



# Office of the Chief Legal and Governance Officer (“OCLO”) Pro Bono Policy (April 8, 2008)

## INTRODUCTION

Nationwide has a tradition of community involvement and service. In addition, as members of the legal profession, members of the OCLO have a professional responsibility to devote our time and resources to ensure equal access to our system of justice for all those who cannot afford adequate legal representation. To facilitate this professional responsibility, and to provide Nationwide associates with meaningful opportunities for pro bono service, the OCLO established this Pro Bono Policy (the “Policy”) for our attorneys, paralegals and administrative support staff.

## DEFINITION

Pro bono is short-hand for the Latin phrase, *pro bono publico*, which literally means, “for the good of the public”, or “for the welfare of the whole”. To the layperson, the term pro bono refers to free legal services. For purposes of this Policy, the term refers to legal services provided without a fee to:

- Individuals of limited means or charitable, religious, civil, community, governmental or educational organizations in matters primarily designed to address the needs of individuals of limited means; and
- Individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights or charitable, religious, civil, community, governmental or educational organizations in matters in support of their organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the individual’s or organization’s economic resources or would otherwise be inappropriate.

Activities designed to improve the law, the legal system and the legal profession are also considered pro bono service.

## PRO BONO PROJECTS

The OCLO Pro Bono Committee (the “Committee”, as defined below) will offer various pro bono opportunities throughout the year. These pro bono projects will generally be offered in partnership with a legal service provider, such as a local legal aid society. OCLO associates will be volunteers of the legal service provider. In general pro bono projects will be structured to be

limited in scope, finite in duration, have a training and support element, and include professional liability coverage.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Participation in a pro bono project is open to all OCLO associates; however, since many pro bono projects involve providing legal advice, OCLO associates should follow the rules of their respective jurisdictions regarding the practice of law. The Committee will strive to structure pro bono projects that offer volunteer opportunities for all OCLO associates. Participation is strictly voluntary and employment status will not be affected by a decision to participate or not to participate in a pro bono project.

Pro bono projects sponsored by the Committee may be conducted on Nationwide time during the normal workday, so long as participation does not interfere with regularly assigned responsibilities and the associate has received his/her manager's prior approval to participate. Associates will be required to track all time spent on pro bono projects and to report it to the Committee.

## **USE OF NATIONWIDE RESOURCES**

Associates may use the computer, telephone, fax machine, copier, and other Nationwide owned office equipment and supplies. Associates should not use Nationwide letterhead, including e-mail letterhead, to communicate with their pro bono client(s).

## **PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE**

All pro bono projects will include professional liability coverage provided through Nationwide's pro bono partner, such as a local legal aid society. In addition, the Committee will request indemnification from Nationwide for volunteers in any pro bono project the Committee determines may qualify as a "Nationwide Sponsored Event."

## **OTHER PRO BONO SERVICE**

There are a wide variety of pro bono service opportunities available in the legal profession. Local bar associations and legal aid service providers generally have multiple programs. While OCLO associates are not prohibited from participating in pro bono opportunities sponsored by other entities, this Policy does not cover such participation. Therefore, any pro bono service not sponsored by the Committee is done strictly on an associates' own time, using their own resources, and without any indemnification from Nationwide.

## **THE OCLO PRO BONO COMMITTEE**

The Committee is made up of volunteer attorneys, paralegals and administrative support staff from across OCLO. The Committee meets periodically to plan, evaluate, research, strategize and administer pro bono projects. Associates are encouraged to participate on, and submit pro bono project ideas to, the Committee.