



Promoting  
justice

forall

2023  
Pro Bono  
Report

# Table of Contents

## Introduction

Letter from Hossein Nowbar and Beth Henderson.....3

Closing the justice gap .....4

2023 Pro Bono by the Numbers .....6

## Providing direct legal services

Kids in Need of Defense.....8

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.....10

Afghan Asylum Initiative .....12

Immigration Equality .....14

Virtual Records Clinic.....16

Seattle Clemency Project .....18

ProJourn .....20

Virtual Help Clinic .....22

National Veterans Legal Services Program .....23

Make What’s Next .....25

## Advancing more diverse and inclusive communities

Racial Restrictive Covenants Project .....28

Women’s History Month Pro Bono Volunteer Celebration .....29

Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program.....30

Leadership Council on Legal Diversity service project .....32

## Achieving more through the power of technology

Achieving more through the power of technology .....34

## Scaling access to justice with our partners

Pro Bono Maturity Model.....37

Community events .....38

# Letter from Hossein Nowbar and Beth Henderson

As we publish Microsoft's fourth annual pro bono report, we reflect on the impact of the Microsoft Pro Bono Program and the opportunities that lie ahead. This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), a legal services organization Microsoft cofounded in 2008 with the goal of ensuring that no child would appear in US immigration court alone. While our US engagement with KIND remains as strong as ever, Microsoft employees outside of the United States have also supported KIND's recent expansion efforts to meet the needs of unaccompanied children worldwide.

Just as our pro bono partners like KIND have grown and evolved, so has the Microsoft Pro Bono Program. To track our progress and to offer a resource to other in-house legal departments looking to develop their own pro bono programs, we created a **Pro Bono Maturity Model** in collaboration with the **Corporate Pro Bono project of the Pro Bono Institute (PBI)**. This self-guided tool helps corporate pro bono programs assess where they are on their pro bono journeys and provides a framework for building and growing an in-house pro bono program.

With growing awareness about the need for pro bono at Microsoft and beyond, we are excited about the role technologies, such as responsible AI, can play in helping more people get access to legal aid. In this year's report, you will find a section entitled "**Achieving more through the power of technology**" and an overview of the ways in which the Microsoft Pro Bono Program has used Microsoft technology to support pro bono volunteers, partners, and clients.

We are eager to expand upon this work in the year ahead and to explore how responsible use of AI can offer solutions at scale. We will continue the imperative work of ensuring that the technology we create benefits everyone on the planet through **Microsoft's societal impact commitments** to expand opportunity, earn trust, protect fundamental rights, and advance sustainability.

"With growing awareness about the need for pro bono at Microsoft and beyond, we are excited about the role technologies, such as responsible AI, can play in helping more people get access to legal aid."

Finally thank you to all the volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to our program. Your contributions are invaluable, and we are grateful for your support. We also want to thank the people who have shared their stories with us, allowing us to spread awareness and make a difference. Your courage and willingness to share your experiences are truly inspiring.



**Hossein Nowbar**

*Chief Legal Officer, Microsoft*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hossein Nowbar".



**Beth Henderson**

*Assistant General Counsel and Senior Director of the Microsoft Pro Bono Program*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Henderson".

# Closing the justice gap

In the United States, we are proud of the founding principle of equal justice under the law. This ideal is enshrined in our most important institutions, including the Supreme Court, yet it is far from reality today.

Individuals are not entitled to legal counsel for civil legal issues. That means representation, for the most part, is limited to those who can afford it. Those who cannot are left to navigate complex, high-stakes cases and legal systems on their own. In 2022, 92 percent of low-income Americans facing civil legal problems, including eviction, domestic violence, and deportation proceedings, received inadequate or no legal support. People of color, veterans, women, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and other marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted by the lack of access to representation.<sup>1</sup>

This justice gap presents a crisis. Legal and business professionals are rising to meet the responsibility of righting this inequity, together. As you will read in this report, Microsoft pro bono volunteers and partners are scaling access to justice and providing direct legal aid when individuals need it the most. Their tireless efforts show clients that they are not alone.

## **This year's report highlights three ways in which the Microsoft Pro Bono Program has worked to close the justice gap:**

- Providing direct legal services
- Advancing more diverse and inclusive communities
- Using technology to enable pro bono volunteers and partners to achieve more

“

Low-income Americans do not get any or enough legal help for 92% of their substantial civil legal problems.

Source:

[Executive Summary | The Justice Gap Report \(lsc.gov\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> Source: [The Report | The Justice Gap Report \(lsc.gov\)](#)

Microsoft has also collaborated with access to justice leaders to raise awareness of the justice gap and inspire the development of innovative solutions:

- In October, the Microsoft Pro Bono Program hosted Professor Rebecca Sandefur of Arizona State University's School of Social and Family Dynamics, Jim Sandman of the Future of the Profession Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law, and Lisa Dewey, Pro Bono Partner at DLA Piper—three leading experts on the access to justice crisis—who inspired employees to get involved.

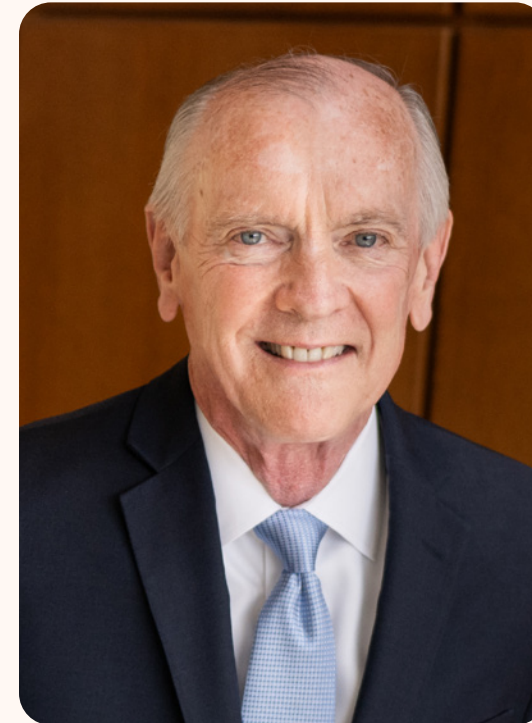
**Listen to the podcast: [Bridging the Justice Gap in America](#)**

- In April, Beth Henderson, Senior Director of the Microsoft Pro Bono Program, spoke at Stanford Law School on a panel with Jim Sandman and Lisa Dewey on the topic of **Regulatory Reform, Legal Innovation, Pro Bono, and Access to Justice**.

The justice gap will not be bridged in a single year, but this year's annual report shows progress. Read on for stories of impact and inspiration.



