



## Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

The lawyers and staff of Weil, Gotshal & Manges are honored to receive the 2009 Pro Bono Publico Award, which is especially meaningful because candidate law firms must be nominated for the

award by other persons or organizations. For the past several years Weil Gotshal has enjoyed the strong support of five nominating organizations: The Legal Aid Society, Lawyers Alliance for New York, New York Lawyers in the Public Interest, Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program, and Legal Services for NYC. We are gratified by their support for this recognition because it is emblematic of the deep relationships the firm seeks to build with organizations in the pro bono arena.

Since embarking on a project to revitalize its approach to pro bono, Weil Gotshal has posted tremendous increases in pro bono hours and matters. The cornerstone of the firm's approach is our firm-wide policy to encourage participation and embed a pro bono ethic into the firm's culture. The firm maintains the goal that every lawyer perform 50 hours of pro bono work each year; the expectation that every partner work on a pro bono matter each year; and the requirement that every new entering attorney – from first-year associates to lateral partners – take on a pro bono matter within the attorney's first two years at the firm.

The policy has clearly produced the desired results. Since 2004, Weil Gotshal has seen a 100% increase in the number of hours devoted to pro bono work firm-wide. In 2008 alone, the firm performed over 89,000 hours of pro bono work, an average of roughly 82 hours per lawyer in the US, and equivalent to 45 full-time lawyers.

While the raw numbers are useful – they help to quantify the impact of what the firm does – they capture only part of the story. Along with encouraging greater lawyer participation, Weil Gotshal's guiding philosophy is to bring genuine change to the pro bono world by challenging the traditional pro bono model associated with large law firms. Rather than just log hours, Weil Gotshal seeks to develop and implement new models for the provision of pro bono legal services. That often means formulating new ways to deliver pro bono service, such as partnering with The Legal Aid Society to provide pro bono representation in housing court, a rarity for large law firms before Weil Gotshal attorneys did it. Similarly, the firm seeks innovative approaches to counseling pro bono organizations, helping them to better leverage their resources and time to drive efficiencies within their own organizations.

More than simply logging large numbers of pro bono hours, Weil Gotshal aspires to demonstrate leadership in the pro bono arena by encouraging and developing innovative approaches to problem solving. This philosophy has led the firm to partner directly with the providers of aid and services – such as Human Rights Watch, Oxfam, and the UN World Food Program – to help them think proactively about how the considerable skills and resources of law firms and their lawyers might enhance each organization's core mission. These partnerships have the potential to revolutionize not only the effectiveness of aid and service delivery on a global basis, but the very idea of what pro bono can do.

The world's top law firms handle transactions and litigations of extraordinary sophistication. Weil Gotshal's vision for pro bono is that the same level of sophistication be applied to challenges – like human rights, climate change, and economic development – that require both local action and global resolve. The firm is very proud of and grateful for the ABA's recognition and is no less excited about what the future holds for pro bono programs across the legal industry.

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*Founded in 1931, international law firm Weil, Gotshal & Manges is headquartered in New York and has over 1,300 lawyers in 21 offices. Weil Gotshal recently became the first law firm to hold concurrently the ABA's Pro Bono Publico Award and the Pro Bono Institute's Pickering Award, the two greatest pro bono honors in the US.*