

**19. How do I learn more about pro bono services and ATJ Fund donations?**

For more information about pro bono services, see [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org).

For more information about financial donations, see [www.atjfund.org](http://www.atjfund.org).

**20. How do I learn more about participating in “A Lawyer Helps”?**

For more information on participating in “A Lawyer Helps,” see [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org).

Order “A Lawyer Helps” gear at [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org).

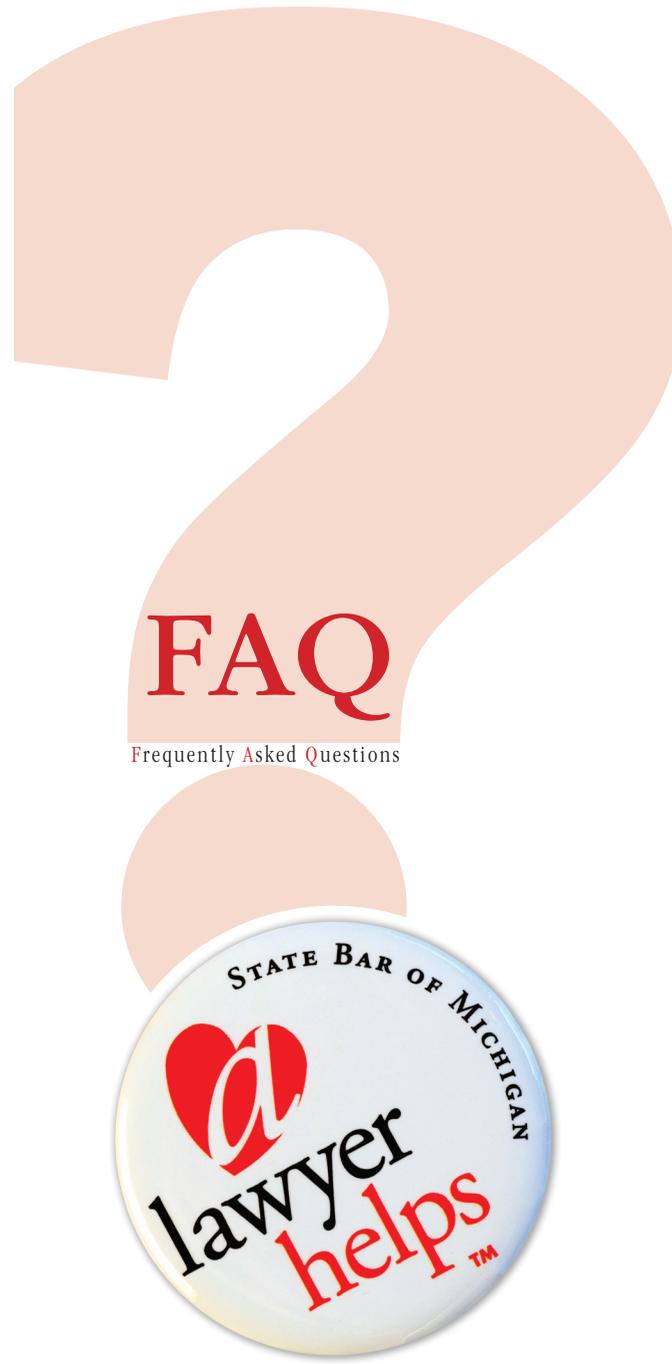
Upload stories at [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org).

—CO-BRANDING LANGUAGE:

Lawyers make a difference for people and society. They solve legal problems, provide free legal help to the poor, and give time to many other community efforts.

—BOILERPLATE LANGUAGE:

(Name of entity) participates in the State Bar’s “A Lawyer Helps” program which celebrates lawyers who make a difference for people and society and which provides lawyers with tools to continue doing so. “A Lawyer Helps” focuses on the legal profession’s priority of pro bono: free legal help for the poor and financial donations for nonprofit legal aid services. In addition, “A Lawyer Helps” also recognizes lawyers who give time to other community efforts beyond pro bono. See [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org) to find pro bono opportunities, make an Access to Justice Fund donation and upload stories of lawyers’ pro bono and community service.



# FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

**1. What is “A Lawyer Helps”?**

“A Lawyer Helps” is a State Bar of Michigan program with two goals:

- Celebrating lawyers who make a difference for people and society;
- Providing tools and resources to help lawyers continue to do so.