*Professor Rebecca (Becky) Sandefur of Arizona State University's School of Social and Family Dynamics*



*Jim Sandman of the Future of the Profession Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law*



*Lisa Dewey, DLA Piper Pro Bono Partner*

The Microsoft Pro Bono Program hosted Becky Sandefur, Jim Sandman, and Lisa Dewey—three leading experts on the access to justice crisis—who inspired employees to get involved.

## 2023 Pro Bono by the Numbers

4,700

Pro bono hours reported through the **Microsoft Give Program**

64

Students served through **Street Law**

75

**DACA** clients served

896

Hours volunteered for **KIND**

300+

Hours volunteered for the **Immigration Equality Clinic**

700+

Hours volunteered for **Seattle Clemency Project**

# Providing direct legal services

From upholding immigrants’ rights to guarding the right to equal justice, Microsoft pro bono volunteers take action using their legal expertise to advance social and economic well-being in the community.

- Kids in Need of Defense..... 8
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.....10
- Afghan Asylum Initiative .....12
- Immigration Equality .....14
- Virtual Records Clinic.....16
- Seattle Clemency Project .....18
- ProJourn .....20
- Virtual Help Clinic .....22
- National Veterans Legal Services Program .....23
- Make What’s Next .....25

# Kids in Need of Defense

## Ensuring that no child faces the immigration system without legal aid

In 2022, more than 150,000 children entered the United States without an adult.<sup>2</sup> Dangerous political, social, and environmental crises in their home countries force them to seek safety and a better future in the US. If they make it to United States soil, many must then face another difficult challenge: immigration court.

Without legal representation, children must make their case for legal immigration status on their own. Yet roughly 9 in 10 children without a lawyer lose their case and are deported back to the unsafe conditions from which they fled.<sup>3</sup>

### A not-so-straightforward Leave to Remain case—[Kids in Need of Defense UK](#)

In response to the unmet legal needs of unaccompanied children worldwide, KIND has expanded its efforts outside of the United States. Microsoft employees are helping to support this work, as highlighted by this story about a KIND UK pro bono case.

Read more at [KIND UK](#)

The legal services organization [Kids in Need of Defense \(KIND\)](#) works to help these children. Since 2008, when Microsoft cofounded KIND, pro bono volunteers have partnered with KIND to support children through this country's complicated, lengthy immigration process. Microsoft volunteers conduct interviews, file documents, and represent clients in court—all so that their clients can safely and legally stay in the United States.



Brad Smith, Vice Chair and President, Microsoft helped cofound KIND in 2008. This year, volunteers donated nearly 900 hours to helping unaccompanied minors with their immigration journey.

This year,

75

Microsoft volunteers dedicated nearly

900

hours helping

42

clients. Five clients received U.S. permanent residency.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Council on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Detention of Child Migrants*, March 2023

<sup>3</sup> Source: Congressional Research Service, *Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview*, Sept. 2021



Kids in Need of Defense (cont.)

## Enni's story

At age 12, Enni Ramirez fled her country to find safety. Now she has a green card and a new life with the help of Megan Yoshimura, KIND, and the Microsoft Pro Bono Program.

“

I don't think I would have had my papers if I didn't have a lawyer. I felt very safe and very grateful that they were able to help me.”

*Enni Ramirez*

[Read Enni's story here](#)



# Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

## Providing peace of mind to Dreamers facing uncertain futures

In 2012, President Obama issued the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) executive order, enabling people who were brought to the United States as children to work and stay in the country. Participants in the program, called Dreamers, confront continued and ongoing anxiety and uncertainty when renewing their status every two years.

Roughly 580,000 people from 200 countries are active DACA program participants.<sup>4</sup> Every two years, these Dreamers must renew their status to legally live, study, and work in the United States. The renewal process can be confusing, scary, and expensive. The program faces constant political tensions and litigation, perpetuating an uncertain future for Dreamers.<sup>5</sup>

Since February 2013, the **Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP)** and Microsoft have hosted free monthly DACA clinics to help Dreamers secure DACA status and employment authorization. The services that volunteers provide offer peace of mind as they help Dreamers understand and complete the application forms accurately—a crucial step to ease the anxieties of participants, given that even inadvertent mistakes can jeopardize a DACA application.

Microsoft Service Engineer Cecilia Garcia Betancourt has channeled her drive to help others—and her experience of being a Dreamer herself—into supporting approximately 20 people during DACA clinics.

“I tell them, ‘I started right where you are, I know exactly what you’re going through.’ It feels amazing when they tell me they’re going to keep going. They’re grateful, but I do it for me, too. It gives me joy to give back.”

