

*KEY FINDINGS FROM
2005 MARYLAND PRO BONO REPORTING RESULTS*

Maryland Rule 16-903 (effective July 1, 2002) requires all Maryland attorneys authorized to practice law in the state to annually report on their pro bono activities. The definition of pro bono service was redefined by the Court of Appeals in Rule 6.1 with an “aspirational” goal of 50 hours of service for full-time practitioners with a “substantial portion” of those hours dedicated to legal services to people of limited means.

The Administrative Office of the Courts contracted with an independent company (ANASYS) to administer the process and compile the reporting results. There are now three years of reporting results to review and analyze. Some of the key findings from the *Current Status of Pro Bono Service Among Maryland Lawyers, Year 2005* report are summarized below.

Compliance Rate

- 31,991 Maryland lawyers **filed their pro bono service report** by the final cutoff date and were included in the report (representing over a **99% compliance rate**). Approximately 63% filed their reports online.

Amount of Pro Bono Service

- Among all licensed lawyers, **48% reported engaging in some** type of pro bono activity. **Among full-time lawyers practicing in Maryland, that number increased to 62.3%.**
- **Lawyers provided a total of 1,098,609 hours** of representational pro bono legal service in 2005 (amounting to 26,641 hours more than in 2004). They gave an additional 407,984 hours to improve the law, legal system or legal profession **totaling over 1.5 million hours of pro bono service.**
- Among all lawyers, 19.2% reported 50 hours or more of pro bono service while among **full-time lawyers, 23.3% reported donating more than 50 hours.**

Type of Pro Bono Service

- Tracking Rule 6.1, the breakdown of services provided by lawyers practicing in Maryland was as follows:
 - **54.6% rendered their services to people of limited means;**
 - 15.8% assisted organizations serving people of limited means;
 - 5.3% worked with entities on civil rights matters; and
 - 24.3% gave organizational help to non-profits.

If you combine those who provided service to individuals of limited means with those assisting organizations serving the low-income community, **over 70% of the pro bono services provided directly impact the poverty population.**

- Of those hours donated to assist people of limited means, 24.3% of those to individual clients and 15.8% of those to organizations serving the poor (or 40.1% combined) were referred *through* a pro bono or legal services organization.

Geographic Distribution

- The **Eastern Shore and Western Maryland** continued to **have higher proportions** of lawyers rendering pro bono services overall than lawyers in other regions. This year, lawyers in Washington County reported the highest percentage of lawyers rendering any pro bono service (70.2 %) with Allegany coming in a close second (69.5%) followed by Wicomico County (69.4%).
- **Somerset County** reported the **highest percentage of full-time lawyers with 50 hours** or more of pro bono service (72.7%) followed by the Dorchester County (50.0%) Calvert County and Caroline County. Counties with fairly consistent patterns of lower participation rates include Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery and Carroll counties and Baltimore City.

Practice Areas

- The **largest number of pro bono hours** was donated in the **family/domestic** practice area even though family/domestic law ranked seventh as a primary practice area. About 70% of the family law bar provided pro bono service while most family law pro bono cases were handled by lawyers who identified their primary practice areas as family, litigation or general.
- Lawyers generally provide a **high percentage of their pro bono service in their primary practice area**. Those in certain practice areas tend to **proportionately provide more pro bono service hours**. The top areas include:
 - Family Law – 69.6%
 - Elder Law – 67.8%
 - Trusts/Estates/Wills – 66.3%
 - Personal Injury – 63.2%
 - Bankruptcy/Commercial – 62.3%
 - General Practice – 61.5%
 - Litigation – 61.5%

Size and Type of Firm/Office

- **A larger percentage of solo and small firm practitioners engage in pro bono work. Close to 80% of solo** practitioners reported some pro bono service hours while almost 73% of small firm members (2-5 in size) donated their time. About 68% of those in extra large firms, with 50 or more members, reported pro bono service. Medium and large firms had the lowest percentages of pro bono hours.
- Government lawyers overall provided less pro bono hours than those in other offices. Over 17% of the full-time Maryland bar listed “government agency” as their place of business, translating into 3885 lawyers. Approximately 23.2% reported some pro bono service.

Financial Contributions

- The **total financial contribution** to organizations that provide legal services to people of limited means was **\$2,759,360**.
- Smaller proportions of lawyers in Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore contribute to legal services organizations than those in other jurisdictions. With the exception of litigators, top contributors are those who tend to provide fewer pro bono hours such as those whose practice areas are: administrative, banking, labor, and environmental law.

Summarized by the Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Service and the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland.

*The full report can be found at:
mdcourts.gov/probono/servicesreports.html.*

Special thanks to the Department of Family Administration, Administrative Office of the Courts and ANASYS for compiling and presenting this data.