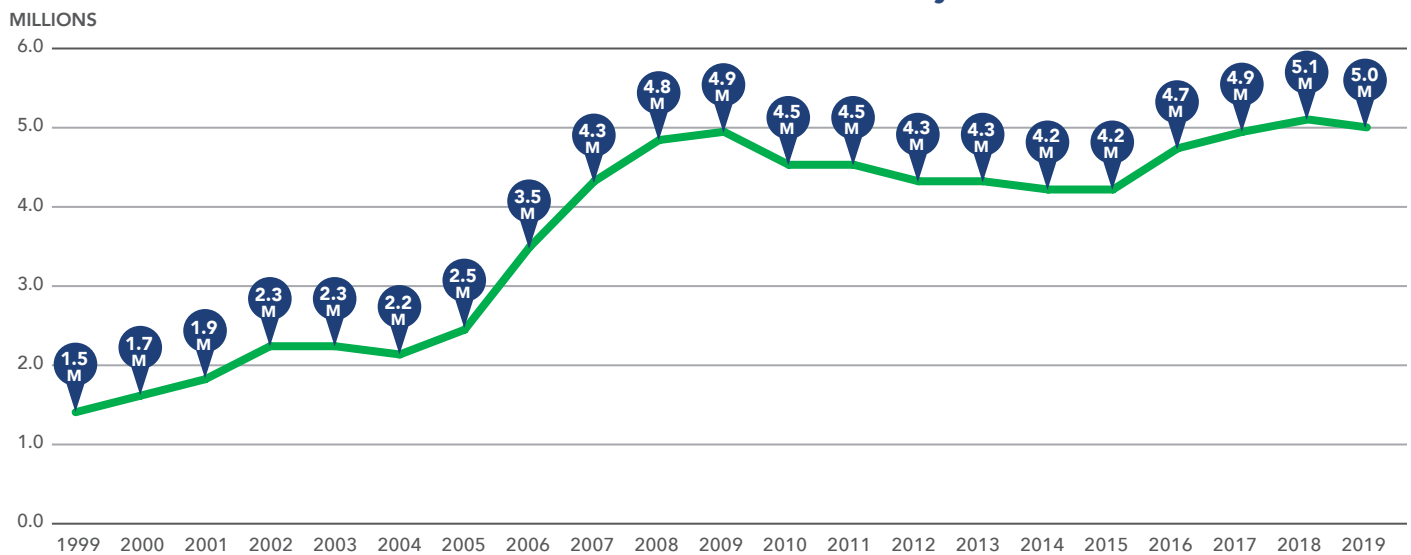
– Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

# 2019 CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE DATA

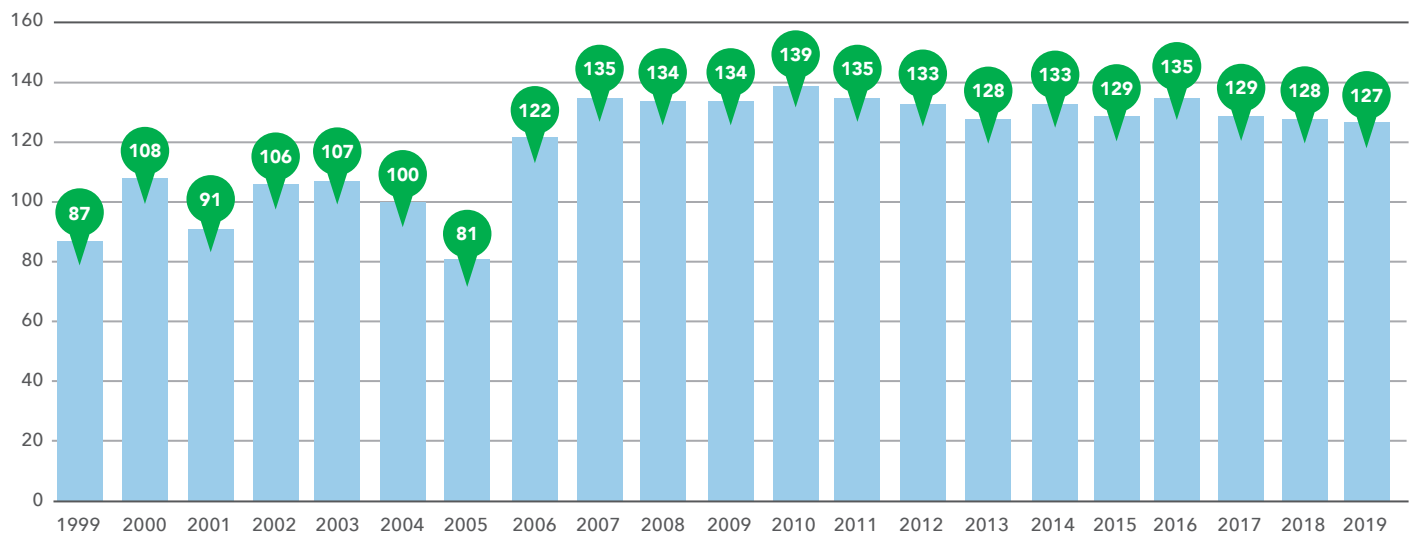
## Highlights of Overall Pro Bono Performance

One hundred twenty-seven firms reported in 2019, performing an aggregated total of 4,993,398 hours of pro bono work, approximately 77,135 hours less than in 2018, when 128 firms reported an aggregated total of 5,070,533 hours of pro bono work.

