



Microsoft 2021 Pro Bono Report

Promoting justice for all

November 2021

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As General Counsel of Corporate Legal Affairs, I am thrilled to assume the sponsorship of our world-class Pro Bono Program, led by Beth Henderson. Facilitating and providing free legal aid to those in need is our honor and our duty. Many lives depend on and are impacted by these pro bono services. Our commitment to facilitating and providing these services will continue to be a top priority for our legal department at Microsoft.

When one of us hurts, we all hurt. Pro bono investments help provide actionable and impactful avenues to address and heal the source of that pain. As legal workers, sometimes the work we do can too easily fall into abstraction. Pro Bono opportunities ground our practice in real societal impact. Whether we help reconnect children to their families separated in refugee crisis, ensure due process for the incarcerated individual who faces life without parole, or support families who live every day without secured housing, pro bono is but one important way that pulls the humanitarian truth of our practice and obligation into focus.

And indeed, we cannot, nor should we, pretend that we as volunteers do not also benefit from this participation. Volunteering and giving back is as rewarding as it is healing. The stories and organizations you will read about in this report have helped so many of us get through the crises of our time. Helping others gives us purpose, and it gives us hope. Let us convert that hope to fuel the continuation of this good work.

Thank you to the pro bono organizations and volunteers that embraced the need to offer our services remotely during the ongoing pandemic. I believe that technology democratizes our world, and I am optimistic not only about the continued service in virtual models, but also the future of pro bono work in a three-dimensional world. With commitment and the right tech behind us, I believe that better days are on the horizon.



Hossein Nowbar
*Microsoft Corporate Secretary,
 Corporate Vice President, and
 General Counsel of Corporate Legal Affairs*

The Microsoft pro bono program formally launched in 2003 and continues to grow with increased employee engagement and participation year over year. Employees who participate in pro bono work embody the spirit of giving that is core to Microsoft's mission of empowering every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020, the Microsoft pro bono program double-downed on our commitment to providing legal services to people in need. This meant developing new pathways for providing pro bono legal services to the individuals and organizations most impacted by the pandemic while refining and maturing the many programs that have formed the core of our program for nearly two decades. In 2021, we continued to build upon our longstanding pro bono partnerships with organizations like Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP), and Seattle Clemency Project, and developed new pro bono partnerships with Street Law, the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, and the W.H. Gates Public Service Law Program at the University of Washington School of Law.

In this report, you will find many reflections on the impact of these partnerships and how our employees have volunteered their time and skills to provide direct legal services, mentorship and legal education, and digital transformation support. You will also read about the impact of this work on our employees and how pro bono enriches them professionally and personally.

I am immensely proud of our employees' efforts to help people who cannot afford an attorney and am inspired by our pro bono partners and the clients we help serve. I would also like to extend a special thank you to the pro bono committee members for their commitment and support this year. I'm truly humbled to work with you all.



Beth Henderson

*Microsoft Senior Corporate Counsel and
Director of the Microsoft Pro Bono Program*

2021 Pro Bono by the Numbers



94

DACA clients served



11

Domestic violence protection orders granted



31

Active KIND cases with 66 volunteers



100%

Success rate for six Day One Initiatives



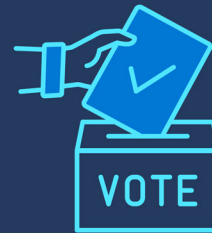
250+

Hours volunteered for Street Law



21

Protecting Journalists matters assigned



200+

Hours volunteered for Election Protection



30

Seattle Clemency clients served by 55 volunteers

Hope in a time of crisis

Some of our volunteers share how participating in pro bono work helped sustain them during challenging times.

“ Growing up we had limited resources and faced many challenges. My family and I have benefitted from pro bono services. I now feel honored to be on the other side of the spectrum and help those in need. ”



Stephanie Chavez,
Executive Business
Administrator

“ Growing up as an immigrant, I've personally experienced and witnessed the incredible challenges in understanding and navigating the legal system. With today's growing economic inequalities, I believe it's as important as ever for those in the legal community to provide their time and skill set to assist those in need to protect their rights and ensure they have access to essential resources. ”



Phong Dihn,
Senior Corporate Counsel

“ For me, pro bono work helps make the playing field more equal. It's also a great way to have meaningful impact in areas that are important to me. I get to do something rather than waiting for someone else to make something happen. ”



Avani Patel,
Corporate Counsel

“ Pro bono is like exercise for your soul. It takes a little time commitment, but you get much more in return. And you're helping a fellow human being. I always come away from pro bono work recharged and with a renewed perspective on the legal system. ”



Dan Choi,
Assistant General Counsel

IMMIGRATION

Protecting families and people who immigrate to the US

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Kids in Need of Defense

Pairing children in immigration proceedings with legal volunteers

Every year, thousands of children from around the globe flee their homes and attempt the dangerous journey to the United States in search of protection and security. They often travel alone, and many are looking to reunite with family members who are already in the United States. Despite the confusing and uncertain path to protection in the United States, there is no guaranteed access to legal help for these children.

