



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: MANDATORY PRO BONO REPORTING

Effective on January 1, 2025, Business and Professions Code [6073.2](#) requires active licensees to report the amount of pro bono legal services hours performed during the prior calendar year as well as the amount of hours of “reduced fee legal services” performed for a low-income individual, nonprofit organization, or public law library during the prior calendar year. For the 2025 fee bill cycle (February – April 2025,) attorneys have the option to report pro bono and reduced fee hours completed in 2024. Reporting will become mandatory starting with the 2026 fee cycle; attorneys are encouraged to begin tracking their 2025 pro bono and reduced fee legal services hours now to facilitate reporting in 2026.

These FAQs regarding reporting requirements are subject to revision and will be supplemented and updated as needed. For additional information on pro bono services, including where to find [pro bono opportunities](#), visit the State Bar’s [Pro Bono webpage](#). For additional questions, please email programdevelopment@calbar.ca.gov.

1. Why am I required to report my pro bono hours to the State Bar?

One goal of collecting attorney pro bono and reduced fee hours is to better understand attorneys’ provision of pro bono and reduced fee services and where there may be opportunities to develop additional opportunities for attorneys to increase access to justice by volunteering in their communities.

2. Is this reporting required in 2025?

In 2025, attorneys may optionally report their pro bono and reduced fee legal services hours in My State Bar Profile. Those reporting in 2025 should report hours completed from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024. Beginning with the 2026 licensing fee cycle, attorneys will be required to report the pro bono and reduced fee legal services hours completed from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, in My State Bar Profile.

3. Are any attorneys exempt?

The reporting requirement applies to active licensees. Among active licensees, the reporting requirement does not apply to:

- Licensees employed by an organization primarily engaged in the provision of pro bono legal services, including qualified legal services projects and qualified support centers, legal aid organizations, and nonprofit public benefit corporations.
- Full-time employees, officers, or elected officials of the State of California, political subdivisions, or the federal government.
- Licensees prohibited by their current employer from performing pro bono legal services (if declared on their My State Bar Profile).

See Business and Professions Code [6073.2](#) for more information.

4. What are pro bono legal services?

Per Business and Professions Code [6073.1\(c\)](#), “pro bono legal services’ means providing or enabling the direct delivery of legal services without expectation of compensation from the client other than reimbursement of expenses to any of the following:

- An indigent person, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 6213.
- A charitable, religious, civil, community, governmental, or educational organization in matters that are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means.
- A charitable, religious, civil, community, governmental, or educational organization in matters in furtherance of its organizational purposes.”

5. What are some examples of pro bono legal services?

Pro bono opportunities vary depending on the needs of the client community. Examples of pro bono legal services to indigent clients may include, but are not limited to:

- Representation
- Negotiation and settlement
- Screening and intake
- Brief service by phone or in-person
- Legal information or “Know Your Rights” workshops
- Document preparation and review
- Legal research and writing
- Consumer/public education
- Litigation support
- Legislative research and legal analysis

6. Does serving on the board of a legal aid organization count as pro bono legal services?

Board service for a legal aid nonprofit would qualify because all board work with such an organization is enabling the delivery of legal services to the indigent (since these organizations primarily serve indigent Californians).

7. Does serving on the board of a local or affinity bar association count as pro bono legal services?

Service to a local or affinity bar association counts toward the pro bono hours requirement if it is legal in nature (i.e., providing legal services to the nonprofit directly pursuant to Business and Professions Code 6073.1(c)(1)(B) or 6073.1(c)(1)(C)). General board service only counts to the extent that the work enables legal services to the indigent, to another “charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, or educational organization in matters that are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means,” or to another “charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, or educational organization in matters in furtherance of its organizational purposes.” Licensees should use their best judgment to determine whether non-legal work for such organizations enables the direct provision of legal work to the indigent or other nonprofits.

8. How is indigency defined?

Business and Professions Code [6213\(d\)](#) defines an indigent person as a person whose income is 200 percent or less of the current federal poverty level or who is eligible for Supplemental Security Income or free services under the Older Americans Act or Developmentally Disabled Assistance Act.

9. How do I track and report my pro bono hours?

Attorneys are expected to track their own hours for the purposes of this reporting requirement. Some law firms require their attorneys to track this time already. A nonprofit with whom the attorney provides pro bono legal services may assist in tracking hours.

Attorneys are asked to report pro bono and reduced fee hours as a range (e.g., 1-5 hours, 6-10 hours, 11-19 hours, etc.). Attorneys will also be able to report zero hours or less than one hour of pro bono and/or reduced fee service.

10. Does the State Bar have a program for attorneys that only want to do pro bono work?

The State Bar's Pro Bono Practice Program (PBPP) allows attorneys who would otherwise be inactive to maintain an active license, free of fees, to exclusively provide pro bono legal services in partnership with a pro bono legal services provider. For more information on the PBPP, maintain an active license, free of fees, to exclusively provide pro bono legal services in partnership with a pro bono legal services provider. For more information on the PBPP, see the [program webpage](#).