Total Number of Pro Bono Hours by Year



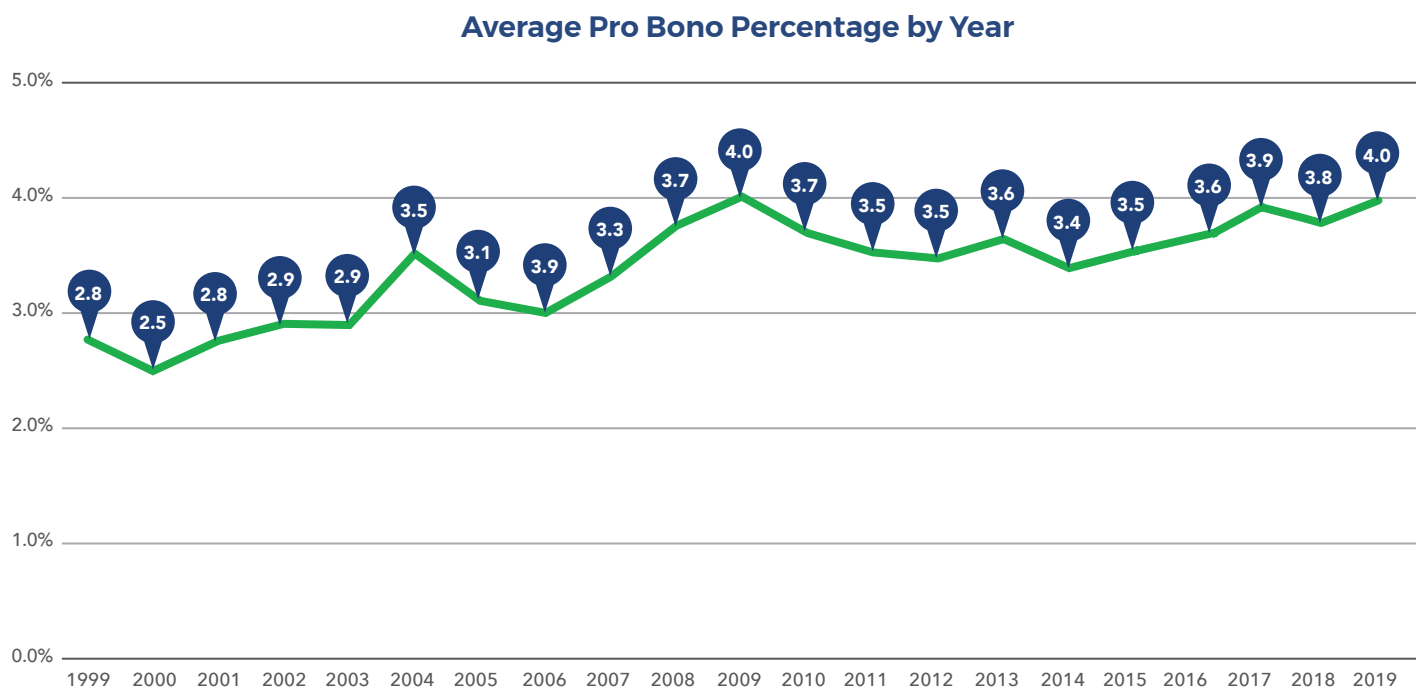
Number of Firms Reporting



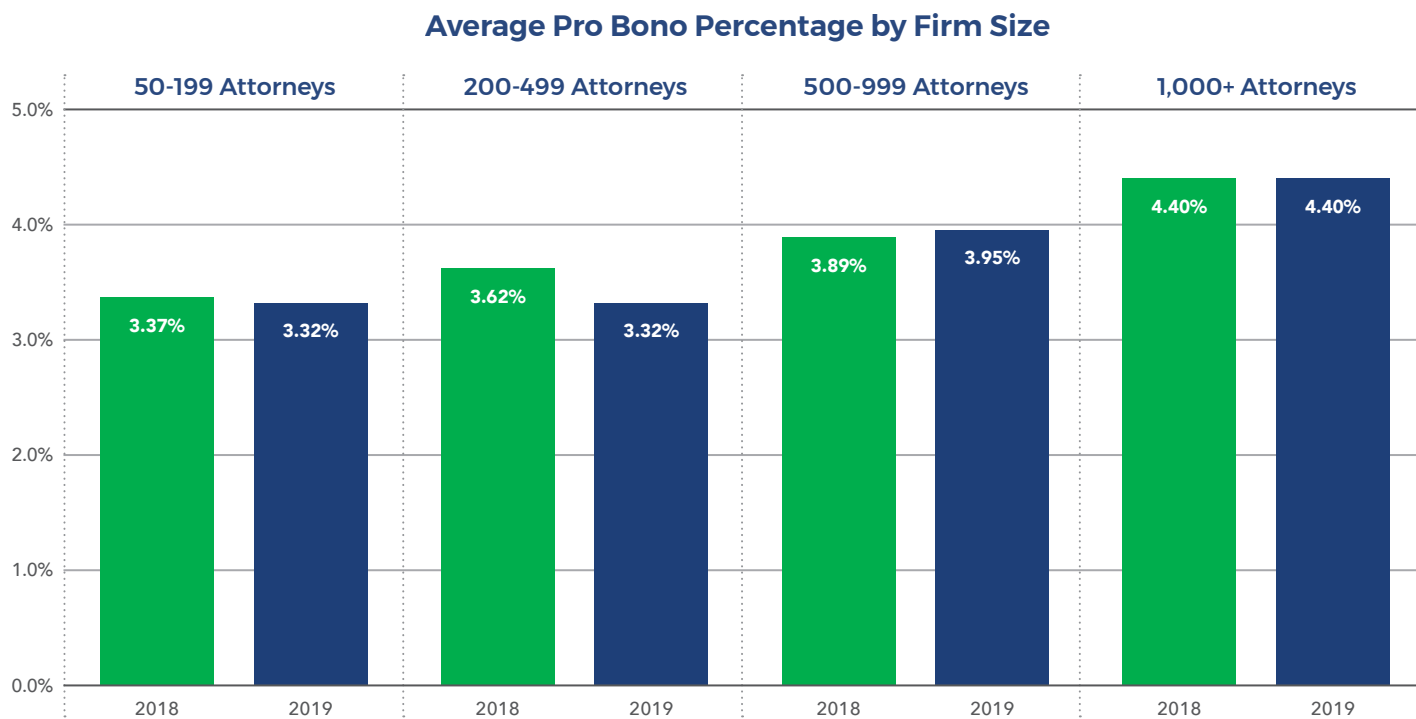
# 2019 CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE DATA

## Average Pro Bono Percentage

Viewed as a percentage of total client billable hours, pro bono hours increased slightly in 2019, with an average of 4.0%.



As reflected in the graph below, firms with headcounts of 1,000 or more attorneys had the highest average pro bono percentage again in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

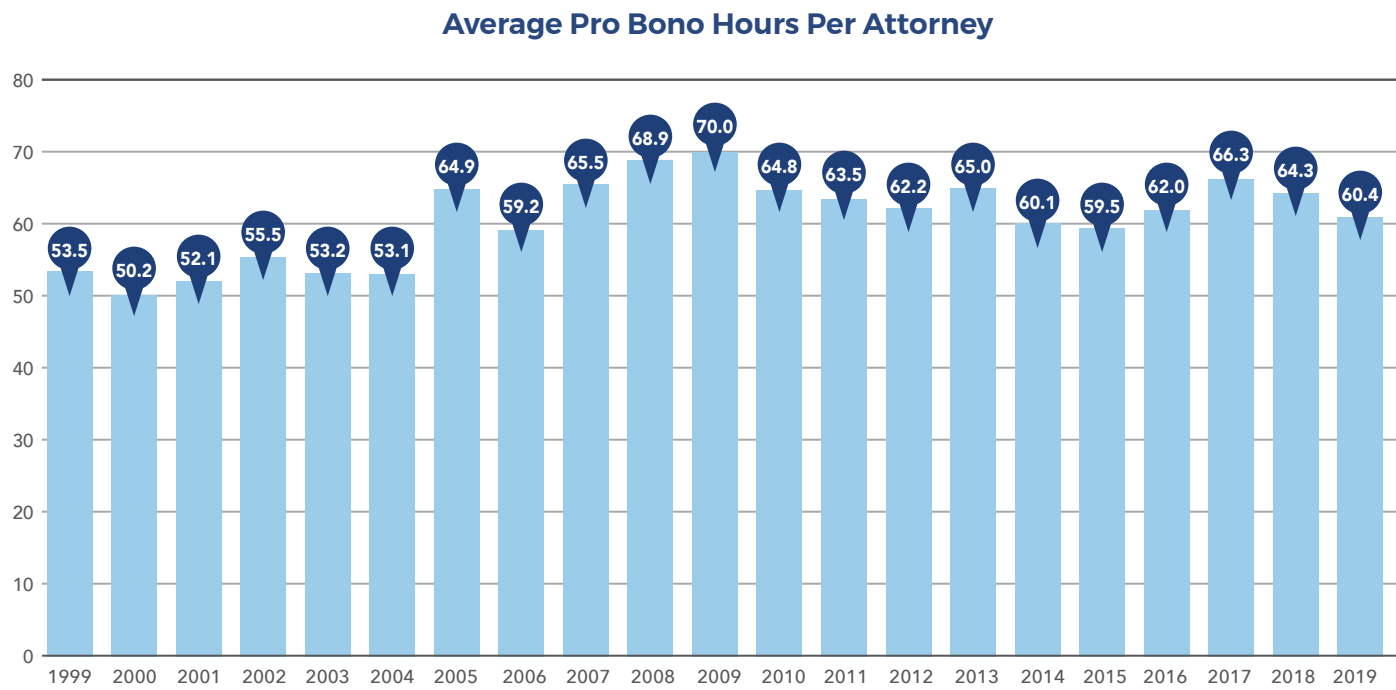


<sup>1</sup> For a detailed breakdown of average pro bono percentage by firm size, see Table 1 in Appendix B.