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) addresses this gap by pairing unaccompanied children in immigration proceedings with pro bono volunteers. Microsoft cofounded KIND in 2008, and since then, hundreds of employees have volunteered their legal and language skills to help unaccompanied children navigate the US immigration process.

In addition to helping unaccompanied children with their individual immigration cases this year, Microsoft employees partnered with KIND to provide legal services and support to the children at the Fort Bliss Emergency Intake Site (EIS) in El Paso, Texas, one of several sites established by the Biden administration to assist the growing number of unaccompanied children who have arrived at the US southern border and taken into custody by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

The children remain at these sites until ORR can release them safely to a US sponsor or foster care provider.

This past year, 66 Microsoft volunteers were matched with 31 cases with KIND, and four children received US permanent residency.

66 Microsoft volunteers were matched with 31 cases with KIND and four children received US permanent residency.



*"We are a great nation with a rich history of helping children who arrive at our borders alone. The current crisis is no different—innocent children are fleeing violence and coming to the US simply to be safe. **That's why when unaccompanied children turn to us for help, we will continue to be there for them.**"*

~ Brad Smith, Microsoft President and Cofounder of KIND

KIND: Ali's story¹

In 2007, Ali's parents were murdered for their political activities in his country, and he was placed in care with his uncle. In October 2018, Ali made the journey to the US, and Office of Refugee Resettlement placed him at YouthCare in Washington State. He was eventually released to his locally residing sister and brother-in-law, who were struggling economically. Because his Washington family was unstably housed, they connected with KIND's social service coordinators, who helped them find a safe place to live and helped Ali apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and asylum.

Now as a legal permanent resident, Ali attends a local high school and has plans to attend community college in the fall of 2021. He has a job and is growing his English skills. Ali also participates in KIND's ArtsCorps program, producing mixed-media art, writing, and poetry. Ali's future is bright.



Between May and July of this year 10 Microsoft volunteers with advanced Spanish language proficiency and with prior experience volunteering at the immigrant detention

center in Dilley, Texas, traveled to the El Paso EIS for one week at a time to provide Know Your Rights training and legal screening to the children sheltered there.

"It is essential that unaccompanied children receive information about the immigration system and their rights and responsibilities under US law as soon as possible after their arrival at the border. The dedication and support provided by Microsoft volunteers makes all the difference in these kids' ability to seek protection and begin their lives anew in the United States. KIND hugely appreciates our ongoing partnership with Microsoft in this deployment and on so many other fronts."



Wendy Young,
Executive Director, KIND

¹ Names and identifying information of clients have been changed to protect their privacy.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival Clinics

Helping Dreamers live and thrive in the country they call home

Prior to the creation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program by the Obama administration in 2012, undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children, known as “Dreamers,” lived in constant fear of being deported even though the United States was likely the only country they ever called home.

DACA helps Dreamers receive employment authorization and protection from deportation. Despite the efforts by the Trump administration to end the program, the US Supreme Court effectively preserved the program in June 2020, in response to a lawsuit filed by Microsoft and Princeton University to protect the DACA program.²

This past year, Microsoft volunteers provided more than 286 hours of remote pro bono services to Dreamers, helping 94 DACA applicants continue to live and thrive in the United States.

Remote DACA clinics

Throughout 2020, Microsoft continued to host monthly clinics in collaboration with the [Northwest Immigrant Rights Project](#) (NWIRP) to help Dreamers renew their DACA status, so they could continue to work or attend school. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Microsoft and NWIRP shifted these clinics to an online format in April 2021, and we continue to help Dreamers with the DACA renewal process through this virtual clinic model by using Microsoft Teams.

This past year, Microsoft volunteers provided more than 286 hours of remote pro bono services to Dreamers, helping 94 DACA applicants continue to live and thrive in the United States.

DACA 
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Northwest
IMMIGRANT
RIGHTS
Project

² A US Supreme Court ruling upheld the rights of the nation's Dreamers.

Day One Initiative

Helping rescue asylum seekers from life-threatening conditions when waiting to enter the US

In 2019, the US government implemented the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), requiring asylum seekers at the United States–Mexico border to stay in Mexico while waiting for their immigration hearings. More than 71,000 adults and children were returned to Mexico through MPP, with no access to food, shelter, or medical care, and were faced with threats such as abduction, rape, assault, and persecution while awaiting immigration proceedings for their asylum claims.

