

## Pro Bono

### Contact

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Miller Canfield has long been recognized within our communities for pro bono and community service efforts. We believe that the firm and its attorneys have an ethical responsibility to undertake pro bono engagements. Through an active pro bono committee, the firm seeks to create a culture where pro bono legal services are encouraged and where our professionals have ready opportunities to perform meaningful pro bono legal services.

Our work has included:

- Partnering with the Michigan Department of State, DTE Energy, the Detroit Justice Center and others, Miller Canfield has worked to provide over 50 free Road to Restoration driver's license clinics throughout Michigan. The clinics connect residents who have restricted and suspended licenses with the resources they need to get them on the path to restoring those privileges. Started in response to bipartisan legislation that removed many barriers to restoration, we have served almost 10,000 Michiganders in more than 20 cities and trained over 120 pro bono attorneys to date.
- Miller Canfield represented a female Jewish prisoner, who before our firm's involvement, had been denied access to Passover Seder meals. At that time, Jewish women at Michigan's only female correctional facility were denied proper religious services. Women faced rampant cancellation of Jewish services; religious supplies were inadequate; and women were denied Passover Seder meals, while the male prisoners were not. In an egregious example, rather than provide a Passover Seder meal, the female prison showed pictures of Passover foods while a prison official tried to convert the women to Christianity. Our team was appointed just a few months before trial. Three days into the trial, due to the strength of the case and the client's moving testimony, defendants agreed to a substantial monetary settlement and, significantly, injunctive relief, including a commitment to allow all female Jewish inmates the same religious rights as male Jewish inmates.
- Miller Canfield led a team of attorneys to assist the Michigan Prison Doula Initiative (MPDI), which had taken shape as the brainchild of social justice activists and certified doulas who were shaken by the lack of access to care

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during pregnancy and childbirth experienced by incarcerated women. MDPI formed a grassroots collaboration among the only women's prison in Michigan and a local medical facility. It matches imprisoned pregnant women with a doula, who provides delivery and pre- and post-partum support. Without MPDI, pregnant incarcerated women would largely face the birthing experience alone. Miller Canfield originally had been asked only to review the agreements between the organization, the health system and the Michigan Department of Corrections. But our team has since assisted MPDI with corporate governance, board leadership and risk mitigation, and other counsel to the fledgling organization to help these mothers and infants.

- In response to the tremendous strain that the COVID-19 pandemic placed on small businesses, Miller Canfield and the nonprofit Michigan Community Resources teamed with the Lawyers for Good Government Foundation to launch the Detroit Remote Legal Clinic. While initially focused on pandemic-related legal questions, as the effects of the COVID-19 subsided, Miller Canfield continues to provide legal consults to small businesses and nonprofits that are the backbone of economic vitality and quality of life in the neighborhoods.

### **Need legal help?**

We are proud to support pro bono work in our communities. Because most of our pro bono matters are accepted through legal aid organizations and other nonprofit partners, we are generally unable to consider direct requests for representation. Individuals seeking legal assistance are encouraged to contact a local legal aid organization or lawyer referral service for help identifying available resources.

#### **Ann Arbor**

- Legal Services of South Central Michigan

#### **Chicago**

- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- Chicago Volunteer Legal Services

#### **Cleveland**

- Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

#### **Detroit**

- Lakeshore Legal Aid
- Michigan Community Resources
- Neighborhood Defender Service
- Detroit Legal Services Clinic

#### **Grand Rapids**

- Legal Aid of Western Michigan

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**Kalamazoo**

- Legal Aid of Western Michigan

**Lansing**

- Legal Services of South Central Michigan

**New York**

- Legal Aid Society of New York

**Torrence**

- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)

**Washington, D.C.**

- DC Bar
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program