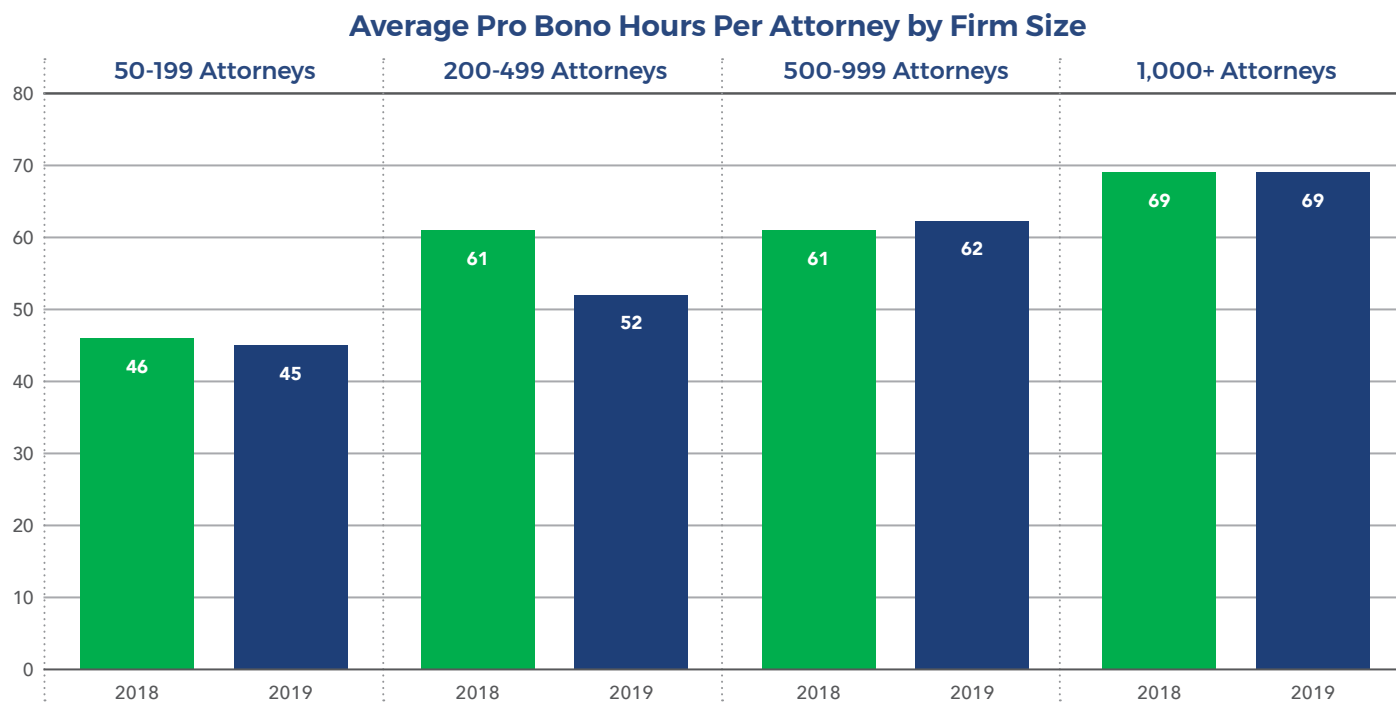


Average Pro Bono Hours Per Attorney

In 2019, the average number of pro bono hours per attorney decreased slightly to 60.4 hours per attorney.



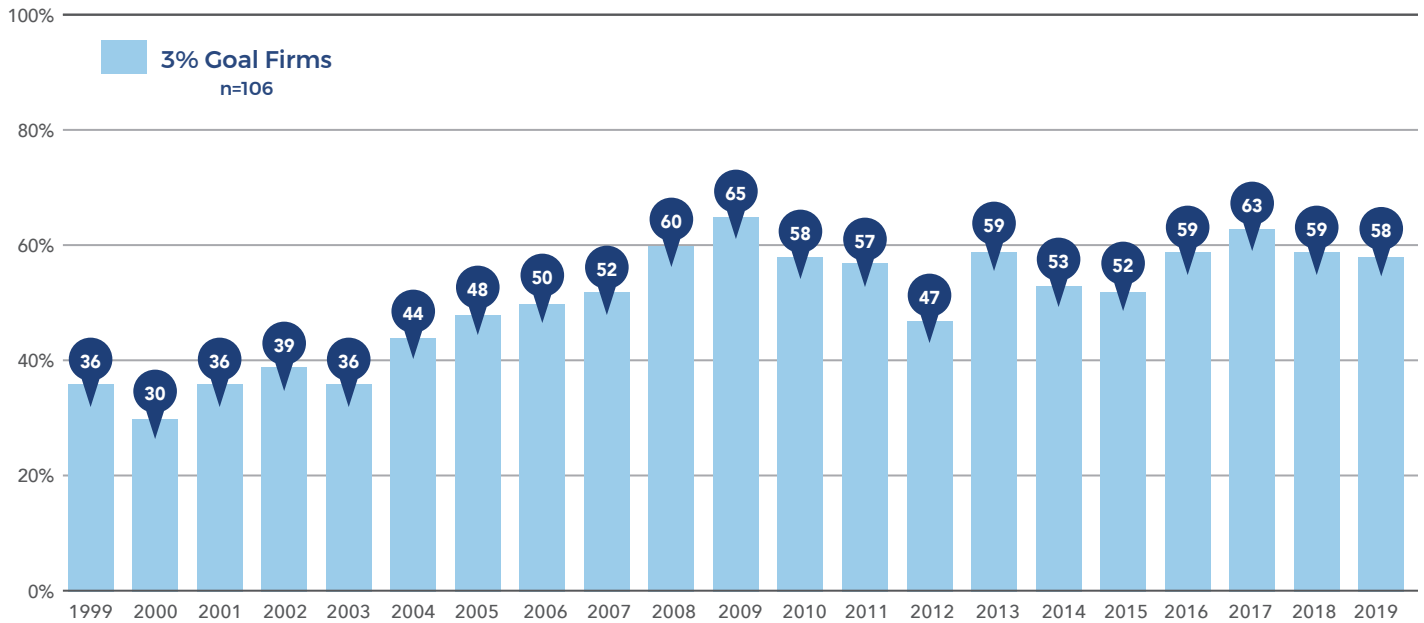
The graph below shows a breakdown of average pro bono hours per attorney by firm size in 2018 and 2019.



