

Collaboration for organising your jurisdiction's pro bono week

TOOLKIT 1: STEPS TO PLAN A PRO BONO DAY/WEEK/MONTH

This is a pilot document. Download the latest version at ProBonoWeekCollaboration.org

Existing pro bono days, weeks and months are organised in different ways, and every new jurisdiction wishing to arrange an pro bono week will do it in their own way.

That said, we hope this document helps with ideas about how to plan a pro bono day/week/month. It contains two sets of suggested steps you can choose between:

- A short list of simple steps to organise either your first pro bono day, or a week with limited activity. This might be more appropriate for a smaller jurisdiction, or where pro bono is less formally coordinated. It might involve a single event and some communications for example.
- Or, a longer list of steps to organise a more detailed week (or month). This might be more appropriate for a larger jurisdiction, or one which has a more developed pro bono infrastructure. Such a week might involve multiple events, including by inviting organisations to arrange their own internal or external events.

After setting out these steps, we set out some points of detail and examples on various organisational issues e.g. appointing a patron, or creating a logo.

See also the separate toolkits for (a) ideas about events and communications activities and (b) how to organise sponsored legal walk.

1) Simple steps to arrange a first pro bono day/week

1. Set the **objective** for your first day/week. Some suggested objectives are “*encourage pro bono by celebrating pro bono lawyers*” or “*encourage pro bono by raising its profile amongst the legal profession*”.
2. Decide who will lead your **organising/planning** and approach any key **collaboration partner**. Eg pro bono clearing house, working with the support of the bar association.
3. Ask a leading, unifying figure to be your **patron**, for example your chief justice, attorney general or president of the bar association/law society.
4. **Arrange the key event** for your pro bono day, or during your pro bono week. For example a launch reception to celebrate pro bono, with remarks by your patron thanking the legal profession for volunteering. See the Event Ideas toolkit.
5. Ask the bar association/law society to promote the pro bono week, for example, by including the news (b) an article in a journal, (c) a social media campaign and/or (d) a podcast.

6. Before/during your day or week, contact law firms (etc) and influencers individually to encourage pro bono activities, including to partner with the clearing house.
7. After your day/week, take informal feedback & consider what could be done next year.

2) Longer set of steps to arrange a more detailed week

You may wish to create a project planning timeline with your own steps to help you plan.

1. Speak to relevant **colleagues / stakeholders** to gauge interest for establishing an equivalent to pro bono week in your jurisdiction and to get their “buy in”.
2. Check if there are any established **regional initiatives** for pro bono week in your area which you might join such as [European Pro Bono Week](#).
3. Consider if a particular organisation(s) or a dedicated organising committee should **lead the organisation**.
4. Decide who might be the **chair and/or coordinator** to lead the planning.
5. Consider if **in-kind help or financial sponsorship** may be needed for administration.
6. Consider appointing an influential person as a **patron or figurehead** for your week.
7. Convene a meeting **of your organising committee** if relevant.
8. Settle your **objectives** for your pro bono week.
9. Decide whether to arrange (or start with) a **day, week or month**.
10. Chose the best date, taking into account local considerations such as holidays, law school timetables, weather, and any existing weeks or events focussing on the law. Also note any regional coordination for timing e.g. in Europe.
11. Elect whether to yourself **organise event(s) centrally**, and/or whether to **invite others** to arrange their own events or communications.
12. Send out a **save the date** message to key people/organisations for the week.
13. Consider whether to promote specific **themes** for your week.
14. Design a pro bono week **logo / graphics** if appropriate.
15. Set up a **webpage/website and/or social media handle** for the week.
16. Consider whether to set up a specific **email address** for enquiries about your week.
17. Prepare a **communications strategy**, for example to collate inspiring case studies of pro bono lawyers or projects to deploy during the week.
18. Start messaging on **social media** about the week.
19. Plan in advance how you will **measure success/impact** in due course.
20. Organise your central event e.g. launch event with panel or reception with your patron.
21. If appropriate **send messages to others** to arrange their own events, and upload their details to your webpage/site.
22. Issue a **press release** per your communications strategy.
23. During the week when attending events, don't forget to take **photos**, post on social media, and keep notes of the substantive discussions.

24. After the week, **measure its success**/impact, and **obtain feedback** for plan next year.
25. Consider preparing an email, **report**, or webpage after the week summarising what happened during the week.

We now set out below additional detail and ideas about some of the above steps.

Organisational models

(a) Model 1: national bar association / law society

A model used in the USA is that their *National Celebration of Pro Bono* week is coordinated by the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Pro Bono & Public Service.

Such a model may have the benefit that the national bar association or law society could help to facilitate effective communication and coordination of activities across the jurisdiction. This model may be particularly relevant where a country has multiple state bars. It may also be relevant where the country does not have a national pro bono clearing house.

In the USA the ABA encourages state bars, non-profits and others to arrange their own events, which are registered on a central website where event details can be found together with event ideas and other resources at <https://celebrateprobono.net>.

(b) Model 2: national clearing house or other non-profits

In Australia, Cayman Islands, Nigeria and Mexico, pro bono weeks (or day/month) are coordinated by their national pro bono clearing house, or other relevant non-profit.

This model may make most sense if the non-profit already plays a central role in coordinating or promoting pro bono in the jurisdiction. One advantage of this model is to reinforce the role of the non-profit in promoting pro bono in the jurisdiction.

