Pro Bono/PD Corner

From NALP’s Pro Bono and Professional Development Task Force, welcome to the “Pro Bono/PD Corner.” This space is dedicated to exploring the benefits and opportunities associated with using pro bono to achieve law graduates’ and practicing lawyers’ professional development goals. We hope that you will tune in monthly for quick tips and information.

Our first tip is simply to help lawyers reframe their thinking about taking on pro bono matters. Linking pro bono and professional development empowers associates to engage in pro bono opportunities that they are interested in and also meet their benchmarks. The next time an associate is faced with a lack of developmental assignments, look for pro bono opportunities to help meet the need. For example, litigation associates can get deposition experience by volunteering with the City of New York’s pro bono program, which allows junior lawyers at law firms to conduct depositions on behalf of the City. In Chicago, real estate associates can cut their teeth on residential closings for low income individuals purchasing affordable housing units through the Neighborhood Stabilization program. In Texas, transactional attorneys get one-on-one client counseling experience by volunteering with the Legal Assistance to Micro-Enterprise Project and providing indigent entrepreneurs with legal services to start, maintain, or expand small businesses.

By linking pro bono programs with professional development planning and training, we can help lawyers build their core skills and also help meet the growing need for pro bono legal assistance.