The US government ended MPP in February 2021, and replaced it with a time-consuming process that was further complicated by the ongoing global pandemic. Tens of thousands of people remain at the Mexican border with no access to legal counsel, and they are still under threat every day based on conditions in Mexico.

In early 2021, Microsoft partnered with the University of [Washington School of Law](#) and the [Adelante Pro Bono Project](#) to develop and support the [Day One Initiative](#).

Twelve Microsoft employees ranging from attorneys to business professionals to translators assisted vulnerable clients who were seeking humanitarian parole and release from MPP. Clients included women and children who needed access to urgent medical care; parents who were separated from their children for months or years; and individuals who were previously kidnapped by Mexican cartels or targeted for being migrants. Volunteers met their clients over the phone and helped prepare and file urgent humanitarian parole applications on their behalf.

As a result of the Day One Initiative, six clients were permitted to enter the United States and were removed from the dangerous living conditions at the Mexican border.

One client had been separated from her children for a year and a half after she was kidnapped in Mexico and her children were placed in custody in the United States. When she learned that she received humanitarian parole and would be reunited with her children in the United States, she immediately started crying and said, “For real? For real? Thank you to all of you, to all of you who helped me. It’s been so long. I’ve been waiting for this and I didn’t think it was possible to see this day. I’m going to see my kids.”



As a result of the Day One Initiative, six clients were permitted to enter the United States and were removed from the dangerous living conditions at the Mexican border.

Day One Initiative: Jo's story³

In late 2020, Jo attempted to seek asylum in the United States with her young children. When she crossed the border, she was forcibly separated from her kids by US and Mexican officials. She was sent back to Mexico while her children were detained in the United States.

Desperately trying to reunify with her children, Jo repeatedly crossed the border, each time informing US immigration agents that she had been separated from her children and needed help reunifying with them. Each time she was dismissed.

Jo was finally connected to the Day One Initiative. One day, she was preparing to cross again when the news came in: she had been granted humanitarian parole to enter the United States. "You gave me my life back," she expressed. "You have been angels. You showed up at the lowest point in my life, and I will never be able to repay you."



"I am constantly impressed by the fortitude and clarity these clients have had while facing unimaginable treatment and/or health situations in Mexico. It is nothing short of inspiring and heroic."



Michael Alcorta,
Microsoft Principal Corporate Counsel
and pro bono volunteer

³ Names and identifying information of clients have been changed to protect their privacy.

Citizenship Clinic

Helping naturalization applications on the long road to citizenship in the US

As a long-standing supporter of the immigrant community, Microsoft partnered with the law firm of [Morgan Lewis](#) and the nonprofit organization [Hogar Immigrant Services](#) to create a Citizenship Clinic in 2021. The goal of the Citizenship Clinic is to provide legal assistance for many in need who are going through the US naturalization application process.

This year, 18 pro bono volunteers helped 20 clients navigate the US naturalization application process.

The road to citizenship in the United States can be a long and difficult journey, due in part to the complicated application and legal requirements of the naturalization process. The consequences for failure to submit sufficient or correct information may result in denial of application and loss of filing fees.

For many applicants, whose first language may not be English, the process can appear insurmountable. In 2019 alone, almost 100,000 naturalization applications were denied by US Citizenship and Immigration Services, according to a recent Department of Homeland Security report.⁴

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, Microsoft business professionals, paralegals, attorneys, and other employees from across the legal department partnered with Morgan Lewis attorneys to interview and advise their naturalization clients over video conferences. Assessing the unique backgrounds of each individual, volunteers worked closely with their clients to complete all components of the naturalization application and ensure that the information provided complied with the application legal requirements.

*18 pro bono volunteers helped
20 clients navigate the US
naturalization application process.*

“Many important benefits attach to the privilege of US citizenship, and Microsoft and Morgan Lewis helped our clients take one very big step in that direction.”



Stephanie E. Cangialos,
*Hogar Immigrant Services,
pro bono coordinating attorney*

⁴ [Table 20. Petitions for Naturalization Filed, Persons Naturalized, and Petitions for Naturalization Denied: Fiscal Years 1907 to 2019 | Department of Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)

Central American Minors Prep Sessions

Guiding minors from Central America through a constantly evolving immigration process

The number of minors arriving at the US southern border from Central America's Northern Triangle reached an all-time high of 62,748 between October 2018 and September 2019.⁵ These children fled their homes rather than risk becoming the latest victims in a gang-fueled increase in homicides.

