

Pro Bono

Since the firm's founding in 1984, BFKN has encouraged its members to contribute to *pro bono* legal efforts. Our *Pro Bono* Committee defines goals for the program and identifies *pro bono* opportunities for professionals and staff. The members of the Committee serve on a volunteer basis and may include, from time to time, members of the firm's administration and attorneys and paralegals from all areas of the firm's practice. The Committee is currently co-chaired by partner Edward F. Malone and associate Victoria Rusanova Cordiak. Both Ed and Vicky devote significant time to representing clients in various *pro bono* matters and act as liaisons between the organizations with which the firm is affiliated.

The firm is a charter member of The Chicago Bar Foundation Law Firm Leadership Circle, which is dedicated to supporting *pro bono* legal assistance to those in need. It is also affiliated with several legal services including the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI), the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC), Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS), Legal Aid Chicago and the Chicago Lawyers' Committee For Civil Rights (CLC). BFKN attorneys serve on the boards of directors and committees of each of these organizations, and we partner with these organizations to provide legal services to those in need.

A shining recent example of our *pro bono* work, through the National Immigrant Justice Center, is our representation of those who seek asylum in the United States as they flee persecution and dangerous circumstances in their home country, but who have no means and little understanding of the necessary process, with a special focus on matters involving minors. Together with NIJC, BFKN has earned victories on behalf of over a dozen clients providing them urgently-needed free legal representation. In addition, BFKN attorneys and paralegals obtained renewed legal status for nearly a dozen Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) applicants ("DREAMers"). Thanks to their dedication and efforts, the clients were able to renew their temporary protected status, remain eligible to renew their work authorization, and further their educational and professional careers.

As another example, the firm handles guardian ad litem cases through Chicago Volunteer Legal Services in which attorneys are assigned to help determine and advocate for the best interest of the minor child in contested guardianship cases. After interviewing the involved parties, including the child, and gathering relevant information about the situation, our team prepares a report of findings to be presented to a probate court. BFKN attorneys also appear in court on the child's behalf.

Our firm also regularly counsels not-for-profit organizations on transactional, corporate governance, real estate, and intellectual property matters. The firm encourages participation by giving attorneys and paralegals up to 100 hours per year of billable hour credit for work on *pro bono* matters.

BFKN is proud to have *pro bono* work weaved into our culture since our firm's founding. We are honored and humbled by the opportunity to use our legal skills and acumen to help people in need and support non-profits, both locally and globally, in the important humanitarian work they perform.