

Pro Bono

A deep commitment to pro bono legal services

Briggs and Morgan is committed to providing legal services to low-income individuals, nonprofit and community organizations, and public interest causes, ranging from direct legal work for the indigent to extensive assistance to the courts. The firm's diverse provision of services aims to meet what we consider to be our highest professional obligation and we strongly encourage our attorneys to contribute at least 50 hours of pro bono services each year as aspired to in the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct and the firm's policy.

Briggs' pro bono activity, which is managed by a designated Pro Bono Committee and led by shareholder Andy Carlson, has provided valuable legal services to the community and received numerous accolades. Much of our pro bono work is focused on direct service to the indigent, service to community organizations, and service to the judicial system.

Pro Bono Direct Service

Briggs' pro bono activity is substantially focused on direct legal service to the disadvantaged. In recent years, this service has included:

The Advocates for Human Rights

The Advocates for Human Rights implements international human rights standards to promote civil society and to reinforce the rule of law. Briggs' lawyers do asylum and removal work for clients referred to the firm through The Advocates, as well as research projects on human rights and international law.

Children's Law Center of Minnesota

CLC provides court-appointed legal representation to children who are wards of the state or have been removed from their homes because they are in need of protection. Briggs' lawyers represent foster children through CLC, and advocate for the legal rights and necessary services for these clients, particularly in the transition from foster care to independent living.

Federal Bar Association Pro Se Project

The Pro Se Project is a collaboration between the Minnesota District Court and the Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association to address the growing challenges presented by civil pro se litigants in the federal judicial system. Briggs attorneys handle full-representation cases in federal court.

LegalCORPS

LegalCORPS provides free legal assistance in transactional matters to low-income entrepreneurs and innovators and small nonprofits in Minnesota through the services of volunteer business lawyers. Our attorneys volunteer at monthly advice clinics and provide pro bono full representation for clients referred to the firm by LegalCORPS.

Volunteer Lawyers Network (VLN)

The VLN Legal Access Point (LAP) clinic provides pro se individuals with direct, quick legal advice on a range of civil legal issues. Briggs and Morgan attorneys volunteer at several VLN LAP Clinics each month.

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Naturalization Cases

Briggs partnered with attorneys at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester on naturalization hearings for indigent individuals in a program that originated with SMRLS. Briggs attorneys prepared clients for naturalization interviews and attended the interviews with the client. Briggs has handled over 80 plus cases in the last several years.

Other direct services provided in conjunction with legal services organizations such as Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota, Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance (MMLA), the Minnesota Guardian Ad Litem Program, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS), and the Minnesota Disability Law Center.

Pro Bono Service to Community Organizations

Briggs and Morgan attorney provide pro bono legal services through, or to assist, various community agencies and programs, including:

Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota

We are extremely proud of our long-time relationship with Habitat, providing a wide range of services to the organization as pro bono counsel.

Minnesota Justice Foundation

Briggs has long served on the Board of MJF and Briggs also partners with MJF to host a Pro Bono Law Clerk each year.

Many other organizations including the St. Paul Festival & Heritage Foundation, the Sanneh Foundation, Wounded Warriors in Action, Global Volunteers, the Interest for Others Foundation, the MSBA Pro Bono Roundtable, and Management Assistance Program for Nonprofits.

Pro Bono Service That Assists the Judicial System

In recent years, Briggs has also provided a substantial amount of pro bono service to programs that help the courts or the legal system, including:

Hennepin County Public Defender Appellate Program

Briggs attorneys created, and continue to administer, a program with the Minnesota State Bar Association's Appellate Section through which private attorneys handle appeals (including oral arguments at the Minnesota Court of Appeals) for the State Public Defender's Office. Briggs attorneys typically argue several appellate cases a year through this program.

Ramsey County Mental Health Court

The Ramsey County Mental Health Court is a diversionary court program for criminal defendants with diagnosed mental illness. Our attorneys provide representation to Mental Health Court participants at court sessions, which take place a few times each month.

Hennepin County Pro Bono Mediation

Through this program, Briggs and Morgan attorneys mediate In Forma Pauperis (IFP) cases from Hennepin County District Court and appeals from Conciliation Court. Briggs attorneys, all qualified Rule 114 neutrals, have mediated more than 125 cases since the project started in 2010.

Pro Bono Accolades

Briggs has received a wide array of recognition for pro bono work, such as:

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- The Ramsey County Bar Association's 2018 "Distinguished Humanitarian Award" to Sally Scoggin for her years of distinguished pro bono and community service;
- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS) "10-Year Social Justice Hero" award to Briggs and Morgan at its 10th Annual Social Justice Uncorked celebration in 2017;
- Children Law Center's (CLC) 2017 "Distinguished Service Award" to Briggs and Morgan for its outstanding commitment to pro bono legal representation for Minnesota foster youth;
- University of Minnesota's 2017 "Outstanding Achievement Award" to Helen Meyer for attaining distinction in the legal profession, including pro bono contributions;
- Hennepin County Bar Association's 2016 "Pro Bono Publico Distinguished Service Award" to Jim Long for his career-long pro bono commitment;
- National Lawyers Guild, Minnesota Chapter's 2016 "Social Justice Award" to Scott Flaherty, Cyrus Malek, Michael Sawers and Jordan Weber for their legal defense of criminal charges brought after the 2014 Black Lives Matter demonstration at the Mall of America;
- Minnesota Lawyer's 2015 "Attorney of the Year" Award to John Degnan for his pro bono work in securing VA medical benefits for a client's post-traumatic stress disorder from the Vietnam war;
- Legal Services Corporation's 2015 "Pro Bono Service Award" to Steven Kirsch for his long-standing service as chair of SMRLS' Campaign for Legal Aid;
- Federal Bar Association Minnesota Chapter's 2015 "Pro Bono Spotlight" on Briggs and Morgan for its outstanding pro bono work through the Pro Se Project and other legal service providers;
- National Legal Aid and Defender Association's 2014 "Beacon of Justice Award" to Briggs and Morgan for devoting significant time and resources to creating and implementing innovative strategies to improve life outcomes for low income individuals;
- Minnesota Justice Foundation's 2014 "Distinguished Service Award" to Daniel Cole for his career-long dedication to pro bono;
- Ramsey County Bar Association's 2014 "Distinguished Humanitarian Service Award" to Ann Huntrods for demonstrating a substantial length of service to the bar, the community, and pro bono;
- Minnesota Lawyer's 2014 "Attorneys of the Year" award to Julie Firestone and Daniel Supalla for their significant pro bono asylum work through The Advocates for Human Rights;
- Minnesota Justice Foundation's 2013 "Outstanding Service Award" to Alan Maclin, Knapp Fitzsimmons, and Michael Wilhelm for their pro bono work with the Ramsey County Mental Health Court;
- Ramsey County Bar Association's 2013 "Excellence in Diversity Award" to Claire Joseph for her pro bono work with Minnesotans United for All Families;
- Minnesota State Bar Association's 2013 "David Graven Public Service Award" to Sam Hanson for exemplifying the high standards of the profession in his commitment to pro bono;
- William Mitchell College of Law Alumni Association Board of Directors' 2012 "Honorable Ronald E. Hachey Outstanding Alumnus Award" to Greg Stenmoe for his pro bono commitment to William Mitchell.