In 2014, the Obama administration established the [Central American Minors \(CAM\)](#) program to offer children fleeing violence and persecution in the Northern Triangle a safe, legal, and organized alternative to traveling on their own or with a smuggler. The program allowed parents from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala who had legal status in the United States to apply on behalf of children who were still in their home country, if the children were under the age of 21 and unmarried. Nearly 3,092 applicants were admitted as either refugees or parolees.

In 2017, the Trump administration ended the program and approximately 2,700 approved applicants who were ready but unable to travel prior to the program's termination had their status rescinded. The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) sued on their behalf and, in 2019, the Department of Homeland Security agreed to reopen their cases. IRAP learned that a small portion of the applicants from these cases would need to be re-interviewed by a US embassy official in their home country and partnered with Microsoft volunteers to help prepare applicants for their follow-up interviews.

To date, five Microsoft employees have assisted 11 applicants, helping explain the re-interview process and shed light on what can be a confusing and constantly changing experience for applicants.

The Biden administration announced it was reinstating the CAM program in March 2021. For applicants who have witnessed tragic acts of violence such as homicides, kidnappings, extortion, and persecution, this restoration offers hope that their long journey will soon come to an end, and that they will finally be reunited with their parents in the United States.



Five Microsoft employees assisted 11 applicants with preparing for immigration interviews.

⁵ <https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-central-american-minors-cam-program/>

CRIMINAL AND YOUTH JUSTICE

Ensuring access to legal services for justice-impacted individuals

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18 Virtual Records Project



Seattle Clemency Project

Helping reformed people to secure freedom from a lifetime in prison

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—this is akin to clemency. However, because of Washington State’s abolition of the parole system in 1984, people in Washington State prisons are forced to serve their full sentence with few opportunities to earn early release, even for those who have rehabilitated themselves. As a result, prisons in Washington are constantly at or near capacity.⁶

Many incarcerated people in Washington prisons have been impacted by harsh sentencing under the “three strikes” law, and others received excessively lengthy or life sentences as juveniles. For people sentenced to prison as adults, one of the only paths to early release is having the governor commute or reduce a sentence following a petition and hearing before the Washington State Clemency and Pardons Board. People sentenced as juveniles who have served 20 years or more may petition the Washington Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB) for early release.

[The Seattle Clemency Project](#) (SCP) provides legal aid to incarcerated individuals who cannot afford a lawyer to help them apply for early release through the Clemency Board or the ISRB, because securing a favorable outcome through these processes is more likely with a legal advocate. SCP identifies strong candidates for early release across Washington State’s 12 adult prisons and matches them with pro bono volunteers to assist with the legal process. SCP also assists immigrants and refugees who have transformed their lives following a criminal conviction and who are at risk of being deported from the United States.

Over the course of its partnership with SCP, more than 55 Microsoft employees have provided pro bono legal representation to 30 SCP clients, four of whom were sentenced to long-term or life sentences as juveniles.

This year, Microsoft volunteers helped four people secure freedom from prison, and three people were saved from deportation.

This year, Microsoft volunteers helped four people secure freedom from prison, and three people were saved from deportation.



⁶ *National Immigration Forum: Fact Sheet: Central American Minors (CAM) Program*