**2. Why is it called “A Lawyer Helps”?**

Because helping is the heart of the law. “A Lawyer Helps” focuses first on the legal profession’s priority of pro bono—free legal help for the poor and financial donations to help nonprofit legal aid agencies. But “A Lawyer Helps” also honors lawyers who additionally volunteer time to other efforts that benefit their communities.

**3. Is “A Lawyer Helps” an “image” campaign?**

No. “Image” can imply just a public relations blitz. “A Lawyer Helps” is not about making lawyers LOOK good. It simply recognizes the ways they DO good every day in their communities.

**4. Why publicize examples of pro bono and other community service?**

Recognition of the roles that many lawyers play in providing pro bono services and helping their communities is important for two reasons: to encourage other lawyers to become involved and to help other community members recognize the positive roles that lawyers play in their communities.

**5. How does “A Lawyer Helps” continue the tradition of lawyers helping others?**

In addition to lawyers and bar groups being able to replicate the good works they see recognized by “A Lawyer Helps,” tools and resources for doing so are provided on the “A Lawyer Helps” web site: [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org).

**6. What is [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org)?**

This web site is an umbrella portal for lawyers who want to:

- Give pro bono legal services to assist those in need;
- Donate to the Access to Justice Fund to help legal aid;
- Provide community service beyond pro bono.

**7. How will public education about “A Lawyer Helps” happen?**

The web site at [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org) is also accessible to the media and the public who want to have more information about how lawyers help others. Information for the media and the public about “A Lawyer Helps” or how lawyers make a difference for individuals and communities will primarily be disseminated through press releases to statewide and local legal and general media, print and electronic articles, public service announcements, posters and other information for schools, special events and meetings. All of these can link to [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org) for more information.

**8. What tools and resources are available on [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org)?**

The website is a source of information and also provides resources to facilitate lawyers’ involvement in pro bono and community service. Lawyers can find out:

- How to get a pro bono case to help a low-income family with a legal problem and how to get training, malpractice insurance and other help with pro bono;
- How to donate to the Access to Justice Fund for the statewide endowment or for a local legal aid program and information about tax benefits and how the money is used to help those in need;
- How to obtain “A Lawyer Helps” gear such as pins or tee shirts to wear while volunteering and ways to recognize lawyer volunteers.

There is also an easy web form to upload stories about lawyers who help others.

## 9. What partners can participate in “A Lawyer Helps”?

While “A Lawyer Helps” is led by the State Bar of Michigan, many other partners are also involved, including: local and specialty bar associations which facilitate pro bono and other service by their members, civil legal aid agencies which recruit and train pro bono lawyers and use Access to Justice Fund contributions to help low-income families with legal needs, the Michigan State Bar Foundation which holds the Access to Justice Fund, Michigan law schools which encourage students to volunteer and help others, and Michigan lawyers and law firms whose help makes a difference to individuals and communities. “A Lawyer Helps” is one way we can work together to continue the legal profession’s legacy of providing public service in our communities.

## 10. What are the benefits of and requirements for participating in “A Lawyer Helps”?

Benefits for local or special purpose bar associations or other groups include: being part of our public service legacy; ordering “A Lawyer Helps” products to distribute to volunteers free or at cost from the State Bar; obtaining publicity for public service events; being highlighted in the “A Lawyer Helps” web site and other publicity generated by the State Bar; receiving marketing assistance from the State Bar for efforts related to “A Lawyer Helps;” and accessing helpful resources via the “A Lawyer Helps” toolkit and State Bar staff.

In return, participants are asked to: use the authorized “A Lawyer Helps” logo without varying its design; use the brief “co-branding” language in ads or other pieces that lack text explanation of “A Lawyer Helps” (see back of brochure); use the short “boilerplate” paragraph in articles and other pieces with text to describe “A Lawyer Helps” (see back of brochure); ask lawyer volunteers to wear/use “A Lawyer Helps gear when volunteering and afterwards to promote the program; submit stories, photos and articles about lawyer volunteers to “A Lawyer Helps”; promote the legal profession’s public

service priority of pro bono (services & donations) and “A Lawyer Helps” whenever possible; and use the “A Lawyer Helps” program, language, gear and logo only for nonprofit, nonpartisan efforts regarding pro bono (service and donations) and other community service.