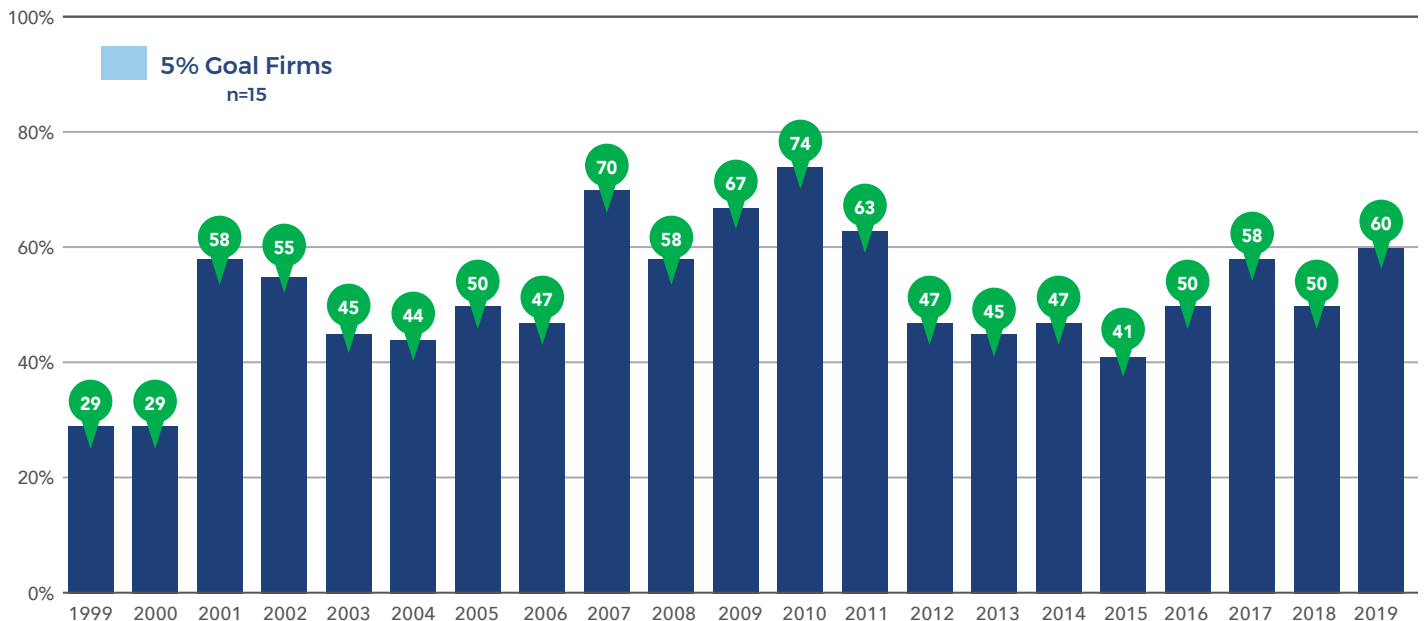
# 2019 CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE DATA

## Reaching the Challenge Goal

Percentage of Firms that Achieved 3% Goal



Percentage of Firms that Achieved 5% Goal

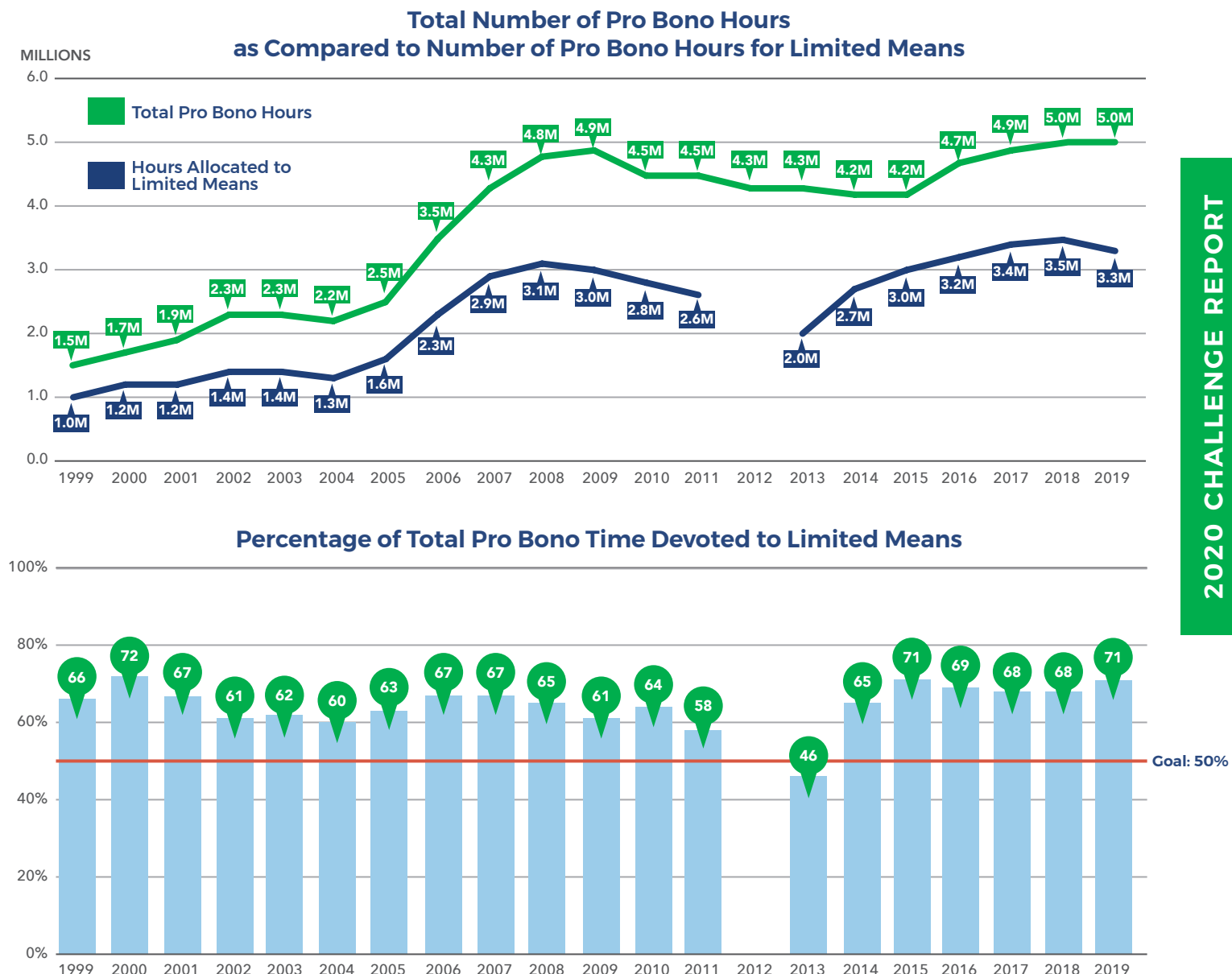


# 2019 CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE DATA

## Service to Persons of Limited Means

The Challenge (Principle 3) asks firms to devote a majority of their pro bono time “to persons of limited means or to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means.” This element of the Challenge remains particularly critical at this time, when poverty in the U.S. remains high and resources and staffing for legal aid remain inadequate.

In 2019, 120 Challenge signatories reported 3,316,438.6 actual or estimated hours of service to persons of limited means and the organizations that serve them, a decrease of 136,795.4 hours over 2018 when one additional firm reported. Seventy-one point four percent of all pro bono time was devoted to those of limited means and the organizations serving them, showing that collectively, signatories are meeting their Challenge commitment to devote a “majority” of their pro bono time to people of limited means.<sup>2</sup>