### **Cecilia Garcia Betancourt**

*Microsoft Service Engineer  
and pro bono volunteer*

This year,

39

Microsoft volunteers  
helped

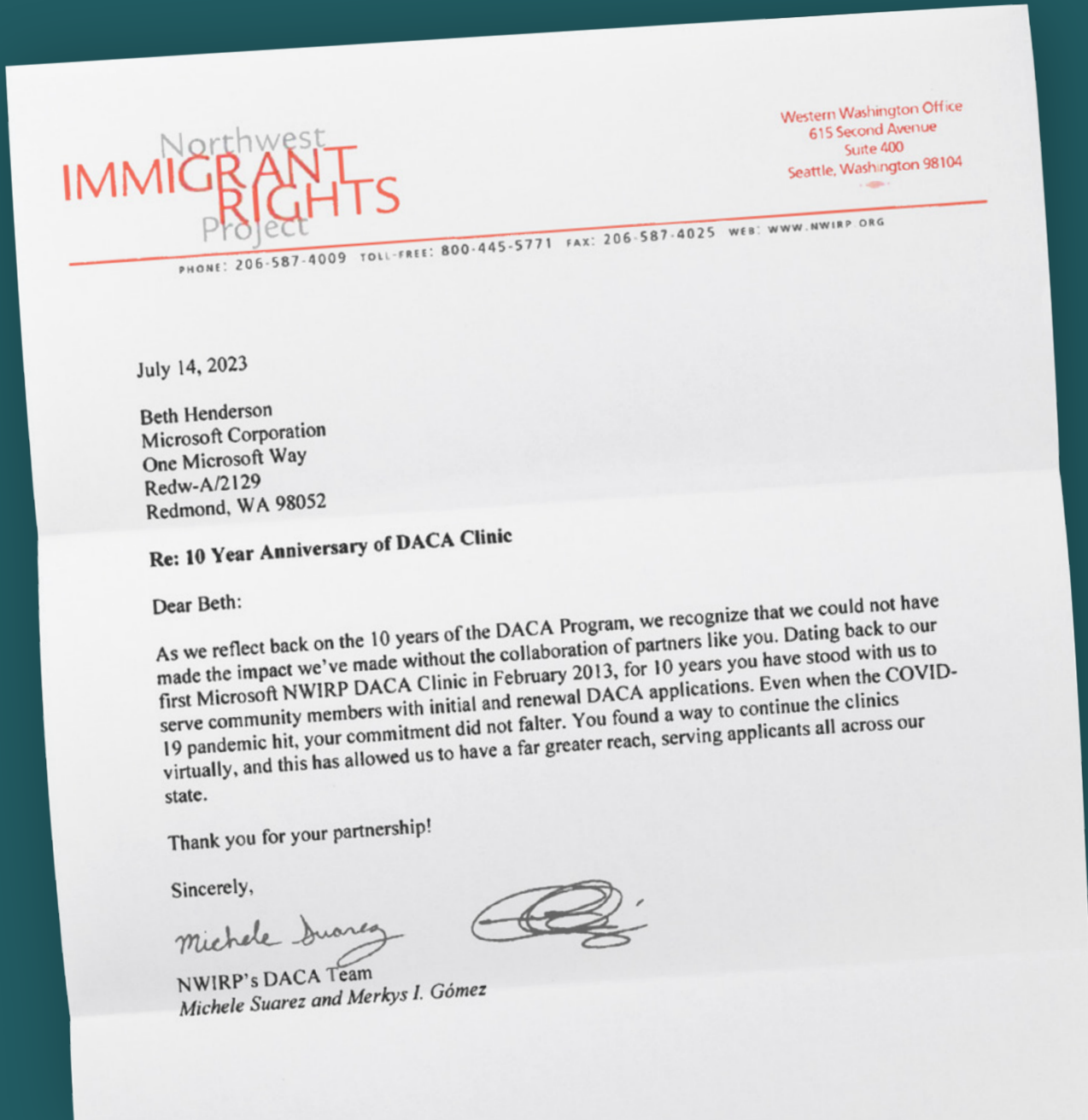
75

clients process their  
DACA renewals.

<sup>4</sup> Source: KFF, *Key Facts on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)*

<sup>5</sup> Source: USCIS, *DHS Begins Limited Implementation of DACA under Final Rule* | USCIS

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (cont.)



“

...we recognize that we could not have made the impact we've made without the collaboration of partners like you.”

NWIRP's DACA Team  
Michele Suarez and Merkys I. Gómez

# Afghan Asylum Initiative

## Helping at-risk Afghan nationals gain safe harbor in the United States

When the United States military withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, thousands of Afghan nationals had to evacuate. They face risks to their safety if they return—and for those who entered the United States, a complicated legal process that often involves strict application deadlines.

Since the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in 2021, over 100,000 Afghans, many of whom helped the US government, have fled Taliban rule and sought safety in the United States.<sup>6</sup> With nonprofit and community support, they have resettled across the United States. While some of them are eligible for special visas, many more must apply for asylum or be returned to Afghanistan where the threat of violence awaits them.

Like other asylum seekers, Afghan evacuees are not guaranteed legal representation in the United States. The immigration process, however, can be confusing, intimidating, and time-consuming, especially for those impacted by the trauma of violence.

In response to this issue, Microsoft partnered with the immigration law firm Fragomen to assist Afghan evacuees applying for asylum. Volunteers conduct interviews, help clients compile in-depth asylum applications, and accompany clients to hearings. In short, they help establish that evacuees would face persecution, or even death, if they returned to Afghanistan.

Since launching this initiative, 20 Microsoft volunteers have supported 7 clients and their families with asylum cases. This year, 2 of these clients and their families received a grant of asylum.

“

I felt a huge sense of relief when we learned that our client was granted asylum and feel like my team and I had a direct impact on our client in this life-or-death case. It was one of the highlights of my career.”



**Allison Lauterbach Dale**

*Senior Corporate Counsel and pro bono volunteer*

<sup>6</sup> Source: Homeland Security: [Statement from Secretary Mayorkas on the Two-Year Anniversary of Operation Allies Welcome](#) | Homeland Security (dhs.gov)

Afghan Asylum Initiative (cont.)

“

When I saw the letter that my asylum was granted, I just cried. Not just for me, but my family, too.

*Afghan asylum seeker*

## People are here for me, they welcome me, they support me

“When I was in Afghanistan, I saw that when women contribute to their household income, others respect them and listen to their voice. I hoped to bring change to women’s lives. I wanted to bring changes to my country.

Then the government collapsed. I received threat letters. They said, ‘you are working for US purposes, your work is against Islam.’ They were threatening me and my family. The Taliban was aware of my work; I was exposed. They came to our house. I changed my location, changed homes, but anywhere I was not safe. That was no way to stay.

I did not want to go, but I had to go. When I evacuated, I got help in my asylum case. The amazing pro bono team worked with me very hard. They listened to me with passion. It was the feeling, people are here for me, they welcome me, they support me. I was getting help with asylum, and I was getting recovery, too.

In the asylum application, my history, the documentation, everything was reflected well. We expected to receive notification about the decision maybe after four weeks. We received notification after only one week.

When I saw the letter that my asylum was granted, I just cried. Not just for me, but my family, too. Now I can support us financially, I can work here, I can help my family. I am also connecting with other organizations and working with newcomers like me. I share my experience because it really helps to share your story and connect them with resources. We are trying to help as many people as possible.

People like me, we had no choice. We had to leave Afghanistan. We cannot go back. I know 100 percent, the pro bono team helped. Now I have asylum granted, and I’m in good shape. I’m very hopeful.”

*Client name and identity omitted to protect their safety*

# Immigration Equality

## Assisting LGBTQIA+ clients in applying for asylum

Worldwide, people face persecution and risk of harm for their sexual orientation and gender identity. For these individuals, navigating the US asylum system can be overwhelming and complicated.

At least 67 countries have laws that criminalize homosexuality, including seven that may impose the death penalty.<sup>7</sup> In addition, at least nine countries outlaw diverse gender identities and expressions.<sup>7</sup> Further, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual (LGBTQIA+), along with people with HIV often endure discrimination, physical and psychological violence, and threats on their life and well-being.

While a growing number of people are seeking political asylum in the United States based on persecution of their gender identity or sexual orientation,<sup>8</sup> navigating this process without legal representation lowers the chances of success: Only about one in five unrepresented individuals are granted asylum.<sup>9</sup>

This year, **Immigration Equality**, the law firm **Akin Gump**, and Microsoft hosted a clinic to help LGBTQIA+ and HIV-positive asylum seekers. During the event, Microsoft volunteers worked with their law firm counterparts to help clients prepare asylum applications, while Immigration Equality staff attorneys and experts offered guidance to the volunteers. Microsoft employees also volunteered their language skills to interpret in Russian, Turkish, and Spanish.

“Hosting the clinic in partnership with Microsoft allowed Akin Gump to form robust legal teams to support and service each Immigration Equality client,” shared Steve Schulman, Partner at Akin. “We hope this clinic encourages volunteers to continue to participate in meaningful, rewarding pro bono work.”

