

About Us

Community Commitment

Our firm is grateful for the support it has received from the communities where we practice law. At each of our offices, our lawyers and professional staff members are deeply involved with cultural organizations, charitable groups, legal pro bono organizations and other programs that seek to improve the quality of life in those communities.

Giving back through nonprofit service.

We don't just practice law in communities. We live there as well. As such, members from Vorys are free to identify community or charitable organizations they wish to support and to provide the kind of support that is best suited to their personal interests and circumstances. Some of our attorneys and professional staff members serve on boards for nonprofit organizations of various sizes. Other volunteer by offering hands-on activities for charitable organizations that matter to them. Finally, in some instances, teams of individuals from Vorys have worked together to help local organizations like Habitat for Humanity, local food banks and Pelotonia.

Our firm also engages in office-wide charitable activities. Each year the Cleveland office adopts several charities that are supported through fundraising events, such as chili cook-offs, bake sales, raffles, and dress-down days. The Columbus office conducts luncheons and raffles to support Operation Feed, a community-wide food drive coordinated by the Mid-Ohio Food Bank and the United Way of Central Ohio. Additionally, the Washington, D.C. office provides support to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers.

Our firm has also received both the Corporate Caring Award and the Corporate Citizenship Award from *Business First*, central Ohio's only business newspaper.

Long-standing commitment to pro bono legal work.

Since its inception, our firm has been dedicated to providing pro bono legal services. We strive to foster an environment that encourages all of our attorneys – from the newest associate to the most senior partner – to provide legal services to individuals and organizations that otherwise may lack access to the legal system.

Pro bono work helps our attorneys to develop as lawyers and as contributing members of our communities. Assisting poor and disadvantaged individuals, charitable organizations and legal aid societies in addressing and resolving legal problems can also be a deeply rewarding experience. In addition, pro bono legal work often provides excellent opportunities for our associates to sample new areas of practice and to gain significant practical experience at early stages in their careers. We encourage our attorneys to identify and pursue pro bono activities that are of particular interest to them.

Recent Pro Bono Experience

- Providing free legal services to more than 65 businesses owned by racial and ethnic minorities through the [Vorys Initiative for Business Empowerment Program](#).
- Providing will and power of attorney documentation for indigent elderly individuals in our communities.
- Providing legal counsel in the formation of nonprofit corporations and tax-exempt status for organizations helping to provide legal services to those who otherwise would not have access to the justice system.
- Providing legal assistance for indigent tenants in eviction litigation.
- Aiding inner city business owners to obtain childcare benefits and other publicly-available funding.
- Helping veterans navigate the administrative benefits process.
- Litigating under the Hague Convention for the return of internationally missing children.
- Representing indigent defendants in criminal and habeas corpus cases, including death penalty cases, in the federal district courts and courts of appeals.
- Providing legal counsel to various community-based nonprofit organizations.
- Providing assistance to low-income taxpayers.
- Representing the Coalition for Education Reform as legal counsel in a national civil rights pro bono case that was filed in Federal Court in Wilmington in September 2016 alleging race and disabilities discrimination, among other claims. In November 2019, the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware approved a settlement agreement, consent order, and appointment of a special master.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Pro Bono Efforts

The firm has sought in recent years to align pro bono offerings with our DEI mission to ensure that we offer meaningful pro bono opportunities to all of our people.

- **Lawyers for Kids:** The firm partners with Nationwide Children's Hospital to provide patients free and confidential legal advice on issues affecting their health and well-being. For more information, see [here](#).
- **Early Release Program:** The firm assists applicants Ohio's Sentence Reduction Through Judicial Release program with drafting and filing a judicial release motion.
- **Name and Gender Change Clinic:** The firm participates in Equitas Health and TransOhio's clinics throughout Ohio to help individuals navigate the name and gender change process. For more information, see [here](#).
- **Reproductive Health Care:** The firm partners with multiple health care industry organizations regarding the advancement of reproductive health care. For more information, contact [Jolie Havens](#).

In addition, our attorneys serve on the governing boards of many legal services groups and other organizations dedicated to the cause of increasing access to legal services and the justice system. We also work with such organizations in developing new pro bono initiatives. For example, our firm recently partnered with the Association of Corporate Counsel, the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, and the Legal Aid Society of Columbus. We have also supported an Equal Justice Works Fellow, who worked with Lone Star Legal Aid in Houston, Texas.

In recognition of our deep and long standing commitment to pro bono efforts, our firm has received the prestigious Pro Bono Publico award from the American Bar Association.