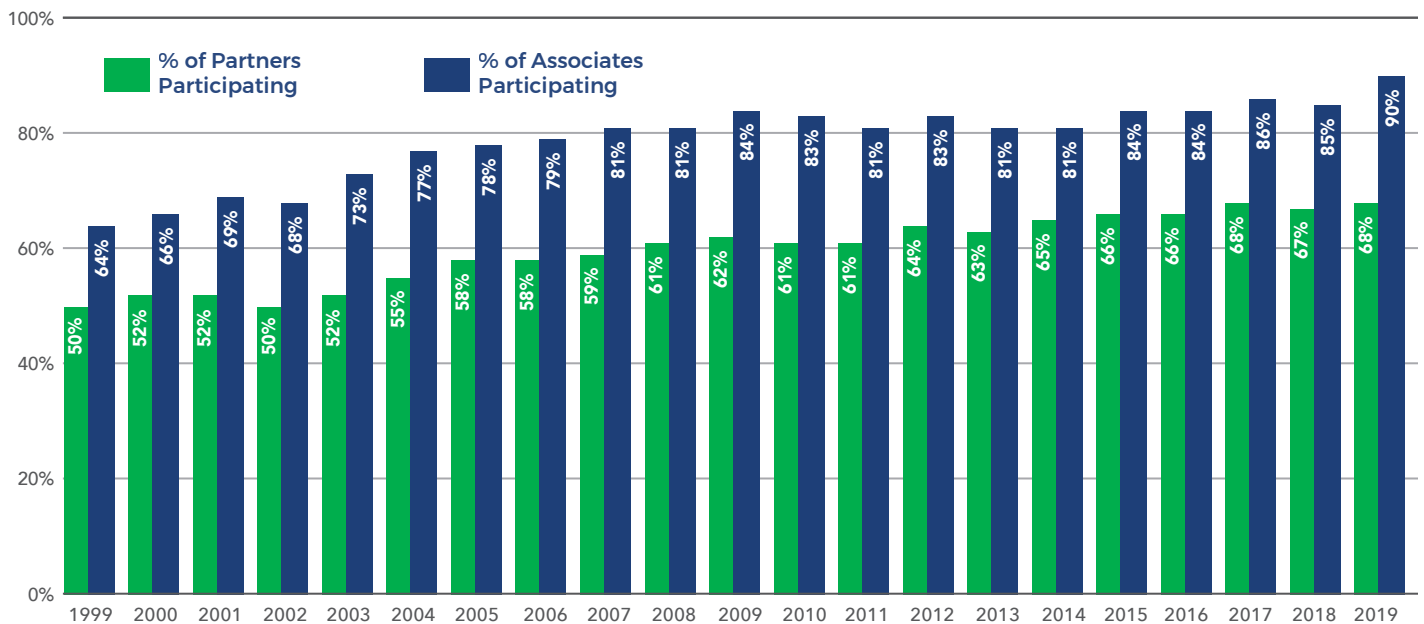
<sup>2</sup>In 2012, the failure of a large number of Challenge signatories to report reliable data on the hours and percentage of total pro bono time committed to persons of limited means and the organizations that serve them meant that PBI, in turn, could not provide reliable aggregated statistics.

# 2019 CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE DATA

## Participation

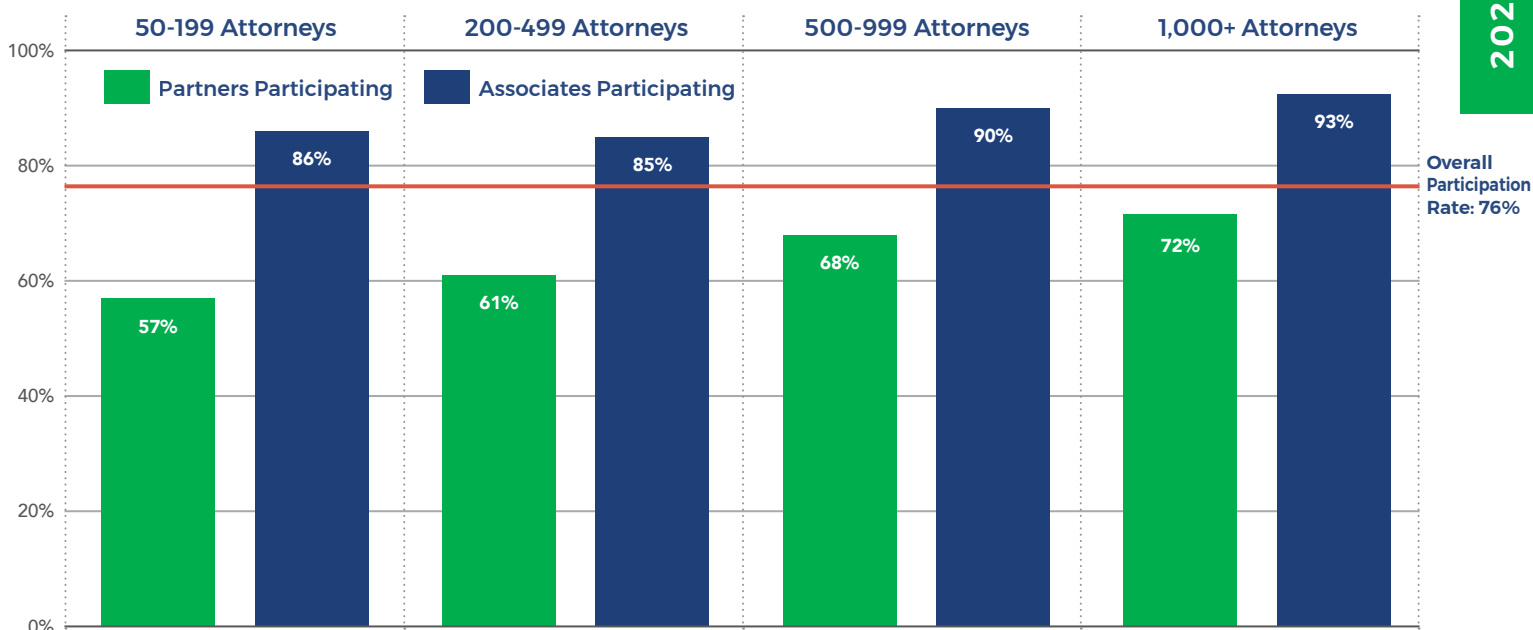
Participation rates in 2019 were steady for partners and up for associates. As seen below, 67.6% of partners and 90.1% of associates participated in pro bono in 2019, compared to 67.4% and 85.1%, respectively, in 2018. Collectively, 76.3% of attorneys participated in pro bono in 2019; 76.6% participated in 2018.

Attorney Participation Rates



The graph below shows a breakdown of partner/associate participation in pro bono by firm size for 2019.<sup>3</sup>