“For my client, his health and well-being were at stake. I was able to translate and communicate with him in a safe space so he could tell his story.”



**Jenny Diaz**

*Microsoft Paralegal and pro bono volunteer*

20

Microsoft volunteers gave

300

hours to help

9

clients to prepare asylum applications.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Human Rights Watch, *The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name*

<sup>8</sup> Source: UNHCR, *LGBTIQ+ Claims*

<sup>9</sup> Source: TRAC Immigration, *Asylum Grant Rates Climb Under Biden*

## Immigration Equality (cont.)

“

This clinic demonstrated that when a dedicated in-house team and law firm come together to donate their talents and expertise the results are remarkable. Immigration Equality looks forward to using this model to reach more LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers.”



**Stéfanie Lacroix**

*Staff Attorney, Immigration Equality*

# Virtual Records Clinic

## Assisting justice-impacted individuals to get relief from the stigma of past convictions

Washington State law allows people to clear certain past convictions. A cleared conviction can help people overcome barriers in education, employment, housing, and more, but the process can prove to be unduly challenging for those without legal representation.

Since 2020, Microsoft pro bono volunteers have donated their time to a Virtual Records Clinic, an initiative formed in partnership with Microsoft, the Post-Conviction Unit of the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, and the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle.

Volunteers help in multiple stages. Some review court records and assess outstanding legal financial obligations and other imposed conditions to gauge individuals’ eligibility. Others write and file pleadings. Pro bono attorneys also represent clients in court.

This year, Microsoft helped organize a Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) Day of Service, by developing a volunteer opportunity focused on the first step of Virtual Records Clinic work. Sixteen LCLD fellows and alumni assessed the eligibility of 42 cases, streamlining the next steps in the legal process.

Together, volunteers with the Virtual Records Clinic help relieve the stigma of past convictions, enabling individuals to improve their lives.



Microsoft pro bono volunteers shared their time and skills at a Virtual Records Clinic to help relieve individuals of the stigma of past convictions and improve their lives.

“Volunteering with the Virtual Records Clinic makes a tangible impact on individuals’ lives. By vacating convictions, we can help them find a job or a place to live and create a better path forward.”

**Kristen Pugsley-Onsager**

Assistant General Counsel and Microsoft pro bono volunteer

This year,

32

Microsoft volunteers gave

279

hours of pro bono service to vacate

30

convictions for

9

individuals.



## Virtual Records Clinic (cont.)



Through the partnership with Microsoft's pro bono team, we have orchestrated a symphony of transformation by helping individuals vacate and expunge their criminal records. Together, we've not only cleared legal barriers but also paved the way for second chances and renewed opportunities."

**Nick Jeffreys**

*Community Outreach Organizer, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle*

Read more about this initiative:

**[Urban League's Vacating Records Programs Helps People Get a Fresh Start](#)**

# Seattle Clemency Project

## Fighting to secure freedom from a lifetime in prison for rehabilitated individuals

Many states in the United States operate a parole system that provides incarcerated people with early release if they can demonstrate remorse, rehabilitation, and readiness to rejoin society. But Washington is one of 16 US states that abolished parole.<sup>10</sup>

In the absence of parole, justice-impacted individuals may apply for resentencing or clemency. When incarceration no longer serves its purpose—when a person demonstrates remorse, rehabilitation, and readiness to rejoin society and is deserving of another chance—resentencing or clemency can grant individuals' release before their original sentencing.

The clemency and resentencing processes are complicated and virtually impossible without legal representation. Through the **Seattle Clemency Project (SCP)**, Microsoft volunteers provide pro bono support to reformed individuals.

Microsoft volunteers Mia Scavella-Little and Juan Santillan recently helped their SCP client successfully navigate the ISRB petition process and secure early release from prison after establishing that the 47-year sentence he received as a juvenile no longer served its purpose.

**Read Bobbie Lehman's story [here](#).**

Over the course of an SCP case, volunteers meet with currently incarcerated clients to understand their story and how they have turned their lives around. Volunteers help clients shape a narrative to successfully explain to a prosecutor or clemency board how they have reformed their lives and are ready to reenter society.

Microsoft volunteers also assisted clients who received a lengthy or lifetime prison sentence as a juvenile and who are eligible under Washington State law to request early release by petitioning the Washington Indeterminate and Sentencing Review Board (ISRB).



*Shont Miller and his wife, Katrina, with their client Gregory Steen, who was released in 2021 after they, in partnership with the Seattle Clemency Project, obtained a resentencing from life in prison to time served (13 years) under Washington State's revised 3-strikes law. While in prison, Greg was a leader in bringing college education to inmates, developing and teaching classes on confronting addiction, and earning a degree from Seattle Central College.*

Thanks to these efforts, Microsoft volunteers have collectively prevented

# 142

years of prison for people deemed eligible for early release.

Read more about the special relationship between Seattle Clemency Project and Microsoft in the [Seattle Clemency Project 2023 Impact Report](#).

<sup>10</sup> Source: Restore Justice, *Why Parole Matters*

## Seattle Clemency Project (cont.)

# Change the conversation, change the population

During his sentence in 2009, Anthony Powers cofounded the Redemption Project, a successful behavioral health program to create a better environment in prison to “change the conversation, change the population.” He taught and mentored over 2,000 inmates. His gift for rallying people for the better created highly effective solutions that helped reduce prison violence in prisons across Washington State.

In 2019, through pro bono counsel from Seattle Clemency Project—Anthony was granted an early release. He was then offered a job as the first Reentry Coordinator for the Seattle Clemency Project, which he accepted. At Seattle Clemency Project, Anthony established a successful reentry system and became the Reentry Program Director. During this time, Anthony also began pursuing his dream of creating a way to use technology to highlight disparities in the justice system.

Since 2018, the Pro Bono Program at Microsoft has been supporting the Seattle Clemency Project. During a pro bono workshop in 2019, Anthony was invited to Microsoft to discuss his vision for technology and share the sentencing data he was collecting. Following the discussion, Microsoft employees wanted to find ways to support his objective and get involved.

**Read more at Microsoft Unlocked:**  
**[The pursuit of justice](#)**

*Anthony Powers, Executive Director,  
American Equity and Justice Group  
and Reentry Program Director for  
Seattle Clemency Project*



# ProJourn

## Providing free legal aid to journalists and news outlets to protect democracy

Accurate and free reporting informs the public and holds those in power accountable. Without access to legal assistance, journalists and newsrooms can encounter challenges with sharing their findings with the public.

