

Circle of Excellence Policy and Calculation

Adopted April 2006

The Circle of Excellence is a listing that is periodically published by the Bar in recognition of the *pro bono* services that firms and corporations across Michigan donate throughout the year. The list includes both small and large organizations. The Pro Bono Initiative of the State Bar of Michigan publicly acknowledges the *pro bono* work of firms or corporations by listing them in the *Michigan Bar Journal*. These firms and corporations have adopted a formal written *pro bono* policy encouraging their attorneys to do *pro bono* work. The Initiative asks the firm or corporation to document that it has complied with the Voluntary Standard for Pro Bono participation and/or that it will make a good faith effort to comply with the Standard in the upcoming year. In order to be listed on the "Circle of Excellence" a law firm is required to complete an application and must certify that it has provided financial donations or legal services to bring every lawyer in the firm into compliance with the Standard. The firms must reapply each year.

1. Eligibility is determined on a calendar year basis. In calculating compliance with the Voluntary Pro Bono Standard, we will divide the total contributions reported by \$300.00 and the total hours reported by 30. These two numbers will be combined to get the "total firm lawyers who met the Standard." Firms whose total is equal to or greater than the number of lawyers in the firm will be recognized as eligible for the Circle of Excellence. Primary determination of eligibility will be made based on *pro bono* hours, however a reduced-fee program may be considered.
2. All donations reported by the firm to ATJ-approved agencies and non-reimbursed costs advanced by the firm are counted.
3. Only attorneys practicing in Michigan and number of *pro bono* hours contributed by Michigan-based lawyers are counted towards eligibility.
4. The *pro bono* hours of legal specialists, paralegals, law students, and summer associates may be considered if the firm's attorney combined contributions and services do not reach 100% participation.
5. Pledges are counted in the year(s) received, and the firm may designate which year a pledge is credited.

Every individual is encouraged to initiate steps within their firm, corporate legal department, or organization to adopt a *pro bono* policy and lead efforts in its implementation. Please visit www.michbar.org/programs/ATJ/home.cfm to obtain an application. Applications and further inquiries should be directed to Dionnie Wynter at the State Bar of Michigan, 306 Townsend St., Lansing, MI 48933-2012.