



Strong Organizations. Strong Leaders. Strong Nonprofit Network.

Power of Pro Bono

Opportunities in Investment & Partnership
Serving the Community

November 2024

The History



Our History

- Founded as Community Legal Resources in 1998 to address a gap.
 - Michigan Community Resources provides an array of services to support organizations that serve low-income communities that includes transactional legal services.
 - Since inception in 1998, we have served over 4,200 nonprofits with free legal assistance valued over \$25 million.
 - MCR is committed to strengthening and celebrating the pro bono network of Michigan attorneys, a crucial element in our vision of vibrant communities.



Transactional Pro Bono

- **The impact:** Pro bono transactional assistance to community groups provides opportunities to effect change on a macro level. The client organization receives the direct benefit of the work, but the results are filtered indirectly to the many individuals who are served or impacted by the group.
- **The clients:** Nonprofit staff are passionate about their work and care about their communities; their passion shines through in these interactions with pro bono counsel.
- **Economic Justice:** The value of nonprofits cannot be overlooked; they are vital to Michigan's economy.



Our Legal Programs



Our Legal Programs

Direct Legal Services & Pro Bono Referrals

MCR and pro bono attorneys provide one-on-one legal counseling for nonprofit leaders serving a range of business and transactional legal needs.

Office Hours & Virtual Clinics

Limited scope appointments w/ MCR and pro bono attorneys for Nonprofit Start-up Legal Assistance or support with a transactional legal needs including IP, Contracts, Real Property issues, Insurance, and other legal consultations for nonprofits and small businesses.

Workshops

Workshops leveraging pro bono attorneys and skills-based professionals explore a particular legal topic, such as navigating municipal or other processes, purchasing real estate, etc.

Legal Alerts & Resources

Legal resources and timely legal alerts provide nonprofits and small businesses with in-depth information on a variety of topics.

Nonprofit Governance Clinics

MCR and pro bono attorneys meet with clients to explore all aspects of nonprofit governance; helps organizations to continue their mission and impact with confidence in their compliance with legal regulations.



Types of Legal Issues MCR helps with

- Incorporation and application for tax exemption status under IRS Code sec. 501(c)(3).
- Nonprofit Governance
- Contracts – Drafting and advising on business contracts.
- Employment – Preparing, reviewing and revising personnel policies, employment contracts, and confidentiality agreements.
- Real Estate – Help with property leases and purchase and sale agreements.
- Intellectual Property – Assistance with registering trademarks, and advising on copyright protection, license agreements, or website-related agreements.
- Risk and Liability Assessment – Assistance with risk and liability assessment including waiver and release forms, and general advice on insurance coverage.
- Federal Tax-Exempt Status – Assistance applying for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

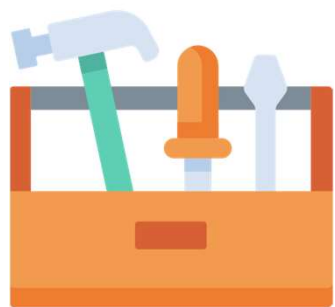


The Opportunities

TO DEEPEN AND EXPAND IMPACT



The Why of Our Work



BUILDING ON
NEIGHBORHOOD
STRENGTH



DEVELOPING TRUST AND
CONNECTIONS



FIGHTING FOR ECONOMIC
EQUITY

Building on Neighborhood Strength

Through our legal programs, MCR has worked closely with many neighborhood-based groups, including the Russell Woods-Sullivan Area Association.

- Incorporated in 1958, RWSAA is one of the oldest nonprofit organizations in Detroit.
- The Russell Woods neighborhood faces many challenges due to changing economic conditions, decline in public education systems, increased crime, and risk of gentrification.
- MCR and our pro bono attorneys have walked alongside RWSAA to help them remove barriers and build on their organizational strength.
- With a strong organizational foundation, RWSAA can continue to serve neighbors and advocate for resident priorities at the city level.



WWW.RUSSELLWOODSSULLIVAN.ORG

Developing Trust and Connections

We work with clients to remove barriers and assist as they focus on their mission and programs. As much as possible, we defer to their visions and definition of success.

For example, the Organization of Exonerees was founded in 2021 by a group of exonerated individuals to provide advocacy and support for individuals who were wrongly convicted.

After building a foundation of trust, MCR worked with the Organization of Exonerees and pro bono counsel to incorporate as a 501(c)(3), ensure legal compliance, build capacity, and ensure further access to lawyers, judges, and advocacy connections.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF EXONEREES

Fighting for Economic Equity

MCR believes pro bono lawyers can and should be a key partner in shifting the playing field toward economic justice.

We recognize that by facilitating meaningful pro bono legal services to small businesses and nonprofits, we can help create a more inclusive and equitable future for underserved communities in Michigan.

Beyond pro bono legal services, we aim to contribute to each organization's "soft capital" – the confidence, relationships, and information they need to succeed.



AL'S BARBER SHOP, DETROIT

Pro Bono

Lawyers have a license to practice law, a monopoly on certain services. But for that privilege and status, lawyers have an obligation to provide legal services to those without the wherewithal to pay, to respond to needs outside themselves, to help repair tears in their communities.

– U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg
(March 2014)



Pro Bono Investment

MCR's ongoing mission is to provide access to pro bono legal services and other trusted guidance to help nonprofits serving low-income communities to advance their missions.

Volunteer opportunities are available for ongoing transactional pro bono legal services, presentations at workshops, in-depth compliance clinics, small business clinics, and legal publications & toolkit development.

MCR participates in and encourages donations to the Access to Justice (ATJ) Campaign.

The ATJ Campaign is a collaborative centralized campaign, administered by the Michigan State Bar Foundation in partnership with the State Bar of Michigan, to increase resources for civil legal aid programs in Michigan. 100% of attorney donations will be distributed to support civil legal aid throughout Michigan. To make a charitable contribution, donate online at www.atjfund.org.



Next Steps & FAQ's

How do I get involved with MCR?

Email legal@mi-community.org to sign up for volunteer opportunities. In the email, please include your contact information (including address and phone number), the name of your law firm or legal department, practice area, state(s) in which you are licensed to practice law, and year(s) of admittance.

What is the time commitment?

Our matters range in complexity and time commitment, but many are discrete and manageable (requiring 5-15 hours). We will work with you to find an opportunity that is a good fit.

Other important details?

We do all the required screening of the clients. MCR also offers malpractice insurance coverage in limited scope for in-house counsel.



Questions?





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THANK YOU

MCR appreciates the Detroit Bar Association. Please contact Maureen Krasner at mkrasner@mi-community.org for more information.