Independent journalists and small to medium news organizations do not always have the resources to access legal assistance. In fact, half of journalists nationwide say their legal needs are unmet.<sup>11</sup>

To address this need, Microsoft and the law firm **Davis Wright Tremaine (DWT)** launched **The Protecting Journalists Pro Bono Program**, known as ProJourn, in 2020. What started as a regional pilot has since grown to a nationwide effort operated by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (RCFP) and in partnership with the Knight Foundation.

This year, a series that ProJourn supported won a James Beard Foundation Media Award. The investigative articles in the online news outlet Civil Eats, called **Injured and Invisible**, explored the dangers of animal agriculture in the United States. Microsoft and DWT volunteers provided pre-publication review for the pieces, which the investigative team identified as being at risk of retaliatory litigation.



Microsoft employees Sima Sarrafan, Amy Larsen, and Rachel Chernaskey attend RCFP's Freedom of the Press awards to celebrate and protect journalism.

This year,

8

volunteers  
worked

319

hours to serve

13

ProJourn clients.

<sup>11</sup> Source: ProJourn, *Standing Up for Journalism*

ProJourn (cont.)

“

It was an investigation that we could not have done without your support and guidance. Our newsroom has always been ambitious; but this kind of deep investigative work is a first for us, especially as it dealt with such a sensitive matter. My team has learned a lot and we are now even better journalists for having gone through this process.”<sup>12</sup>

**Florangela Davila**

*ProJourn client News Director, 88.5 FM KNKX*

<sup>12</sup> Quote used with client permission

# Virtual Help Clinic

## Offering a lifeline to survivors of domestic violence

More than 4 in 10 women in Washington State alone will experience some form of domestic violence (DV) in their lifetimes.<sup>13</sup> Long-term protection orders can help prevent future abuse, but the process is often difficult and traumatic without legal aid. This year, volunteers secured 11 DV protection orders through the Virtual Help Clinic.

“Doing pro bono work reminds me why I became a lawyer: not only to match my expertise with my passion of technology, but to help people in need. We can all carve out a little bit of time to help, and that has a big impact.”



**Tony Beasley**

*Senior Corporate Counsel and pro bono volunteer*

To obtain a protection order against a DV abuser, survivors must navigate complicated paperwork and filing as well as appear in court alongside their abuser, all without legal representation unless they can afford a lawyer.

To address the rise in DV that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, the law firm Perkins Coie, Microsoft, and the King County Protection Order Advocacy Program launched the Virtual Help Clinic in 2020.<sup>14</sup> The clinic provides high-quality, free legal counsel using Microsoft Teams. Through the program, survivors do not have to fight for safety alone.

Under the guidance of mentor volunteers, Microsoft attorneys and business professionals prepare clients' cases. Volunteers interview clients and compile the necessary documents for new or renewal protection orders. Through these efforts, volunteers stand as advocates for a safer future for the survivors.

“

People are being threatened with their lives or their families' lives, and most people fall through the cracks. It's not just filling the forms out or knowing what to do with them.

I advocated heavily for myself, but I didn't know how to navigate the civil court and wouldn't have gone forward with that on my own without Tony as my attorney.”

*Anonymous client who Tony Beasley helped win an expanded protection order*

<sup>13</sup> Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *Domestic Violence in Washington*

<sup>14</sup> Source: UN Women, *The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19*

# National Veterans Legal Services Program

## Improving access to benefits for veterans

Members of the military are eligible for benefits in recognition of their service. Veterans with combat-connected injuries, and those incorrectly discharged with a less-than-honorable status, cannot always access those benefits without legal assistance.

Veteran benefits, from compensation and health care to home loans and education support, improve well-being and create opportunities for individuals and their families. Without legal assistance, many veterans cannot access these benefits.

The **National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP)** created the Lawyers Serving Warriors® program to improve access to certain types of benefits. Microsoft volunteers support NVLSP in two ways: the combat-related special compensation project and discharge upgrade screening projects, including clinics.

### Combat-related special compensation (CRSC)

Members of the military who sustained injuries during combat, including psychological harms such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are eligible for compensation. Microsoft volunteers help these medically retired veterans by preparing a CRSC petition. They weave together medical records, the client's history, and other documentation to make a case connecting their need for CRSC to injuries sustained during combat duty.

### Discharge upgrade screening projects and clinics

Through virtual clinics enabled by Microsoft Teams, volunteers meet with veterans who were discharged with less-than-honorable characterization. Volunteers interview clients and review documentation, then write summaries for pro bono NVLSP attorneys. This process allows NVLSP to move forward more quickly and ultimately helps more veterans apply for discharge upgrades. This year, four out of nine veterans interviewed during the clinic have been placed for full scope pro bono representation.

Volunteers also assist veterans remotely by analyzing and assessing veteran files, including veterans' Military Service History, Service Treatment Records, VA Claims File, and other supplemental documents. Volunteers then provide their analysis of documents that flag key terms and potential evidence for the veteran's claim to discharge their characterization of upgrade. This work significantly expedites the process for NVLSP screening attorneys, ensuring the veterans receive assistance promptly. Microsoft attorney volunteers and other professionals assisted with nine independent file review projects for preliminary screening this year.

# 25

volunteers donated

# 175

hours to veteran causes through NVLSP this year.

National Veterans Legal Services Program (cont.)

“

The Department of Army decided to grant me the award, with back pay from the day I was discharged.

*Anonymous client assisted through NVLSP and the Microsoft Pro Bono Program*

## A combat-related special compensation victory

“I enlisted in the Army in 2011 and served for nine years, including two combat deployments to Afghanistan and one to Iraq. I did it voluntarily, and I’m thankful for the service I did, but war is not pretty. Many of those PTSD feelings come back even when you’re safe.

I was looking for services that helped veterans, and Microsoft volunteers helped me apply for combat-related special compensation. Their expertise came into play with the narrative reasoning to the Department of Army why I was entitled to the compensation.

The Department of Army decided to grant me the award, with back pay from the day I was discharged. I think it was because of the volunteer team’s expertise and reasoning, putting my story in words with concrete evidence. I have two kids and a mortgage to pay, so it’s a tremendous help with our finances.

I volunteered for this position; nobody owes me anything. But it’s nice to know the Department of Army recognizes my sacrifice. I’m extremely grateful.”

*Client name and identity omitted to protect their safety*



*Microsoft pro bono volunteers Adrian Palma, Amanda Molina, and Bill Hayden attend the National Veterans Legal Services Program’s (NVLSP) Fourteenth Annual Benefit Reception with Paul Wright, Executive Director of NVLSP.*



# Make What's Next

## Helping the next generation of inventors secure patents to protect their ideas

Securing a patent can feel overwhelming for new inventors. Microsoft volunteers support innovators from underrepresented communities to advance and protect their big ideas.