(c) Model 3: organising committee

Several jurisdictions in Europe and the UK have a specific organising committee to coordinate the week.

This might be a good option especially if your jurisdiction has more than one legal professional body, and/or you want to broaden engagement to a wider audience, including civil society and academic institutions.

In this way, a committee can bring together key stakeholders from across the jurisdiction, helping obtain their "buy in" for the initiative. It can also bring different resources to help with organisation, for example the bar association or clearing house could still provide administration or media support. Bringing people together as partners to organise such a joint project may help promote the sense of a pro bono community in the jurisdiction.

A committee might for example include representatives from:

- National bar association / law society
- Pro bono clearing house

- Other relevant non-profits
- Key law firms
- Representatives of in-house lawyers
- Law schools / academics

Figurehead / patron

Depending on your organisational model (for example who chairs your organising committee, bar association or clearing house), it may be useful to invite a senior or other influential person to champion the establishment of your pro bono week.

For example, in the Cayman Islands the Chief Justice championed its new pro bono week, hosting a reception for its launch to celebrate volunteers at a new pro bono clinic. In the UK], the traditional figurehead of pro bono week is the Attorney General.

The patron could for example be asked to:

- Provide quotes endorsing/welcoming your pro bono week, to use on social media, other materials, and press releases.
- Host a launch event or other reception (e.g. at court or parliament etc).
- Attend an event and make a speech to thank lawyers.
- Issue a proclamation to thank lawyers across the jurisdiction for their pro bono.

In-kind help and financial sponsorship

Consider whether the organisation of your pro bono week would be helped by in-kind support from the bar association or another organisation, for example to run the social media campaign, or if a law firm could host an event or drinks reception.

Financial sponsorship from larger law firms and other commercial entities may be available for your pro bono week. Consider though whether other firms might be discouraged from taking part if the brand of a single firm is too prominent (which might be addressed by co-branding with multiple firms).

Centrally organised events v. inviting others to organise

Pro bono weeks in different countries may comprise of:

- Events and communications organised centrally by the central coordinator. This may be particularly relevant where a pro bono week is arranged for the first time.
- An encouragement or invitation issued to any interested stakeholder to arrange their own events and communications, under the banner of the pro bono week.
- A mixture of the above two.

Plan your objectives and how to evaluate

Outcome-based planning may involve:

1. First, decide your objective(s), in other words your desired outcomes. For example, to raise the profile of pro bono amongst the legal profession.
2. Second, plan your activities back from those objectives, to decide on events and/or communications which will best help you achieve your outcomes. For example, a high profile pro bono awards ceremony or reception with the chief justice or attorney general.
3. Third, plan how you will evaluate, i.e. to measure success of your activities against your outcomes. For example, measure numbers of lawyers attending the event; measure click rates for a story about the event; feedback form for attendees; survey the legal profession etc.

There is presentation on outcome-driven planning and evaluation at probonoweb.org.uk/event-ideas-and-tips

A webpage/site and/or social media handle for your pro bono week

A pro bono week celebration may benefit from either having (a) a webpage or microsite on an existing website (e.g. of the national bar association or clearing house), (b) a standalone website, and/or (c) social media handle(s) for the pro bono week.

Your webpage or website might include:

- An explanation of the objectives of your pro bono week, and an invitation to get involved.
- Details of event(s) you are centrally organising for your pro bono week.
- Details of any other events organised by others.
- Ideas and resources that others can use to help them organise events or communications.
- Compilation of videos, social media posts, photos etc from your previous pro bono week.
- Links or information to signpost lawyers / firms on how they can do pro bono in your jurisdiction.
- Links or information on how the public can access free legal help.

Examples of webpages and websites from existing pro bono weeks can be seen at:

- pilnet.org/event/2022-european-pro-bono-week The PILnet website collates information on pro bono weeks across Europe.
- pilp.ng/probonoweb
- probono.net/celebrateprobono
- probonocentre.org.au/events/walk-for-justice
- probonoweb.org.uk
- accesstojusticebc.ca/a2jweekbc

Use social media, newsletters and other communications to drive visitors to your pro bono week webpage/site.

Logo and branding

Some existing pro bono weeks have a dedicated logo or branding. This enables event organisers to promote their events using a unified brand, and where appropriate to cross-brand with organiser or partner logos e.g. law firms, bar association etc. It also enables joint-branding on social media graphics, videos and other forms of communications that occur during pro bono week.

See for example the logos/branding at:

- Europe: <https://www.pilnet.org/our-work/european-pro-bono-week/>
- USA: probono.net/celebrateprobono/promote
- UK's logo at probonoweb.org.uk/media-resources

Resources for your event organisers

If you are encouraging others to independently organise their own events or communications during your pro bono week, consider providing shared resources to them. For example, ideas for events, social media suggestions, case studies etc.

See for example the ideas and resources offered at:

- <https://www.probono.net/celebrateprobono/ideas/>
- <https://www.probono.net/celebrateprobono/promote/>
- [https://probonoweb.org.uk/resources](http://probonoweb.org.uk/resources)

Ideas for events and communications activities

See the second toolkit for suggestions and resources on the types of activities that could be arranged during your pro boon week.

YOUR IDEAS AND FEEDBACK

We would love to hear from you with additional ideas, or additional web links or other resources that could help improve this toolkit. Please email info@ProBonoWeekCollaboration.org