Attorney Participation Rates by Firm Size

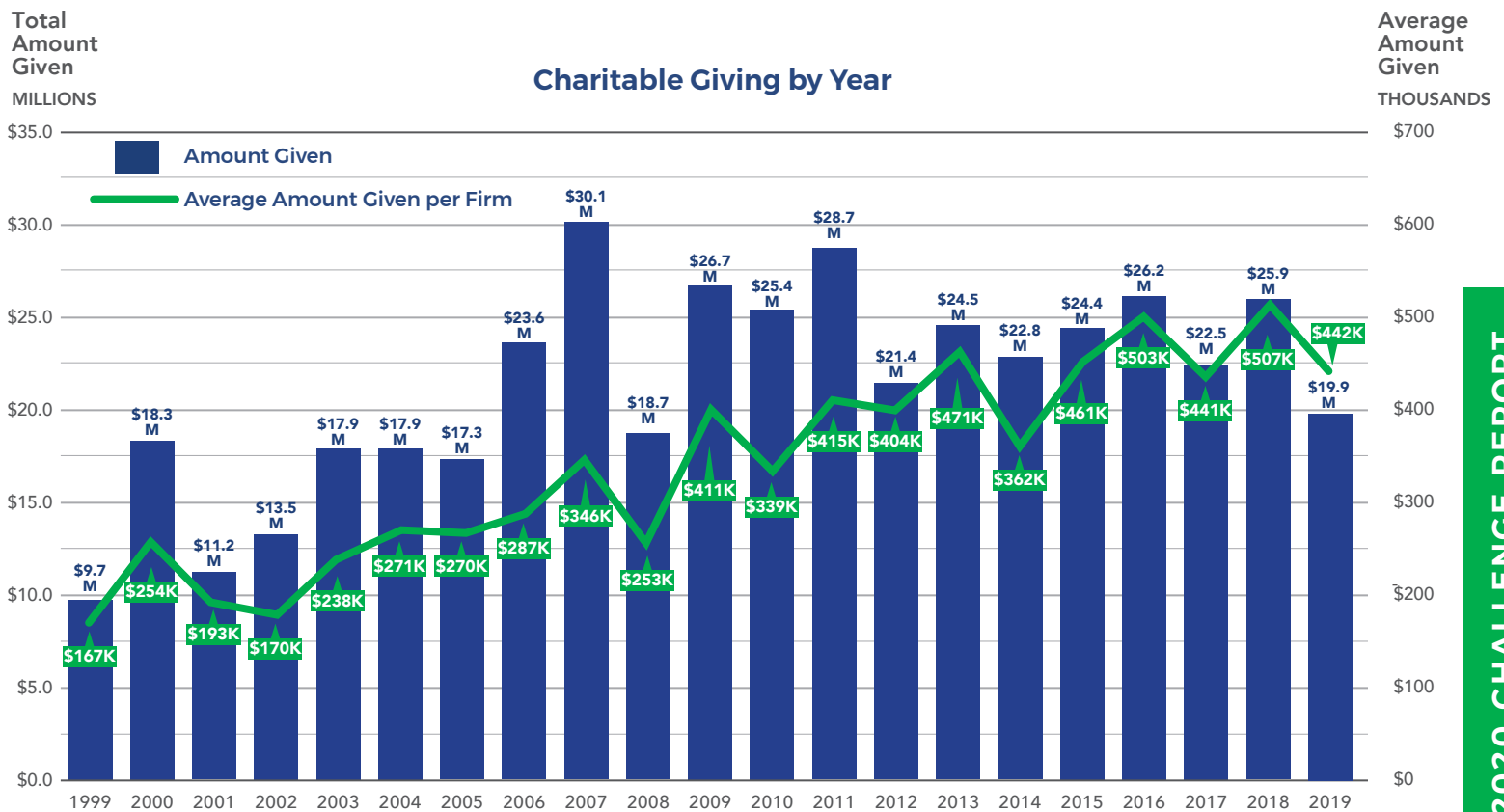


<sup>3</sup> For a detailed breakdown of attorney participation rates by firm size, see Table 3 in Appendix B.

# 2019 CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE DATA

## Charitable Donations

In addition to asking Challenge signatories to provide required information, the Challenge asks firms to respond to several optional questions, including providing supplemental information on charitable donations to legal services organizations. In 2019, 45 firms reported that they had donated \$19,906,087 to legal services organizations compared to 2018, when 51 firms reported they had donated \$25,891,604 to legal services organizations.



# REFLECTIONS

Law firm pro bono continues to remain stable. Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® signatories had their second best year ever, contributing 5.0 million hours of pro bono service – a performance bested only in 2018 when one more firm participated in reporting. The key metrics of (1) pro bono hours for those of limited means and organizations serving them; (2) attorney participation rates; and (3) average hours per attorney for 2019 were similar to those from 2017 and 2018. In-depth analysis of the data offers a basis for watchful optimism and underscores the need for continued effort to promote pro bono; vigilance; and long-term, strategic thinking. At a time of widespread economic challenge, increased need, social upheaval and concern for the future, and when threats to the rule of law prevail, meaningful efforts to promote access to justice for all are critical to moving society forward.

## Pro Bono is a Core Value

- > The Law Firm Pro Bono Project's longitudinal data indicate that law firm pro bono does not follow an unswerving, upward trajectory. Total pro bono hours reported decreased by approximately 77,135.15 hours in 2019, not surprising given that there was one less firm reporting. However, the average number of pro bono hours was 60.4 hours per attorney, slightly down from 2017 (66 hours) and 2018 (64.3 hours).
- > In 2019, 57.5% (nearly the same as in 2017 and 2018) of Challenge signatories that committed to pro bono service hours equal to at least 3% of total billable hours and 60% of signatories that committed to 5% met their stated Challenge goals. In 2017, approximately 58% of firms with a goal of 5% met that goal; in 2018, 50% met the goal. Pro bono hours were 4.0% of total paying client billable hours in 2019, as compared to 3.8% in 2018 and 3.9% in 2017.
- > When the Challenge was launched in 1993 and implemented in 1995, one fundamental goal was to encourage more than half of a firm's attorneys to participate in pro bono, an ambitious objective at that time. In 2019, the combined attorney participation rate for partners and associates was 76.3%. It is heartening that so many attorneys have come to embrace their professional obligation to contribute to society through pro bono service.
- > As we mark the 25th anniversary of the implementation of the Challenge, a look back provides some perspective and context: the first data collection from 1995 yielded information from 135 Challenge signatories, which reported 1.6 million pro bono hours, an average of 53.3 pro bono hours per attorney, and 17,779 attorneys participating in pro bono. In 2019, 127 Challenge signatories reported nearly 5 million pro bono hours, an average of 60.4 pro bono hours per attorney, and 66,254 attorneys participating in pro bono.<sup>4</sup>
- > Pro bono performance varies greatly by geographic region, which demonstrates the need to address persistent differences in pro bono culture, leadership, infrastructure, and the availability of pro bono opportunities.
- > In these times of crisis (both natural and human-made), law firms have consistently risen to the occasion to secure and protect the rights of those with little or no voice. We continue to experience increased and novel needs for legal assistance and are prepared to help firms craft and implement innovative and meaningful solutions.
- > Law firm pro bono efforts are having an impact on local, national, and global scales. Lives are being improved, rights are being protected, and access to justice is being advanced every day. Inspiring and creative innovations are being developed, assessed, and replicated; collaborations and partnerships, with both familiar and unconventional stakeholders, are being formed; and delivery systems are being tested and tweaked. In short, the impact of pro bono goes well beyond the numbers.

<sup>4</sup>In 1995, PBI attorney participation tracking was limited to partners and associates. In recent years, PBI has tracked all attorneys reporting firms. For comparison purposes the number of partners and associates reported to have participated in pro bono in 2019 was 52,681.

## Enhancing Access to Justice through Pro Bono Service and Charitable Giving

- > In addition to the commitment to devote 3 or 5% of a firm's total paying client billable hours to pro bono, Challenge signatories also agree to devote **"a majority"** of their pro bono time "to persons of limited means or to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means" (Principle 3) (*emphasis added*). This year, 71.4% of all pro bono time was devoted to those of limited means and organizations serving them – a figure that is up more than 3% from last year and a clear indication that signatories are continuing to make service to persons of limited means, both direct and indirect, a priority.
- > The financial support provided by Challenge signatories to legal services organizations, whose expertise and assistance make law firm pro bono possible, is critical. In 2019, 45 firms reported that they had donated \$19,906,087 to legal services organizations. (In 2018, 51 firms reported that they had donated \$25,891,604; in 2017, 51 reporting firms donated \$22,478,850.) The average reported firm donation decreased by 12.9% (from \$507,679 in 2018 to \$442,358 in 2019).<sup>5</sup> Reporting of financial contributions is optional for Challenge signatories. Because real world factors and reporting variances account for most of the year-to-year fluctuation, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from the data. As such, fluctuations should be less volatile if the number of reporting firms increases; therefore, we encourage additional firms to report donations for 2020 and subsequent years. All individual firm data is kept strictly confidential, so there is no downside, and all firms will benefit from better benchmarking.
- > Firm contributions are indispensable for maintaining an effective pipeline and support network for legal services programs, which in turn benefit law firm pro bono efforts. Even at a time when all expenses are being carefully scrutinized, we encourage firms to evaluate their financial and in-kind support for legal services organizations; consider creative and stretch increases when possible to maintain the quality and integrity of their own pro bono efforts; and commit to accurately tracking and reporting these amounts to the Law Firm Pro Bono Project.
- > These data points expose as myth any perception that large law firms are not adequately supporting legal aid programs and that they should do more before other funding streams, particularly public ones, are tapped.