Patenting an invention takes time, effort, and expertise. Without guidance, a patent is often out of reach for many inventors, especially for those who cannot afford an attorney. Microsoft's **Make What's Next Patent Program** addresses this problem by matching pro bono volunteers with ambitious teams of inventors.

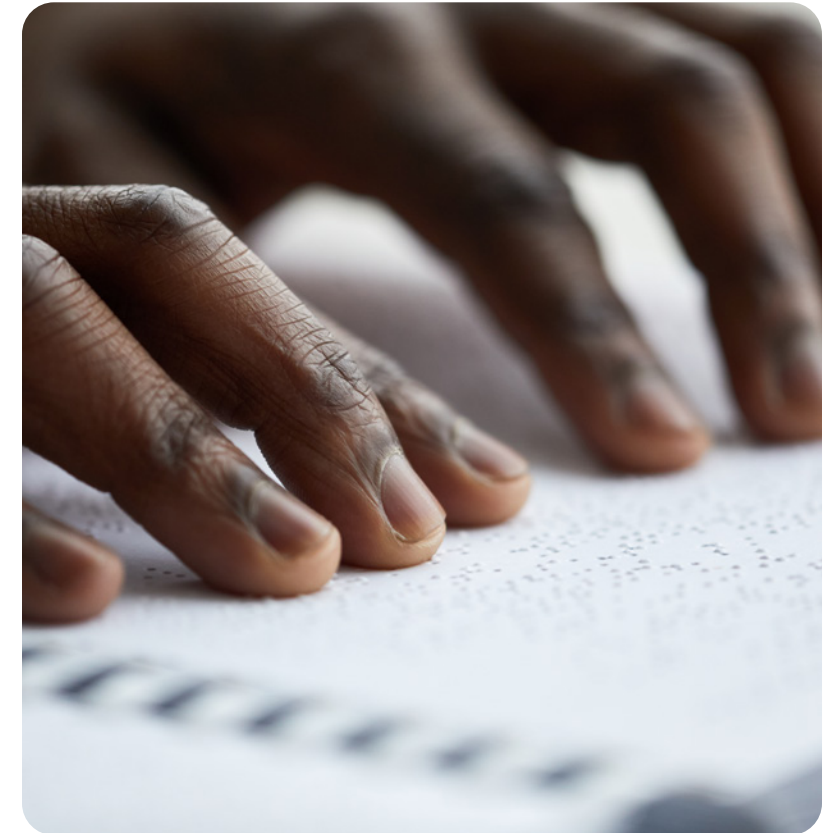
Make What's Next recently joined the **Advancing Diversity Across Patent Teams (ADAPT)** platform, which has allowed other in-house counsel and law firm volunteers to match with inventors from underserved communities in need of patent support.

**Listen to the latest episode of the Inclusion Evolution podcast** where Judy Yee, Assistant General Counsel at Microsoft and ADAPT cofounder, and Elaine Spector, Partner at Harrity & Harrity, recount their DEI journey, how ADAPT came to be, and why they are driven to change the industry.

This year, Microsoft pro bono volunteers mentored and supported a team from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in their patent application, and the team was granted a patent for their braille printing device.

Called Braille-It, the device enables people with blindness to easily create labels, helping them identify and navigate their home, work, and community.

**[Read about Braille-It here](#)**



# Advancing more diverse and inclusive communities

When communities are diverse and inclusive, we are all better positioned to address the world’s greatest challenges, such as the access to justice crisis.

- Racial Restrictive Covenants Project ..... 28
- Women’s History Month Pro Bono Volunteer Celebration ..... 29
- Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program..... 30
- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) service project..... 32

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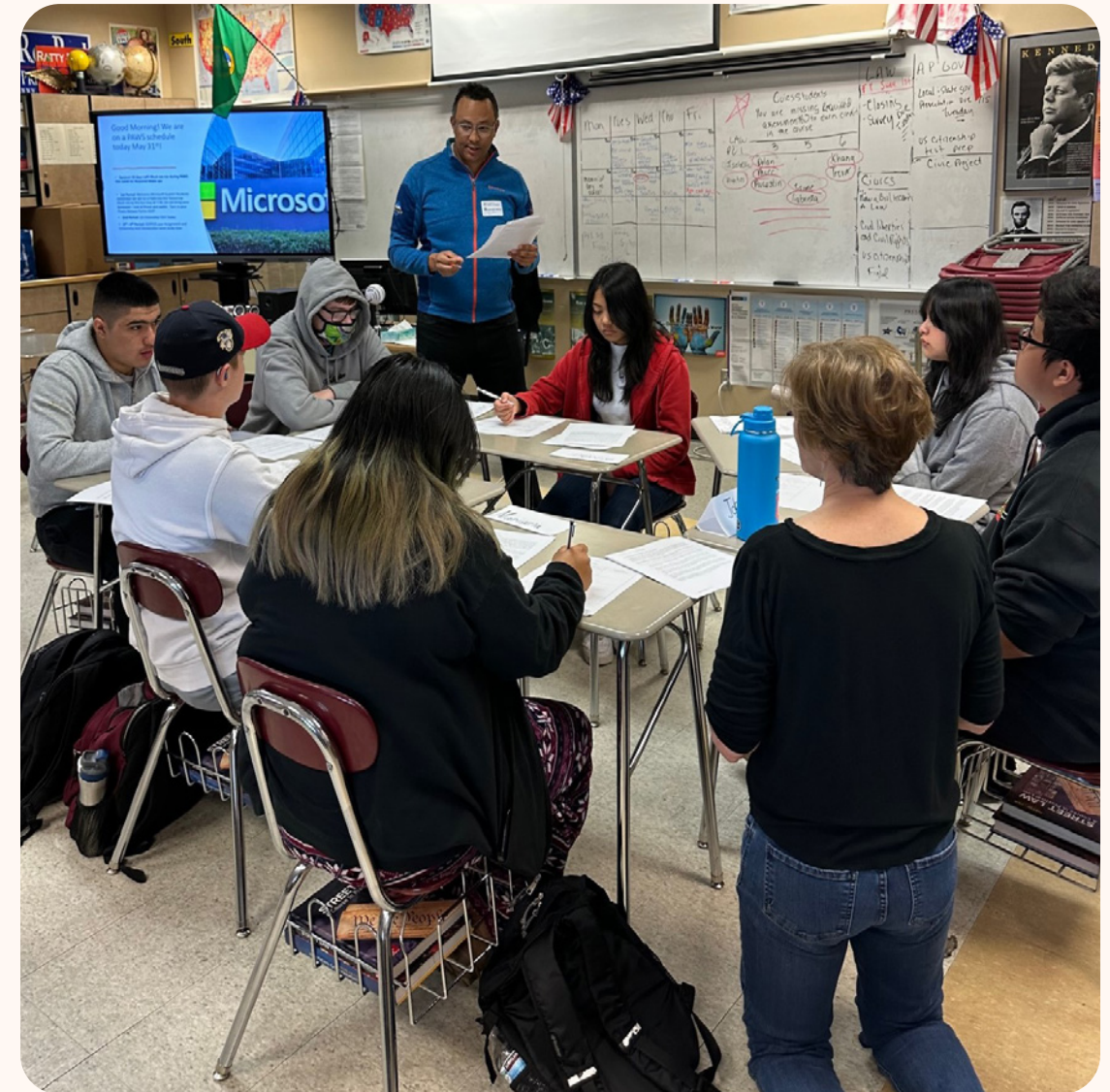
**This year, the Microsoft Pro Bono Program collaborated with several Employee Networks (ENs) within Microsoft's Corporate External and Legal Affairs (CELA) department, including:**

