



Aspirational Statement Encouraging NELA Members & Affiliate Members To Engage In Voluntary *Pro Bono Publico* Service

A crisis exists for millions of workers in the United States who are unable to access the civil justice system when they are confronted with an employment-related dispute. As employee advocates for equality and justice in the American workplace, NELA members and NELA Affiliate members can play a significant role in helping to close this “justice gap” through *pro bono* representation of workers who are unable to afford a lawyer to assist them with workplace legal problems.

Recognizing that *pro bono* service is a responsibility of the legal profession to society, NELA encourages its members and Affiliate members to render *pro bono* legal assistance to workers who are unable to afford a lawyer. To support this effort, NELA has created a *Pro Bono* Project, which seeks to provide resources and opportunities for *pro bono* service by members and Affiliate members. NELA’s *Pro Bono* Committee will guide and develop our *Pro Bono* Project, including the creation of an online presence through The NELA Exchange and on the NELA website (www.nela.org).

In accordance with the definitions of *pro bono* in the [American Bar Association Model Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1](#), NELA members and Affiliate members are encouraged to provide at least 50 hours of *pro bono publico* legal services per year through direct assistance to workers who are unable to afford a lawyer. This may include, but is not limited to, legal representation, advice, or counseling without a fee or expectation of a fee to persons of limited means; volunteering at established workers’ rights clinics; or collaborating with legal services organizations and worker centers. Many NELA members and Affiliate members, who already provide this kind of public service without requiring fees as a condition of representation on a regular basis, exemplify the kind of *pro bono* practices NELA hopes to foster through our *Pro Bono* Project. NELA also encourages law firms in the plaintiffs’ employment bar to consider the quality and level of an attorney’s *pro bono* activities in the same way as their fee-generating cases with respect to performance reviews and compensation, and to allow attorneys to attribute up to 50 hours, if not all, of their *pro bono* legal work as billable hours.

NELA is often referred to as the largest plaintiffs’ employment law firm in the country. By harnessing our collective talent, expertise, and commitment to protecting the rights of workers, NELA members and Affiliate members can make a unique contribution to ensure that our civil justice system is accessible to all workers regardless of their means.

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