## Inspiring Action and Maximizing Impact: The Year Ahead

- > 2020 marks the 25th year since the implementation of the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® initiative. We look forward to recognizing this milestone through both historic, longitudinal scholarship and forward-looking, agenda-setting advocacy, and welcoming more firms as Challenge signatories.
- > We are heartened that Challenge signatories are generally more successful than their peers who have not yet enrolled in the Challenge. While we do not claim causality, the correlation is notable. As signatories often confirm, making a public commitment to the Challenge heightens awareness of pro bono internally, increases attorney participation, engages firm leadership, and sets a clear and shared goal for success. All of these elements combine to make it more likely that a firm's pro bono program will grow and succeed. For firms that have not yet joined because of a concern that you cannot meet the Challenge goals, we encourage you to sign on and use this tool to advance pro bono at your firm. There is no downside to enrolling, as we do not publish disaggregated statistics, nor do we in any way publicly identify individual firms as having met or not met their Challenge goals.

<sup>5</sup>This drop does not demonstrate that law firms are becoming less generous, as the statistic is greatly influenced by shifts in the relative number of small and large firms reporting donations. In 2019, the percentage of small firms reporting donations was much larger than the percentage of large firms reporting, which may explain the reduction in the average amount donated per firm. For this reason, we are reporting an additional metric for the first time this year, average donations per attorney. See Table 4.

## 2019 CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE DATA

- > Metrics create incentives and shape behaviors. To the extent they capture and measure incomplete inputs, they can lock in inefficient ways of working and thinking, and produce resistance to change. Should we regard a firm as providing higher value because its lawyers clock more pro bono hours? Should a year be looked at more favorably simply because Challenge signatories reported more aggregated total pro bono hours? The Challenge looks at several nuanced metrics to evaluate pro bono performance, but it is (past) time to assess the metrics themselves. Let's carefully evaluate not only the amount of pro bono work being undertaken, but also the outcomes and impact of that work to ensure that we are making the highest and best use of our pro bono resources. How can we more fully appreciate and implement a broad range of additional metrics that might help us better evaluate and improve overall pro bono performance and service to clients: Quality and consistency of work? Timeliness and helpfulness of services provided? Efficiency with which services are performed? The skill with which projects are managed? The worth to the client or results obtained? The "social good"? The quality of the experience, engagement, and impact on the firm? We will renew our ongoing effort to address these complicated and compelling questions.
- > The Law Firm Pro Bono Project will continue to listen to the pro bono community and to serve as counselor, resource, strategic advisor, trainer, and catalyst and offer expert guidance on law firm pro bono. Leadership requires being open-minded and resisting the pull of the status quo and the power of the fear of failure to try new ideas to provide improved services. We will also promote experimentation, evaluation, dialogue, and collaboration on how, working together, we can build on the dedication, creativity, and maturation of law firm pro bono to strengthen access to justice.

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June 2020



2020

# **Report on the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® Initiative**

## **APPENDICES**

# METHODOLOGY

Once again, the survey was distributed exclusively in an electronic format, which allows for greater efficiency in the data-gathering process and improved accuracy of the data, which we carefully vet prior to analysis.

Some firms report attorney participation rates higher than 100%. For example, this occurs if the firm's headcount at the end of the year is smaller than the total number of attorneys who participated in pro bono throughout the year. For the purposes of data analysis in the Report, however, attorney participation was capped at 100%.

Aggregated data collected on pro bono hours devoted to those of limited means includes both tracked and estimated data. The Law Firm Pro Bono Project will continue to work with firms to develop comprehensive and accurate tracking systems.

Firms have historically been asked to report metrics for partners and associates. Since 2011, firms have been asked to separately report counsel and staff/other attorneys as well. For purposes of analysis in the Report, attorneys designated as counsel have been included with partners, and staff/other attorneys with associates.

For ease of reference, we now present the data over a 20-year period, *i.e.* in this Report from 1999 to 2019.

# DATA TABLES<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1: Average Pro Bono Reporting by Firm Size**

Firm Size	2019 # of Firms Reporting	2019 Average Pro Bono Percentage	2019 Average Pro Bono Hours Per Attorney	2018 # of Firms Reporting	2018 Average Pro Bono Percentage	2018 Average Pro Bono Hours Per Attorneys	Average Pro Bono Percentage Change
50 - 199 Attorneys	21	3.32%	45.4	21	3.37%	45.71	-0.05%
200 - 499 Attorneys	34	3.32%	51.7	34	3.62%	60.62	-0.30%
500 - 999 Attorneys	49	3.95%	62.3	50	3.81%	60.94	+0.15%
1,000 + Attorneys	19	4.40%	69.2	22	4.40%	68.59	0.00%

**Table 2: Participation by Partners, Associates, Counsel, and Staff/Other Attorneys**

Category	2019 # of Attorneys	2019 # of Attorneys Participating	2019 Participation Rate	2018 # of Attorneys	2018 # of Attorneys Participating	2018 Participation Rate
Partners	30,246	20,452	67.6%	30,806	20,878	67.8%
Associates	35,764	32,230	90.1%	36,359	32,599	89.7%
Counsel	7,277	4,932	67.8%	7,282	4,802	65.9%
Staff/Other Attorneys	5,696	2,474	43.4%	4,441	2,110	47.5%
<b>Totals<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>79,754</b>	<b>60,857</b>	<b>76.3%</b>	<b>78,888</b>	<b>60,389</b>	<b>76.6%</b>

<sup>6</sup>Totals exceed sum of individual attorney types because a very small number of firms reported only total attorneys and total attorneys participating, without a by-type breakdown.

<sup>7</sup>This result suggests that the participation of firm attorneys not falling within the partner or associate classification at mid-sized firms is lagging substantially behind participation of partners and associates at mid-sized firms and all types of lawyers at other sized firms.

**Table 3: Average Participation by Firm Size**

Firm Size	2019 # of Firms Reporting	2019 Partner Participation Rate	2019 Associate Participation Rate	2019 Attorney Participation Rate	2018 # of Firms Reporting	2018 Partner Participation Rate	2018 Associate Participation Rate	2018 Attorney Participation Rate
50 - 199 Attorneys	21	57%	86%	66%	21	59.8%	87.3%	65.7%
200 - 499 Attorneys	35	61%	85%	60% <sup>7</sup>	34	65.1%	86.2%	72.3%
500 - 999 Attorneys	51	68%	90%	77%	51	67.2%	87.2%	75.6%
1,000 + Attorneys	20	72%	93%	79%	22	73.6%	91.3%	80.4%

**Table 4: Donations per Attorney by Firm Size**

Firm Size	Average Amount per Attorney Donated to Legal Services Organizations in 2019
50 - 199 Attorneys	\$713.26
200 - 499 Attorneys	\$654.70
500 - 999 Attorneys	\$794.98
1,000 + Attorneys	\$1,251.90

# 2019 REPORTING CHALLENGE SIGNATORIES

We thank and congratulate the Challenge signatories whose commitment to pro bono is positively reflected in this Report, and we look forward to a renewed and expanded level of commitment in 2020, particularly in light of the current pandemic, which has greatly increased the need for pro bono services and may have resulted in reduced billable work at many firms.

* Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld	Cravath, Swaine & Moore	Goulston & Storrs
Alston & Bird	Crowell & Moring	Graves Dougherty
* Arent Fox	Davis Wright Tremaine	Hearon & Moody
Armstrong Teasdale	Day Pitney	* Hogan Lovells
Arnall Golden Gregory	* Debevoise & Plimpton	* Holland & Hart
* Arnold & Porter	Dechert	* Holland & Knight
Baker Botts	* Dentons US	Hughes Hubbard & Reed
Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz	* DLA Piper (US)	* Hunton Andrews Kurth
Baker McKenzie	* Dorsey & Whitney	Husch Blackwell
Ballard Spahr	* Drinker Biddle & Reath	Irell & Manella
Beveridge & Diamond	* Duane Morris	* Jenner & Block
Blank Rome	Epstein Becker & Green	K&L Gates
Bradley Arant Boult Cummings	WASHINGTON, D.C., OFFICE ONLY	Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Briggs and Morgan	Eversheds Sutherland	King & Spalding
Brown Rudnick	Faegre Baker Daniels	WASHINGTON, D.C., OFFICE ONLY
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck	Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garret & Dunner	Kirkland & Ellis
* Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner	Foley & Lardner	Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel
Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney	Foley & Mansfield	Latham & Watkins
Buckley	Foley Hoag	Linklaters
* Carlton Fields	* Foster Garvey	NEW YORK OFFICE ONLY
Carrington, Coleman, Sloman & Blumenthal	* Fredrikson & Byron	Loeb & Loeb
* Cleary Gottlieb	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer (US)	Lowenstein Sandler
Steen & Hamilton	Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson	Manatt, Phelps & Phillips
Coblentz Patch Duffy & Bass	* Gibbons	Maslon
Cooley	Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher	Mayer Brown
* Covington & Burling	Goodwin Procter	McCarter & English
Cozen O'Connor		McDermott Will & Emery
		McGuireWoods
		Michael Best & Friedrich

\* Denotes Charter signatories to the Challenge

# 2019 REPORTING CHALLENGE SIGNATORIES

Milbank	Pepper Hamilton	* Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom
* Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone	Perkins Coie	Snell & Wilmer
Miller & Chevalier	Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman	* Steptoe & Johnson LLP
Miller Nash Graham & Dunn	* Proskauer Rose	Stinson
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo	Pullman & Comley	Thompson Coburn
Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp	Quarles & Brady	Troutman Sanders
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius	* Reed Smith	* Venable
* Morrison & Foerster	Robins Kaplan	White & Case
* Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough	Robinson & Cole	Wiley Rein
Nixon Peabody	Ropes & Gray	Williams & Connolly
Nutter McClennen & Fish	Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr	Willkie Farr & Gallagher
O'Melveny & Myers	Schiff Hardin	* Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr
* Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe	Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis	Wilson Sonsini
Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler	Seyfarth Shaw	Goodrich & Rosati
Paul Hastings	* Shearman & Sterling	* Winston & Strawn
* Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison	* Shipman & Goodwin	Womble Bond Dickinson
	Sidley Austin	Zuckerman Spaeder
	Simpson Thacher & Bartlett	

\* Denotes Charter signatories to the Challenge

# 2019 NON-REPORTING CHALLENGE SIGNATORIES

## These firms did not report in 2019:

Barnes & Thornburg  
Clark Hill Strasburger  
Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll  
Dykema Gossett  
Fenwick & West  
Greenberg Traurig  
Hollingsworth  
Munger, Tolles & Olson  
Norton Rose Fulbright  
Vinson & Elkins  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges

# ABOUT THE LAW FIRM PRO BONO CHALLENGE® INITIATIVE

The Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge® initiative, developed by law firm leaders and corporate general counsel, articulates a single standard for one critical segment of the legal profession – firms with 50 or more lawyers. The Challenge has become the definitive aspirational pro bono standard for large law firms throughout the world. It is unique for several reasons:

- > It uses a progressive standard – i.e., a target of either 3 or 5% of a firm’s total paying client billable hours (equivalent to 60 or 100 hours per attorney) which ties pro bono performance to firm productivity and profitability.
- > It calls for an institutional commitment, rather than an individual lawyer goal, in recognition of the reality that the policies and practices of law firms are keys to the ability and willingness of firm lawyers to undertake pro bono work.
- > It creates goals not only with respect to the amount of pro bono work to be undertaken, but also with regard to the policy elements that are essential for the creation and maintenance of a pro bono-friendly firm culture.
- > It links Challenge signatories to the extensive consultative services and resources available from PBI’s Law Firm Pro Bono Project.
- > It includes an accountability mechanism and an outcome measurement through its annual reporting process.

While statistics are an important measurement tool, the Challenge is not limited to quantifiable goals. Rather, it provides a framework, a set of expectations, and operational and policy elements that are the keys to major law firms’ ability to institutionalize and strengthen the culture and operations of their pro bono programs. Since the inception of the Challenge, PBI has worked with law firms to: promulgate pro bono policies; enhance their relationships with public interest, legal services, pro bono programs and other groups, including the courts; improve the oversight and staffing of firms’ pro bono work; design and implement pro bono partnerships with corporate legal departments; improve processes for planning and evaluating pro bono efforts; create more meaningful time-keeping mechanisms; incorporate a number of innovative pro bono models – including signature projects, rotation/externship programs, global efforts, integration with other firm goals including professional development, talent management, diversity, and associate satisfaction, and more; and successfully encourage many firms to expand the breadth and depth of their pro bono docket.

With only minor changes made in the language and principles of the Challenge since its creation, it has become the industry standard by which firms define, measure, and assess their pro bono achievements. It has also become a rallying point and a catalyst that enables firms, despite economic cycles and other pressures, to contribute materially to their local communities, to the national justice system, and to communities around the world.



# LAW FIRM PRO BONO CHALLENGE® STATEMENT

Recognizing the growing severity of the unmet legal needs of the poor and disadvantaged in the communities we serve, and mindful that major law firms must – in the finest traditions of our profession – play a leading role in addressing these unmet needs, our firm is pleased to join with other firms across the country in subscribing to the following statement of principles and in pledging our best efforts to achieve the voluntary goals described below.

1. Our firm recognizes its institutional obligation to encourage and support the participation by all of its attorneys in pro bono publico activities. We agree to promulgate and maintain a clearly articulated and commonly understood firm policy which unequivocally states the firm's commitment to pro bono work.
2. To underscore our institutional commitment to pro bono activities, we agree to use our best efforts to ensure that, by no later than the close of the calendar year, our firm will either:
  - (1) annually contribute, at a minimum, an amount of time equal to 5% of the firm's total billable hours or 100 hours per attorney to pro bono work; or
  - (2) annually contribute, at a minimum, an amount of time equal to 3% of the firm's total billable hours or 60 hours per attorney to pro bono work.
3. In recognition of the special needs of the poor for legal services, we believe that our firm's pro bono activities should be particularly focused on providing access to the justice system for persons otherwise unable to afford it. Accordingly, in meeting the voluntary goals described above, we agree that a majority of the minimum pro bono time contributed by our firm should consist of the delivery of legal services on a pro bono basis to persons of limited means or to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means.
4. Recognizing that broad-based participation in pro bono activities is desirable, our firm agrees that, in meeting the minimum goals described above, we will use our best efforts to ensure that a majority of both partners and associates in the firm participate annually in pro bono activities.
5. In furtherance of these principles, our firm also agrees:
  - a. To provide a broad range of pro bono opportunities, training, and supervision to attorneys in the firm, to ensure that all of our attorneys can avail themselves of the opportunity to do pro bono work;
  - b. To ensure that the firm's policies with respect to evaluation, advancement, productivity, and compensation of its attorneys are compatible with the firm's strong commitment to encourage and support substantial pro bono participation by all attorneys; and
  - c. To monitor the firm's progress toward the goals established in this statement and to report its progress annually to the members of the firm and to the Law Firm Pro Bono Project.
6. This firm also recognizes the obligation of major law firms to contribute financial support to organizations that provide legal services free of charge to persons of limited means.

# LAW FIRM PRO BONO CHALLENGE® STATEMENT

7. As used in this statement, the term “pro bono” refers to activities of the firm undertaken normally without expectation of fee and not in the course of ordinary commercial practice and consisting of (i) the delivery of legal services to persons of limited means or to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means; (ii) the provision of legal assistance to individuals, groups, or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights; and (iii) the provision of legal assistance to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, or educational organizations in matters in furtherance of their organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization’s economic resources or would be otherwise inappropriate.

FIRM
PARTNER EXECUTING ON BEHALF OF FIRM
ADDRESS
ADDRESS (CONT.)
CITY / STATE / ZIP
PHONE / EMAIL
DATE