- Blacks in CELA
- Women in CELA
- GLEAM CELA (our LGBTQIA+ EN)
- Asians and Pacific Islanders (API) in CELA
- HOLA CELA (Hispanic and Latinx Organization of Leaders in Action)
- Military in CELA
- Disability Inclusion in CELA

**And external partners:**

- University of Washington
- Street Law
- The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)

These efforts provided programming and pro bono opportunities in support and celebration of diverse and inclusive communities, including an initiative to help address racially restrictive housing covenants in Washington State, a celebration of the Microsoft pro bono volunteers during Women's History Month, and participation in the Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program and the LCLD Day of Service.



Microsoft volunteers Jika Gqiba-Knight (standing) and Cathy Clark (kneeling) shared their time and legal experience with students at an Introduction to Law class at Cascade High School in Everett, Washington.

# Racial Restrictive Covenants Project

Before the US Supreme Court found the practice unconstitutional in 1948, many places across the United States used racially restrictive housing covenants to prevent people of color and religious minorities from purchasing homes. Although no longer enforceable, most of these covenants remain on the books, serving as a powerful yet painful reminder of the legacy of racism and segregation in the United States.

In Washington State, research teams at the University of Washington and Eastern Washington University have been working to identify and map racial restrictions buried in the state's property records. To date, they have identified more than 50,000 restricted properties across Washington and have engaged volunteers to support this work.

This year, the Microsoft pro bono team collaborated with the Blacks in CELA EN to host a training about the [Washington Racial Restrictive Covenants Project](#) during Black History Month. Following the training, Microsoft volunteers joined volunteers from the law firm Davis Wright Tremaine for a day of service at the University of Washington and examined property deeds on microfilm to identify racially restrictive language. This work helped further the project's goals of identifying and documenting every racially restrictive covenant in Washington, which will allow policymakers to determine how best to address the harms these covenants caused.



*With the help of James Gregory, UW Professor of History and the leader of the Racial Restrictive Covenant Project, Microsoft and Davis Wright Tremaine volunteers examined historic property deeds to identify and map the racist and harmful legacy of deed provisions and restrictive covenants.*

[Learn more here](#)

# Women's History Month Pro Bono Volunteer Celebration

## Highlighting the significant pro bono contributions of women

The Microsoft Pro Bono Program would not be what it is today without the pro bono contributions of the women in CELA. To these amazing volunteers, we say thank you.

The 2023 national theme for Women's History Month in the United States was "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories." Building upon this theme, the Microsoft pro bono team celebrated the women in CELA who tell our stories through their pro bono efforts at a luncheon where they were thanked by Hossein Nowbar, Chief Legal Officer, and honored in a video highlighting individual volunteer efforts.

Join us in recognizing the work of these volunteers.

**Watch the video [here](#)**



*Celebrating the Microsoft women employees who tell our stories*

# Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program

## Inspiring diverse students to dream of a future career in law

The legal field does not represent the diversity of the US population. Street Law's Legal Diversity Pipeline Program aims to inspire students from backgrounds underrepresented in legal professions to learn about and pursue a career in law.

The American Bar Association (ABA) affirms that diversity is crucial for a fair and effective justice system, yet representation in the legal profession continues to lag.<sup>15</sup> Through its Legal Diversity and Pipeline Program, the nonprofit **Street Law** works with corporate legal departments and law firms to create legal career pathways for young people of diverse identities and backgrounds.

Since 2020, the Microsoft Pro Bono Program has contributed to this effort in two ways: conducting legal workshops at a local public high school where a significant number of students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch and hosting students on the Microsoft Redmond Campus for a day of inspiration and fun.

“The impact on the students was tremendous, and the conversations we had at the workshops we hosted helped reinforce pursuing and proving what is possible.”



**Hung To**

*Director, Business Management  
and pro bono volunteer*

This year,

71

volunteers donated

123

hours in support of Street Law's Legal Diversity Pipeline Program, reaching

64

students.

<sup>15</sup> Source: American Bar Association, *Diversity in Law: Who Cares?*

## Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program (cont.)

“

My students want attainable ways of making the world the way they want it to be, and this program helps make it possible for them.”

**Melissa Webster**

*Cascade High School teacher*

This year, Microsoft volunteers shared their time and experience with students taking an Introduction to Law class at Cascade High School in Everett, Washington. This included conducting four legal workshops at the school and hosting two capstone events at Microsoft’s headquarters.

Over the course of the two capstone events, the Microsoft pro bono team and volunteers hosted over 60 Cascade High School students. These events included a tour of the **Microsoft Cyber Defense Operations Center (CDOC)**

and the **Executive Briefing Center**, where students experienced Microsoft’s technology through immersive demos and presentations of real-life customer solutions.

During the June 2023 capstone event, students also attended an event featuring philanthropic activist, Washington State Clemency and Pardons board member, and former Seattle Seahawks wide receiver, Doug Baldwin. Doug’s remarks provided students with practical, relatable perspective and helped them reconsider what is possible.



*Doug Baldwin, former Seattle Seahawk, encourages local high school students to push limits and harness their potential.*

# Leadership Council on Legal Diversity service project

## Fostering a more diverse and inclusive legal profession through pro bono work

Recognizing that equity in the law requires that the legal profession continue to diversify, Microsoft is a longstanding partner of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity and proud supporter of a recent LCLD community service project.

The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) was founded in 2009 with the goal of building a legal profession in the United States that better represents the country's diversity. Since its inception, Microsoft has been an LCLD member and participates in the LCLD **Pathfinders** and **Fellows** leadership development programs.

As part of this year's LCLD Alumni Leadership Symposium in Seattle, Washington, Microsoft cosponsored a **Community Service event** with the law firm Davis Wright Tremaine that provided over 50 LCLD alumni with the opportunity to participate in a pro bono project.

For one of the projects, the Microsoft Pro Bono Program organized a file review project for its **Virtual Records Clinic (VRC)**, which helps justice-impacted individuals in Washington State clear eligible convictions from their records.