Seattle Clemency Project: Tiffany's story

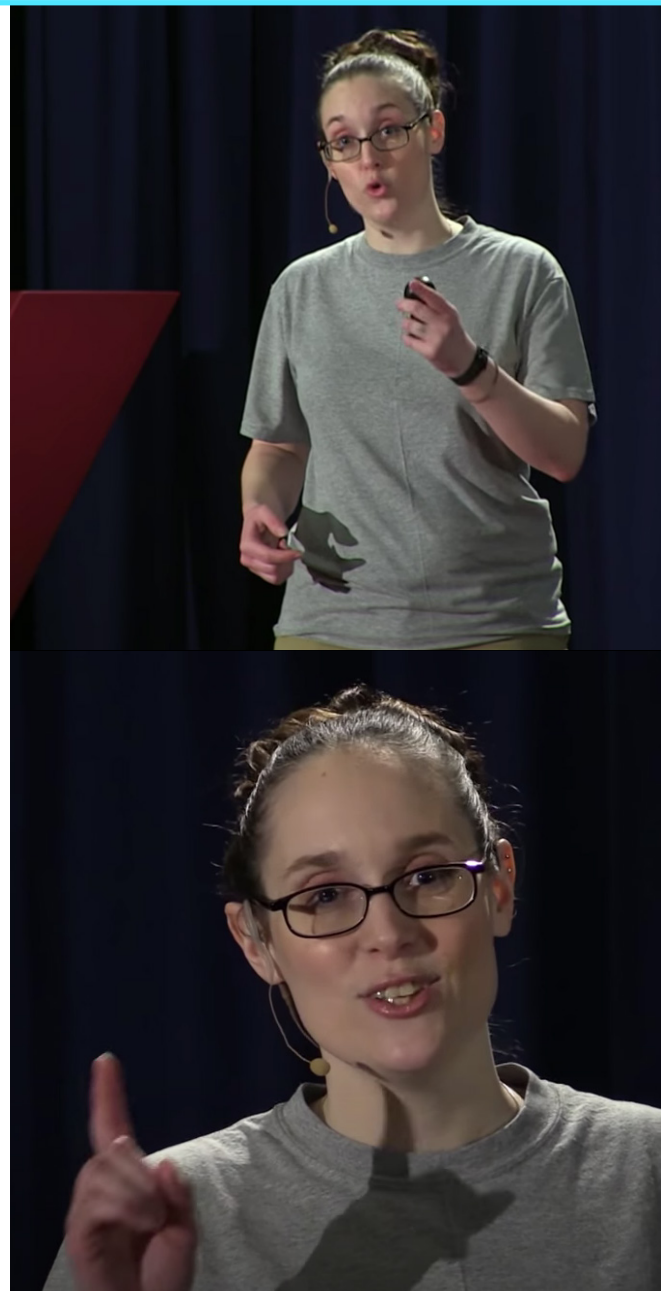
In early 2021, Microsoft pro bono volunteers Susan Sieh-Raffman and Mary Newcomer Williams received news that their client, Tiffany Williams, successfully petitioned the Washington ISRB for release from prison after serving 20 years for a crime committed when she was a teenager.

Tiffany is the first female Seattle Clemency Project candidate to win freedom from prison.

"Ms. Williams dove into education during her incarceration and has set goals of completing a bachelor's degree in biology and becoming a beekeeper after her release. Not only did Ms. Williams achieve exceptional personal enrichment, she gave back to her community by leading programs such as Toastmasters and supporting the availability of mental health services in prison. As a person with Asperger's syndrome, Ms. Williams delivered a moving TEDx Talk on the incarceration experience of people on the autism spectrum. Thank you to Ms. Williams, and her lawyers Mary Newcomer Williams and Susan Sieh-Raffman (part of the Seattle Clemency Project's partnership with the Microsoft legal team), for letting us share this remarkable story!"

~ Seattle Clemency Project

[Check out Tiffany Williams' TEDx Talk](#)



"After volunteering for SCP, I now understand the huge value that legal pro bono work has on literally life or death situations in terms of 'impact per hour.'"



Michelle Stamnes,
Microsoft Senior Corporate Counsel
and pro bono volunteer

Virtual Records Project

Helping clear criminal records through access to remote legal services

Over the past several years, Microsoft volunteers have worked with the [King County Bar Association](#) and the [Georgia Justice Project](#) to help people clear criminal convictions from their records and provide greater access to employment, housing, and educational opportunities. To assist even more people with this process, the Microsoft Pro Bono Program launched a Virtual Records Clinic this year in partnership with the [Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle](#), Civil Survival, and the Post-Conviction Unit of the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office.

Through this partnership, the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle refers matters to the clinic, Microsoft volunteers work with Civil Survival to assess eligibility and prepare a Motion to Vacate a criminal conviction, and the Post-Conviction Unit of the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office signs off on the motions it supports as quickly as possible.

Built on Microsoft Teams, the Virtual Records Clinic allows underserved community members to get legal help in a virtual format and provides volunteers with direct access to the resources they need to successfully prepare and file a Motion to Vacate.

Since piloting the Virtual Records Clinic in March 2020, the clinic has placed seven matters with Microsoft volunteers, with plans to serve more clients over the next several months.



Michelle Merriweather,
President & CEO, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

“Microsoft’s pro bono assistance helps our clients gain self-sufficiency to pursue employment, housing, and education, and enables better opportunities for success.”

VOTING AND FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

Defending a healthy and open democracy

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Election Protection Program

Defending the right to vote

The November 2020 presidential election saw record voter turnout with two-thirds of eligible US voters casting a ballot either by mail or in person.⁷

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a national, nonpartisan coalition, offers a wide range of tools and activities to protect, advance, and defend the right to vote. One of those tools is an Election Protection hotline that voters can call to obtain help with all the stages of voting, including registration, absentee and early voting, casting a vote at the polls, and overcoming obstacles to participation such as finding a way to the polls during a global pandemic.

Twenty-five Microsoft employees volunteered over 200 hours virtually to help people exercise their right to vote. The 2020 election voter turnout broke previous records, in part due to pro bono organizations like [Election Protection](#) that are dedicated to helping people participate in our democratic process.

