



# PRO BONO MATTERS

**CHAPMAN**  
Focused on Finance®

# CHANGING LIVES: ONE STORY AT A TIME

At Chapman, we believe that everyone deserves access to an equitable justice system. As lawyers, we use the legal system to help tell a person's story, and the judges, legislators, and administrative officials who hear these stories can change sentences, laws, and lives. Whether we are representing pro bono clients directly, filing amicus briefs on their behalf, or helping to reform legislation, we believe that everyone deserves to be heard. And we are passionate about using our legal skills and knowledge to help change and improve people's lives, one story at a time.



## HELPING SURVIVORS

Chapman lawyers provide pro bono service through online self-help portals, such as the ABA Free Legal Answers portal, which connects people who have legal questions to attorneys who can answer them. One woman looking for help on the portal—a survivor of domestic violence who fled her abuser by moving to Illinois—wanted to legally change her name. State law required that all name changes appear in a local paper. Realizing that the existing name-change publication requirement was dangerous to victims of abuse and stalking, our attorneys wrote new legislation to fix it. Collaborating with an Illinois State Senator, we worked to get the bill passed and signed into law in 2018—a testament to how one person's story can change lives.



## HELPING IMMIGRANTS

Chapman attorneys help immigrants and those seeking asylum apply for legal status and gain access to the US legal system. Through our work with the National Immigrant Justice Center, our attorneys represent immigrants, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, and people who are fleeing extraordinary violence and political persecution to seek asylum. We also partner with our clients to host pro bono clinics for people applying for DACA renewal and for individuals applying for U visas (special visas granted to people who have been the victims of crime in the United States and who agree to cooperate with authorities). Our work changes lives and empowers new arrivals to become active members of their new communities.



## HELPING HEROES

In addition to helping individuals access the legal system, we are passionate about helping people who serve their communities. Our lawyers organize and volunteer at Wills for Heroes events to give peace of mind to first responders. According to Wills for Heroes, despite having dangerous jobs, upwards of 80% of first responders do not have a will. Chapman works directly with police, firefighters, and EMTs to create the essential planning documents that will ensure their loved ones will be taken care of should the first responders fall in the line of duty. Our efforts help our nation's heroes go to work each day knowing that their families are protected.

# OUR APPROACH

Pro bono work is important and necessary, but it is not always easy to connect the people who need help to the people who can help them. At Chapman, our three-pronged approach—client partnerships, process innovation, and equity advocacy—allows us to connect our attorneys and our resources to help more people.



## CLIENT PARTNERSHIPS

We like to collaborate with our client colleagues—attorneys working in the legal departments of our client organizations—on pro bono matters that can boost our impact on critical issues.

We organize clinics that pair our clients' pro bono priorities with our firm's connections, partnering with legal aid organizations and their experts to train our attorneys and clients. Then, we work through cases together in one collaborative session. In this way, we not only strengthen our client relationships, we also amplify our collective pro bono impact beyond what we could have achieved alone.



## PROCESS INNOVATION

We have learned first-hand that legal aid organizations can help more people when they have access to the same technologies and process innovations law firms use in everyday practice.

We leverage our Chapman Practice Innovations team to create scalable technology solutions for legal aid organizations. So far, we have created an automation app for the Center for Disability and Elder Law that guides preparers through common estate planning documents, and another app for Legal Aid Chicago that makes it easier and faster for volunteer attorneys to draft criminal records relief petitions.



## ACCESS FOR ALL

We use our legal skills and access to the justice system to effect real and lasting change. Our work is guided by our commitment to eliminate racism, discrimination, and injustice in all their forms.

As part of this commitment, Chapman is a proud member of the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance, which is dedicated to dismantling systemic racism. Our projects include, for example, helping organizations working to undo the effects of racial discrimination in jury selection and disparities in sentencing, as well as representing the Illinois Torture Relief Commission in its efforts to provide relief in police corruption cases.

# OUR IMPACT

Helping people who might not otherwise have access to the legal system has immense meaning and impact. Last year, Chapman attorneys provided more than **\$4 million** in free legal services. We are incredibly proud of the people and communities we help with our work.

We are honored to be recognized for our pro bono efforts: we received the Bank of America Legal Department's 2020-2021 **Pro Bono Award**; the Center for Disability & Elder Law named us their 2021 **Partner of the Year**, we received the 2021 Illinois State Bar Association's John C. McAndrews **Pro Bono Service Award**, the Public Interest Law Initiative named us to its 2021 **Pro Bono Recognition Roster**, the HANA Center honored us with the 2020 **Standing Up for Justice Award**, the American Bar Association has named us an ABA Free Legal Answers **Pro Bono Leader** for the past seven years, the Chicago Legal Clinic recognized us with the 2019 **Pro Bono Service Award**, and several of our attorneys have been awarded for their individual pro bono contributions.



“Working with Legal Counsel for the Elderly has opened my eyes to detrimental treatment of seniors. Serving as their advocate and securing rights for them has improved their lives and brought fulfillment to mine.”

– Felicia Graham, Asset Securitization Partner



“Pro bono work provides me the opportunity to strengthen connections in my community and make people feel hopeful about the legal system. It serves as a reminder of what inspired me to become a lawyer.”

– Gamal Hyppolite, Public Finance Associate



“I feel pro bono work continues to make me a well-rounded attorney. I’ve applied many of the skills I’ve learned from doing pro bono work (researching, interpersonal skill development, drafting, etc.) to my everyday work at the firm.”

– John Luchristt, Trusts and Estates Partner



“Pro bono work represents more than just a professional obligation—it’s an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on our community. It’s a chance to leverage our knowledge for the greater good, ensuring that justice and support are accessible to those who might otherwise be left behind. And it’s a reminder that our skills and resources can drive positive change and reinforce our commitment to social responsibility.”

– Alex Pollard, Asset Securitization Associate



“There is so much personal and professional satisfaction in providing pro bono services. I am empowered to learn and flex new legal muscle to help those in need.”

– Rebecca Wallenfelsz, Trusts and Estates / Pro Bono Partner



“The world and our legal system keep getting more complex, and it is getting harder for people to navigate. ABA Free Legal Answers provides me with an outlet to help people deal with bureaucracies and make complex things simpler to understand. I can answer questions at any time and from any place and help someone find a solution to a life-altering issue, and that’s a pretty great feeling.”

– Matt Wirig, Investment Management Partner

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