Sixteen LCLD fellows and alumni assessed the eligibility of 42 VRC cases during the Community Service event and helped streamline the next steps in the legal process.

"I really enjoyed learning about the [VRC] and having the chance to be a small part of its success!"

**Amanda Schlitz**

*VP U.S. Bank and LCLD Alum*



*Pro bono volunteers from Microsoft and local law firm Davis Wright Tremaine volunteer at the Virtual Records Clinic in sponsorship with the Legal Council of Legal Diversity to help relieve the stigma of past convictions and enable justice-impacted individuals to improve their lives.*



# Achieving more through the power of technology

# Achieving more through the power of technology

## Lending expertise and technology to help legal aid organizations scale impact

The need for legal aid often outmatches attorneys' availability, leaving many individuals without legal support. Using technologies, such as responsible AI, to increase productivity and gain efficiency can transform the capacity of under-resourced legal aid organizations.

Microsoft not only provides direct legal aid to clients in need, but also shares tools and expertise with legal aid organizations on an ongoing basis. This year, Microsoft provided technology and expertise to help several partners accelerate their digital transformation journey.



### Expanding ProJourn's capacity to help more journalists

ProJourn relies on the Microsoft Teams accessibility and AI features such as live captions, auto-generated meeting transcription, and live translation captioning so that journalists and newsrooms, including diverse reporters and outlets that publish content in languages other than English, have access to legal support. The Microsoft pro bono team also helped ProJourn implement Microsoft Power Automate workflows to streamline intake processes and legal requests, expanding the organization's capacity to help more journalists.



### Scaling offerings and modernizing co-creation through Microsoft Loop

When the pandemic shut down in-person legal help events, the Microsoft Pro Bono Program transitioned to virtual clinics. This year, the team implemented Microsoft Loop, one of Microsoft's latest collaboration and productivity applications, to hold more clinics than ever before. The Virtual Records Clinic now relies on Microsoft Loop as the one-stop, collaborative hub to quickly onboard volunteers so they can focus on their clients, not on the busywork.

### Microsoft Cloud for Nonprofit: Addressing the backlog of deadline-threatened asylum applications

Welcome.US created the Welcome Legal Alliance to connect volunteers with refugees needing legal help, but it wanted to expand to reach even more clients. The alliance turned to Microsoft Cloud for Nonprofit Volunteer Management to scale its efforts quickly. The centralized Volunteer Management hub trains volunteers, automates the intake of new clients, matches volunteers with clients, and tracks impact using the nonprofit common data model. With this technology, volunteers and immigration law experts are addressing the backlog of deadline-sensitive asylum applications.

"[Loop] is so nice and easy to navigate. It enables me to be much more efficient and effective in getting [pro bono] work done and collaborating with my partners."



**Pamela Almaguer**

*Senior Corporate Council  
and pro bono volunteer*

“

I can confidently say that the Microsoft tools we're using are not only helping us, but are making sure that we can achieve our mission. We're avoiding unnecessary steps, saving time, gaining visibility, and measuring our impact. The possibilities are endless. This is just the beginning.”

**Flavie Fuentes**

*ProJourn and Pro Bono Director at Reporters  
Committee for Freedom of the Press*

# Scaling access to justice with our partners

Scaling access to justice is a collaborative effort that includes supporting the development of other in-house pro bono programs and events for community partners.

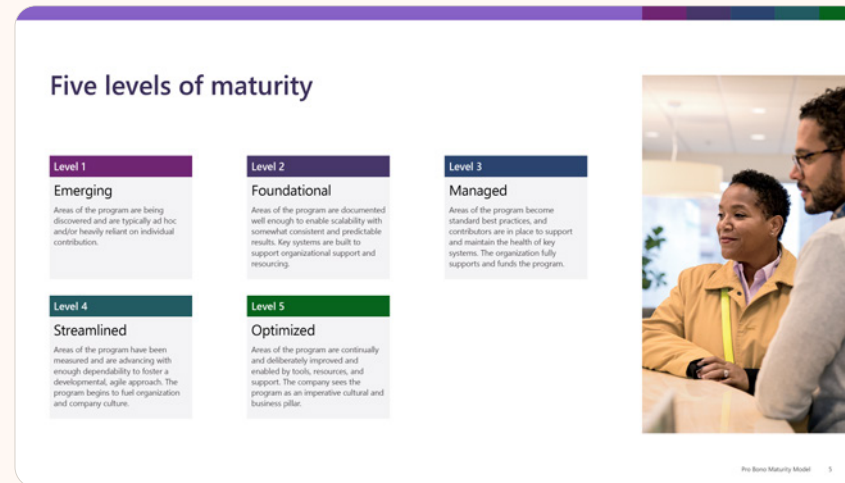
Pro Bono Maturity Model .....	37
Community events .....	38

# Pro Bono Maturity Model

## Scaling pro bono by empowering companies to evolve their in-house programs

This year, the Microsoft Pro Bono Program and the Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO®) project of Pro Bono Institute cocreated this Pro Bono Maturity Model as a tool for other corporate, in-house pro bono programs to assess the evolution of their pro bono efforts and to provide a framework for identifying specific opportunities for growth and development.

[View the 2023 Maturity Model](#)



Cover and pages from the 2023 Pro Bono Maturity Model

# Community events

## Sponsoring community and local events to help advance access to justice and support a more diverse and inclusive legal profession

The Microsoft Pro Bono Program is a proud supporter of efforts to raise awareness, funding, and in-kind donations for its pro bono and community partners. As these photos highlight, Microsoft employees joyfully came together this year to support the annual galas and similar events sponsored in part by the Microsoft Pro Bono Program.



*Julie Mayer, Renate Norman, Jill Lloyd, David Little, Mia Scavella-Little, and Leticia Walker support the Seattle Clemency Project.*



*Grady Mitchell shows off Microsoft swag with Microsoft pro bono volunteer, Paolo Sy. Grady received clemency in January 2021 through the work of the Seattle Clemency Project. [Watch his story here](#)*



*Neeta Saran, Dan Choi, Jeremy Pitman, Minji Kim, Emily Schlesinger, Mia Scavella-Little, Jason Barnwell, and Becky Andrews support the local community's efforts for justice at the Eastside Legal Assistance Program's (ELAP) annual breakfast.*



*Kim Tran, Juan Santillan, Emily Chiang, Beth Henderson, Sam Winninghoff, Kim Meyers, and Tyler Quillin attend the King County Bar Association's annual MLK lunch as part of Microsoft's commitment to the local community.*



*Paolo Sy, Jeanne Ballot, Mohana Bhirangi, Rachel Brown, and Paul Heer at the Seattle Seahawks season opener where the team honored the work of the Seattle Clemency Project during half-time.*

