



South Carolina Bar

Pro Bono Program

SOUTH CAROLINA BAR PRO BONO AWARDS

GUIDELINES

The South Carolina Bar presents awards annually to individual lawyers, law firms, organizations, and institutions in the legal profession that have demonstrated outstanding commitment to providing volunteer legal services to the poor and disadvantaged. Honoring those who have shown leadership in the delivery of services to the poor will encourage others to volunteer in their community. These awards are intended to honor not just individual time, but innovative programming that promotes the delivery of services.

Below is a description of these prestigious awards, with a form attached at the conclusion.

Purpose

The South Carolina Pro Bono Program and the South Carolina Pro Bono Board seek to identify and honor individual lawyers, law firms, government attorney offices, corporate law departments, and other organizations and institutions that have enhanced the human dignity of others by improving or delivering volunteer legal services to our state's low-income community. These services are of critical importance to ensure that representation is provided to the thousands of indigent individuals and families who need free civil legal assistance. These programs help to supplement the work being provided by programs in our state-funded by both Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and the South Carolina Bar Foundation's Interest on Lawyer's Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program.

In addition to lawyers who provide representation, there are lawyers in our state whose contributions have made an impact on the low-income community in other ways such as through the development of comprehensive programs, the delivery of impact litigation, or work that has enabled other organizations to deliver services. Their commitment, energy, and new approaches to the delivery of pro bono service serve as models for others in the legal profession. Nominators should fully describe the unique and deserving efforts of each nominee.

Candidates are legal professionals who commit their talent and training to improve the quality of justice for those unable to afford a lawyer. Some will be nominated for their longtime dedication to the delivery of pro bono legal services to the poor. Others, newer to the field, might be nominated for their creative approaches to the delivery of volunteer legal services or their commitment to representing low-income persons. Some may have brought about legislation that contributes substantially to legal services to the poor.

Definition of Pro Bono Services

For purposes of the Pro Bono Awards, pro bono service is defined, as set forth in Rule 6.1 of the South Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct, as providing legal services without fee or at a substantially reduced fee to persons of limited means or to public service or charitable groups or organizations.

.Criteria

Individual attorneys who do not derive their income delivering legal services to the poor are eligible. Law firms, corporate law departments, government attorney offices, and other institutions whose members have collectively made an outstanding contribution toward one of the award's criteria are also eligible. Organizations that are nominated may not receive or currently maintain funding from either LSC or the South Carolina Bar Foundation's IOLTA program. Not more than five awardees (this includes individuals and firms) will be selected from those who have excelled in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) Demonstrated dedication to the development and delivery of legal services to the poor through a pro bono or other volunteer program.
- (b) Contributed significant work toward developing innovative approaches to delivery of volunteer legal services.
- (c) Participated in an activity which resulted in satisfying previously unmet needs or in extending services to underserved segments of the population.
- (d) Successfully litigated pro bono cases that favorably affected the provision of other services to the poor.
- (e) Successfully achieved legislation that contributed substantially to the delivery of legal services to the poor.
- (f) Successfully secured or protected civil rights and liberties in furtherance of an organization's purpose.

Nomination Guidelines

The nominee will be judged based on the nomination provided by the nominator. Although the nominee may be accomplished, s/he may be unknown to the members of the selection committee. It is important to provide detailed information to allow the fullest opportunity to consider all nominees.

Nominee Information Form: A nomination form will be prepared and made widely available each year, soliciting the following information.

1. Contact and Summary Information (required)

- Name, address and contact information of the nominee, including contact person if nominee is other than an individual (e.g., managing partner of a firm or the chair or president of an organization);
- Name or type of pro bono or volunteer program in which nominee participated;
- Name, address and contact information of nominator(s), including contact person if nominator(s) is(are) other than an individual (e.g., managing partner of a firm or the chair or president of an organization); and
- Relationship of nominator(s) to nominee.

2. Nominee's Background

This can be the nominee's résumé, if available. If not, a two- to three-page document that details the nominee's background and bar association activities will suffice. The background should also include the nominated individual or firm's number of years in practice, primary area of practice, educational background, civic and other public service affiliations, and bar activities. It is helpful to include any supporting documents.

3. Nomination Narrative (required)

Explain how the nominee meets **one or more** of the criteria for the South Carolina Bar Pro Bono Award. This section must contain specific information detailing the nature of the nominee's pro bono contribution. It can be for a single case or project or for an accumulation of assistance over a period of time. If possible, identify who has benefited from the service. This can include description of case(s); amount of time spent on case(s); and the significance this work may have not just to the individual client(s) but also to the community as a whole. It will assist the selection subcommittee if, whenever possible, the nominator provides specific documentation or other materials that demonstrate the nominee's pro bono contribution, including news articles, brochures, hours spent, and other documentation.

The nomination packet should include detailed information on actual work. This can include the particular case or issue worked on, how it impacts the client(s), or delivery of service to the community or a particular group of clients. Outline when this work was performed, the amount of effort expended in the undertaking, and whether the case or work could have been undertaken without the nominee.

The nomination packet should include up to three names, telephone numbers, and email and regular mail addresses of others, who, if asked, could provide support and information on the nominee.

4. Letters of Support (optional)

Letters of support from other individuals or organizations who are familiar with the nominee may be included. These may be from the same individuals that are provided in question number 3.