Twenty-five Microsoft employees volunteered over 200 hours virtually to help people exercise their right to vote.



“In a landmark election where I had previously planned on in-person volunteering, it was such a gift when the Microsoft Pro Bono team identified the Election Protection hotline opportunity. Not only was it extremely rewarding, but I learned so much about voting rights that I am inspired to continue volunteering in this area.”



Jen Scully,
Microsoft Assistant General Counsel
and pro bono volunteer

⁷ [Pew Research Center, Jan 2021](#)

Protecting Journalists

Providing legal support to journalists and small newsrooms

Despite the integral role a free and fair press serves in any democracy, many journalists in the US face increasing difficulty in resolving legal issues that impact their ability to report, and they need help.

To address these challenges, Microsoft and the Seattle-based law firm of Davis Wright Tremaine launched the [Protecting Journalists Pro Bono Program](#) to provide pro bono legal support through prepublication review, access to public records, and legal defense against subpoenas for confidential information.

Pro bono volunteers review stories with a legal lens, spotting potential issues for the journalists. When a journalist makes a request for public records and is stymied by a government agency's refusal or slow response, pro bono volunteers advocate for the records on behalf of the journalist. When a journalist receives a subpoena ordering them to share their confidential sources or face the prospect of a criminal proceedings, the program offers support and legal defense.

Since launching this collaboration nearly one year ago, the program has assisted with more than 20 matters and helped journalists and small newsrooms that would not otherwise be able to access legal services.

One such newsroom is [Open Vallejo](#), an award-winning, independent, nonprofit, public interest newsroom located in Vallejo, California. It was through Open Vallejo's reporting that years of police violence, corruption, and neglect were finally exposed, triggering other reporting on the depth and breadth of the corruption, including by the New Yorker. Citizen action demanding accountability followed.

This year, volunteers from Microsoft and Davis Wright Tremaine assisted with 14 matters for the Protecting Journalists program in total.

This year, volunteers from Microsoft and Davis Wright Tremaine assisted with 14 matters for the Protecting Journalists program.

"The Protecting Journalists pro bono services are critical to our ability to publish deeply investigated and necessary stories."



Geoff King,
founder of Open Vallejo

PATHWAYS

Creating pathways for future generations

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Street Law

Encouraging young people to enter the legal profession

Historically, the legal profession has been one of the least diverse professions in the United States. In 2020, only 14 percent of lawyers identified as Black, African American, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latinx, Multiracial, and Native American, and only 33 percent of lawyers identified as women.⁸

With the goal of increasing diversity in the legal profession by way of diversifying the pipeline, Street Law launched the Legal Diversity Pipeline Program. The program is designed to encourage young people from groups that are currently underrepresented in the legal profession to pursue legal careers. Legal volunteers provide role modeling, career pathway information, support, and the opportunity to step into the shoes of a legal professional and engage in simulated legal problem-solving.

In 2020, 23 pro bono volunteers from Microsoft’s legal department partnered with Street Law to visit Cascade High School in Everett, Washington. The volunteers donated over 200 hours to teach students about various legal concepts and subjects and to provide an opportunity to develop skills required for a legal career through a simulated trial.

Volunteers also shared their personal and unique paths to a legal career and their experience working for a corporate legal department.



Cascade High School, Everett, Washington.

“The personal connections and open conversation with Microsoft’s committed, friendly, diverse, and awesome attorneys allowed students to learn not only about the legal field, but about trusting the process of figuring out ‘what they want to be’ when they grow up. One student recently shared with me that she learned from our Microsoft guest speakers that whatever background you’re from, you can still work toward getting a law degree.”
 ~ Melissa Webster, Introduction to Law teacher, Cascade High School

“It is humbling to see how sharing a little of ourselves and our time can make a difference in the lives and long-term career choices of high school students.”



Lindsey Burt,
 Microsoft Principal Corporate Counsel
 and pro bono volunteer

⁸ American Bar Association, *Growth of the Legal Profession*

Leadership Council on Legal Diversity mentoring

Inspiring the next generation of legal professionals to stay in law school

Navigating the confusion and rigor of law school and the legal profession can deter many new law students from pursuing careers in the law. Sometimes, the only difference between those who persevere and those who do not is the presence of a mentor.

Additionally, 30 percent of all entering law students identify as racial and ethnic minorities.⁹ Recognizing that equity in the law requires that the legal profession continue to diversify, Microsoft has partnered with the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity's [Success in Law School Mentoring Program](#).

Mentor/mentee pairs meet regularly to discuss law school and the legal job search process, and to encourage mentees to keep pushing forward.

This year, 57 Microsoft legal professionals volunteered to be mentors to diverse, first-year law students in the Seattle area.