## 11. How can “A Lawyer Helps” participants obtain “A Lawyer Helps” gear?

Simply fill out the “Gear Request Form” available at [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org) and submit it as indicated two weeks or more before the gear is needed. The State Bar will make every effort to fill each request, subject to availability of gear and the requirements noted on the request form.

## 12. Why and when are participants asked to use “boilerplate” words about “A Lawyer Helps”?

An important goal is to make sure that all lawyers’ community activities (pro bono service, Access to Justice Fund donations, other community service) are seen as supporting each other, not competing with each other. Using accurate and consistent messages for all audiences helps promote understanding of the goals of “A Lawyer Helps.” The authorized language is brief and helps avoid confusion that could occur with multiple, differing descriptions. The “co-branding” language (see back of brochure) is a uniform way to convey the legal profession’s prioritization of pro bono while also celebrating other community service. This “co-branding” language should be used for brief communications which are not accompanied by other text explanation of “A Lawyer Helps,” such as photo ads, PSAs, and other visual vehicles. The “boilerplate” paragraph “A Lawyer Helps” description is for articles and pieces which can include more text. See [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org) and further guidance about using this standard language.

## 13. Why does “A Lawyer Helps” prioritize pro bono services & ATJ Fund donations?

For lawyers, helping starts with pro bono. Pro bono includes free legal services—the one community

service that only lawyers can perform—and donations for legal aid organizations. Moreover, these public service priorities are part of written ethical standards adopted by the legal profession; they emphasize that lawyers’ first public service obligations are to help meet the legal needs of the poor. The tradition of pro bono is one of the proudest traditions of the profession. This is fitting in light of the special skills lawyers have and their role in a justice system. See [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org) for more details. In addition to pro bono, however, many lawyers also give time for other important public service efforts in their communities. The “A Lawyer Helps” program also recognizes and celebrates these other good works.

## 14. What are the State Bar Pro Bono Standard and Pro Bono Initiative?

The Pro Bono Initiative is a volunteer State Bar group which works to develop and coordinate pro bono programs and services in Michigan as well as to advise the State Bar on policy issues related to pro bono. One longstanding policy of the State Bar is the Voluntary Pro Bono Standard, which gives lawyers guidance about annual pro bono expectations, including 3 cases or 30 hours of free legal help for low-income persons or a \$300 donation for a nonprofit legal aid program. Read the full Voluntary Standard at [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org).

## 15. What is pro bono service, and how does it differ from community service?

Pro bono service as defined in the State Bar Voluntary Pro Bono Standard contemplates free or reduced fee legal services for low-income individuals and groups. They key components of the definition are “free” “legal services” to “low income persons or organizations.” “A Lawyer Helps” recognizes that many lawyers provide community service in addition to pro bono legal services. As examples, lawyers build houses for Habitat for Humanity, serve food at soup kitchens, and coach youth sports teams. “A Lawyer Helps” also wishes to celebrate this

broader community service. For more help with this distinction, see [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org).

## 16. Why are financial donations part of lawyers’ pro bono obligation?

Because the term “pro bono” encompasses both services and money under the Voluntary Pro Bono Standard, financial contributions are a way for lawyers who are not able to provide free legal services to support access to justice for those in need. Many Michigan lawyers generously give both pro bono services and financial donations.

## 17. What is the “Access to Justice Fund?”

The Access to Justice Fund is a centralized place to donate money to support a statewide permanent endowment for legal aid or to give to a local legal aid organization. The endowment will provide revenue to help stabilize funding fluctuations that negatively affect legal aid programs. All donations are tax-deductible, and donors can also receive a Michigan tax credit for Access to Justice Fund endowment donations. The Access to Justice Campaign is a partnership of the State Bar of Michigan, the Michigan State Bar Foundation, and Michigan’s civil legal aid programs. See [www.atjfund.org](http://www.atjfund.org).

## 18. How does “A Lawyer Helps” define *non* pro bono community service?

Community service is volunteer or other public service that falls outside the scope of the services a lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide under the Voluntary Pro Bono Standard. One example is a lawyer serving food at a food bank. Another is serving on a local symphony board. Serving on a local pro bono committee or legal aid program board would qualify as pro bono rather than other community service because it calls on legal skills and advances legal aid for those in need. See also question 15 above and [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org).