

What is the Pro Bono Pledge?

The BLS Pro Bono Committee's new initiative, called the Pro Bono Pledge, is intended to encourage 100% participation by BLS Members and their firms in providing active pro bono legal services to our communities. We are asking each BLS Member to publicly commit to performing 20 hours of pro bono service this year. This goal is consistent with The Florida Bar's aspirational goal of 20 hours of pro bono service per year.



What does the Pledge require of me?

By making the Pledge, you promise:

(1) to perform 20 hours of pro bono service, *and* **(2)** to self-report your hours at the end of the year. **Note:** The reporting requirement is *separate* from The Florida Bar's pro bono reporting obligation.

How do I make the Pledge?

"Making the Pledge" consists of signing the [BLS' Pledge Form](#) and returning the signed form to the BLS Pro Bono Committee: **(1)** via email to probonopledge@gmail.com, *or* **(2)** by hand delivery to a BLS Pro Bono Committee representative. We will be collecting forms during BLS meetings throughout the year.

How do I report my pro bono hours?

- Your Pledge hours must be reported to the BLS Pro Bono Committee at the email address probonopledge@gmail.com.
- You can report your pro bono hours at any time during the year, but no later than January 15 of the following year (*g.*, January 15, 2020 for a Pledge made in 2019).
- We encourage you to report your hours at year end *even if* you did not reach 20 hours.
- The Pro Bono Committee will keep track of who has made the Pledge in a given year. As the year ends, the Pro Bono Committee will send out reminders and will contact you, via the email address probonopledge@gmail.com, to request your hours report.



What is the time period for counting pro bono hours for my Pledge reporting requirement?

The calendar year. Any pro bono hours you perform between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019 count toward your 20-hour Pledge commitment.

Do the same pro bono hours I report to The Florida Bar count toward the Pledge?

Yes! The Florida Bar also has an aspirational goal for each Member of 20 hours annually of pro bono service, which Members report to The Florida Bar based on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year. Though the Pledge's reporting requirement is separate, the same hours during the appropriate time period may be counted toward both.

Does a monetary contribution count toward fulfilling the Pledge?

No. The Florida Bar's aspirational goal is either 20 hours of service or \$350 in contributions to legal aid organizations, but the Pledge specifically seeks a commitment of 20 hours of service.



Are there any benefits to making the Pledge?

- The Pro Bono Committee will be recognizing participating Members throughout the year on the website, at meetings, and in social media, and will be planning special recognition and events for Members who fulfill their 20-hour pro bono commitment by year's end.

- The Rules Regulating The Florida Bar provide: “Each member of The Florida Bar in good standing, as part of that member’s professional responsibility, should (1) render pro bono legal services to the poor and (2) participate, to the extent possible, in other pro bono service activities that directly relate to the legal needs of the poor.” Rule 4-6.1(d).
- You will be personally contributing significantly to your community and be an essential part of helping the BLS reach its goal of 100% participation of the Section!