This year, 57 Microsoft legal professionals volunteered to be mentors to diverse, first-year law students in the Seattle area.



⁹ 2019 Law School Diversity Report: JD Enrollment by Race & Ethnicity (enjuris.com)

Equal Justice Works

Sponsoring the passions of upcoming legal professionals

In an effort to invest in and mobilize the next generation of legal professionals committed to fighting for equal justice, Microsoft and an outside counsel law firm have partnered for the last 12 years to cosponsor two fellows for a two-year fellowship through [Equal Justice Works](#) (EJW).



Ming Cheung, 2020 Equal Justice Works fellow.

Each fellowship is curated by the host organization in collaboration with the fellow's passions and skill set. The goal is twofold: address unmet legal needs in an area the fellow cares deeply about, while also building skills that will launch the fellow into a career as a public service lawyer.

Ming Cheung, 2020's EJW fellow sponsored by Microsoft and the law firm of Fish & Richardson, is working with the Immigrants' Rights Project sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union. In 2020, Ming litigated a class action challenge to the Title 42 policy under which unaccompanied children were being immediately expelled from the United States instead of being sent to shelters set up by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) where they could receive care and be placed with sponsors. Ming's efforts were key to obtaining a preliminary injunction to stop these expulsions.

The impact of Ming's work is just one example of how EJW fellows can make an immediate and significant difference, influence policy, and create a structure that supports legal access. Experiencing that kind of impact early in a career can inspire the next generation of passionate public service leaders to persevere as social justice advocates in the legal profession.



University of Washington Entrepreneurial Law Clinic

Pairing law and business students with pro bono attorneys and business advisors for legal counsel

Small business owners, micro-entrepreneurs, and nonprofits can greatly benefit from legal and business counseling but are often unable to pay for this support. The [University of Washington Entrepreneurial Law Clinic](#) helps fill this need by pairing law and business students with pro bono attorneys and business advisors, and by providing critical early stage legal and business counseling through a clinic model.

Like many other legal clinics, the UW Entrepreneurial Law Clinic shifted to a virtual format in early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they partnered with the Seattle Public Library to reach those individuals most in need of assistance.

Over the past year, nine Microsoft volunteers have covered 12 shifts for these clinics and provided employment law, intellectual property, and corporate governance advice to small business owners to help them navigate the challenging landscape created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

W SCHOOL OF LAW
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Entrepreneurial Law Clinic



Make What's Next

Helping reduce the gender gap in STEM fields and entrepreneurship

Despite making up 47 percent of the workforce, women hold less than 27 percent of jobs in the industries of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).¹⁰ The disparity is even greater for inventors—only 12.8 percent of all patent inventors in 2019 were women.¹¹

Microsoft's [Make What's Next](#) program was created with the goal of reducing the gender gap in STEM and entrepreneurship. Along with mentorship and guidance, the program invests in the success of young inventors and entrepreneurs by matching them with teams of Microsoft pro bono volunteers to draft patent applications to protect their inventions and to provide representation during the US Patent and Trademark Office's review.

Entrepreneur Charlene Xia and a team of other developers created a text-to-Braille device that helps vision-impaired individuals read any text, anywhere. Charlene recently learned that the device, named [Tactile](#), will receive a government patent, filed through the Make What's Next program at Microsoft. "This is a big step forward in making the world more accessible for all," she said.

Since 2016, the program has helped almost 100 inventors to file patent applications across a wide range of technology disciplines.

"We started this project while we were still young, inexperienced, and rather naive. We are armed with ambitions to make a difference while fumbling in the dark. The Microsoft Patent program has paved the road for us to keep innovating for the betterment of humanity and the planet."



Charlene Xia,
Engineer and inventor of Tactile



Team Tactile in creation-mode. Learn more about their text-to-Braille invention [here](#).



Charlene Xia, Tania Yu, Jessica Shi, Chandani Doshi, and Grace Li, inventors of Tactile.

¹⁰ *Women in the labor force: a databook: BLS Reports: US Bureau of Labor Statistics and Women Making Gains in STEM Occupations but Still Underrepresented (census.gov)* ¹¹ *Progress and Potential: 2020 update (uspto.gov)*

CIVIL SUPPORT

Ensuring access to civil legal support for those in need

- 29 National Veterans Legal Services Program, Lawyers Serving Warriors
- 30 Virtual Help Clinic for domestic violence survivors



National Veterans Legal Services Program, Lawyers Serving Warriors

Offering free legal help to veterans who were injured during their military service

Many US veterans return home from conflicts with permanent physical injuries and chronic diseases that are a direct result of serving in an armed conflict. Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) is a special monetary compensation program that was enacted by Congress for retired veterans who have a verifiable combat-related disability.

