



The U.S. District Court appoints attorneys and firms enrolled in the Pro Bono Program to represent litigants in civil cases who demonstrate financial need and the need for legal counsel. In assessing a litigant's need for legal counsel, the Court may weigh, among other factors, the legal complexity of the issues, the apparent legal sophistication of the litigant, and the importance of protecting the rights implicated by the claim. As a volunteer, you have the opportunity to provide valuable advice and assistance to these litigants and, as a result, give the Court confidence that litigants are being treated fairly and receiving justice.

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### **Types of Appointments**

A judge may appoint pro bono counsel in civil actions for a specific purpose or for all purposes. A Specific Purpose Appointment is when a judge appoints an attorney or law firm for the completion of a specific task. Common uses for this type of appointment include, but are not limited to:

- Drafting an amended complaint.
- Preparing for and/or appearing at a mediation, settlement conference, deposition, or trial.
- Responding to a motion to dismiss or a motion for summary judgment.

An All-Purpose Appointment is when a judge appoints an attorney or law firm to represent the litigant for the duration of the case.

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### **Program Benefits**

- Appointed volunteers may apply for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for up to \$10,000.00 per case for expenses incurred during a pro bono appointment.
  - Appointed volunteers may move the Court for exemption from PACER fees related to the pro bono appointment.
  - A Guide for Representing Prisoners is provided electronically to volunteers appointed in prisoner civil rights cases to help navigate the inmate-specific details of representation.
  - Many volunteer attorneys, particularly newer attorneys, find that the Pro Bono Program offers opportunities to continue to develop oral and written advocacy skills. To encourage broad participation in the Pro Bono Program for attorneys who would like oral advocacy opportunities, the bench will grant oral argument requests on dispositive motions from pro bono panel members as often as feasible and appropriate. Pro bono panel members may request oral argument on any dispositive motion or response to a dispositive motion by including the following statement at the end of the motion or response: “As a pro bono panel member, I respectfully request oral argument on this motion.”
  - Mentorship is available to assist volunteers appointed to cases outside of their normal area(s) of practice or with limited experience in federal court.
  - Hours spent representing litigants in the United States District Court for the District of Oregon (USDC-OR) count toward Pro Bono Challenge, Honor Roll, and other OSB-sponsored programs.
  - Professors, corporate counsel, retired attorneys, and other attorneys who do not carry PLF coverage may volunteer their valuable services to the Court's Pro Bono Program and be assured that their involvement in the program is covered by the Court's PLF Policy.
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### **How to Volunteer and Find Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**

Download the [Pro Bono Application to Participate](https://ord.uscourts.gov/index.php/attorneys/pro-bono-service/pro-bono-service-opportunities) (ord.uscourts.gov/index.php/attorneys/pro-bono-service/pro-bono-service-opportunities); select the type of role you would like to volunteer for (individual attorney, firm contact, or mentor); enter your contact information, known conflicts, and number of cases you are able to accept each year; sign and date the application; and return it by e-mail to [probono@ord.uscourts.gov](mailto:probono@ord.uscourts.gov). A list of frequently asked questions and answers is located on Page 2 of the application, and additional program information and forms can also be found on the Court's Pro Bono Service Opportunities webpage at ord.uscourts.gov.

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