

McCarter & English Presented the 2019 ABA Pro Bono Publico Award, the ABA's Top Honor for Pro Bono and Public Service

American Bar Association

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McCarter & English was honored to receive the American Bar Association's (ABA) 2019 Pro Bono Publico Award at the ABA Annual Meeting this past weekend in recognition of the firm's outstanding commitment to providing free legal services to low-income and otherwise marginalized people and communities. The Pro Bono Publico Award is the top honor given by the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. McCarter was one of two law firms and three individuals to be honored.

McCarter's pro bono program has grown exponentially in the past few years. The firm's lawyers dedicate tens of thousands of hours annually to providing pro bono services in virtually every area of unmet legal need, including work for veterans, asylum-seekers, victims of human trafficking, transactional services for nonprofits, cutting-edge civil and constitutional rights cases, and animal rights.

Building on the firm's long history of representing people seeking refuge in the United States, in 2018, a team of partners, including our managing partner, traveled to rural Georgia to serve people held in immigration detention there. The team took on full representations for several people they met in detention, including an appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals that resulted in the client's release and grant of relief.

Also in 2018, the firm launched the McCarter & English Pro Bono Fellowship for the City of Newark, which dedicates a full-time attorney to a designated area of urgent unmet legal need in Newark, New Jersey, where the firm has deep roots. With housing as its first area of focus, the Pro Bono Fellowship expands the firm's ability to represent tenants by increasing representation of families in landlord-tenant court, bringing services to tenants at risk of eviction, and engaging in systemic reform efforts.

Mike Kelly, the firm's chair, said: "It was a wonderful surprise to hear we had been selected for the ABA's Pro Bono Publico award this year. I have never been prouder of this firm. Service to those in need is central to the firm's identity, and expanding our pro bono practice has been one of my top priorities since becoming chair. Over the last three years, our pro bono program has reached new heights, thanks to the commitment of the Executive Committee and the leadership of our managing partner, Joe Boccassini. We expect all lawyers at the firm to engage in pro bono work. Our pro bono partner Michelle Pallak provides opportunities for every lawyer to do something that invokes his or her passion. I am grateful to all of the legal services organizations that partner with us in putting our legal skills to their highest and best use."