Over the past year, lawyers, paralegals, and business professionals volunteered to help 14 veterans file for CRSC benefits. These volunteers connected with their clients through the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP)'s Lawyers Serving Warriors (LSW) program. NVLSP's LSW program offers pro bono legal help to veterans with disability needs.

For one of these cases, a Microsoft attorney and paralegal partnered to help an army veteran from Texas, who served in conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The soldier had sustained combat-related injuries that resulted in partial permanent disability that impacted his family and his quality of life. The two volunteers worked with the veteran to draft and submit his CRSC claim with the US Army, which then granted the benefits he earned through his sacrifice.



Brandon Burks, an army veteran who served in conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan, sustained combat-related injuries. As a result of engaging the NVLSP and Microsoft pro bono volunteers, he was able to receive the benefits he deserved. Brandon is pictured here with his wife, Monica, and their son, Carson.

"The entire experience was rewarding and fulfilling on a very personal level."



Elise Trester,
Microsoft Senior Paralegal
and pro bono volunteer

Virtual Help Clinic for domestic violence survivors

Helping survivors of domestic violence obtain protection orders

Domestic violence abuse rates have risen dramatically during the global pandemic, creating an even greater need for protection order advocacy services. Before COVID-19, people in King County who wanted to obtain a protection order against domestic violence were required to appear in person before the court. With government shutdown and stay-at-home orders in place, the King County court system quickly developed a pathway for survivors to request a protection order remotely.

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office partnered with Microsoft, the law firm of Perkins Coie, and The WAVE Foundation for help. The group quickly stood up a legal support model—the Virtual Help program—to connect clients to pro bono volunteers virtually.

This year, 11 protection orders against domestic violence were granted, and volunteers donated 800 hours to create the infrastructure to sustain and expand this work, which includes a robust on-demand training and forms library, case tracking system, and referral process—all using Microsoft technology.

This year, 11 protection orders against domestic violence were granted, and volunteers donated 800 hours.

"The Virtual Help Clinic is able to harness the vast resources of law firms and corporations, including the technological innovations of Microsoft. Not only is this program an effective model of service, but it prioritizes access to justice and trauma-informed advocacy."



David Martin,
*Domestic Violence Chair,
King County Prosecuting
Attorney's Office*

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Equalizing access to legal aid, empowered by technology

- 32 King County Housing Justice Project, Eviction Heatmap
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King County Housing Justice Project, Eviction Heatmap

Defending tenants against eviction during a pandemic

More than 500,000 King County residents have filed new unemployment claims since the COVID-19 pandemic started in early 2020. As job losses have surged, so has the number of households in Washington unable to pay their rent fully and on time.

The King County Bar Association’s Housing Justice Project (HJP) helps tenants facing eviction due to economic hardship by partnering with volunteers to provide legal counseling, representation, and connections to resources that can help tenants stay housed.

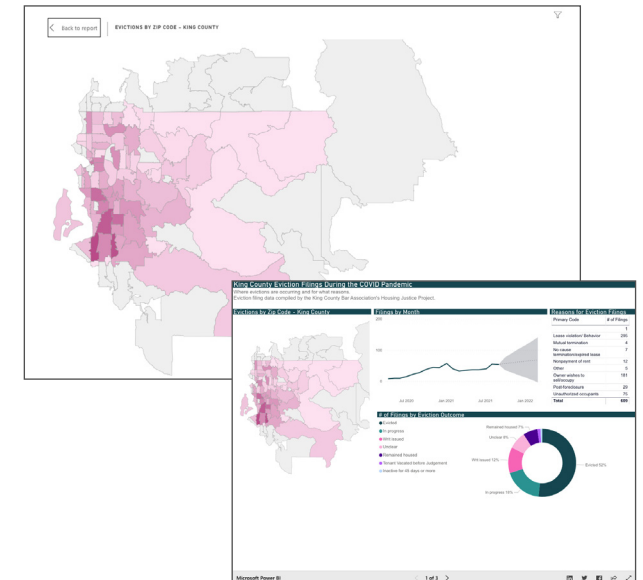
As the economic and housing implications of the Covid-19 pandemic increased in magnitude, Microsoft employees began looking for ways to help. In July, more than a dozen volunteers—including legal professionals, engineers, designers, researchers, data scientists, and project managers—came together to design and build solutions for HJP as part of the [company’s annual one-week Hackathon](#).



2020 Hack for Housing Justice team members

The team, working in partnership with HJP employees, redesigned HJP’s website to increase their reach to clients and volunteers while providing more accessible information for clients to learn about landlord-tenant legal issues. The team also created data visualization tools by using Power BI for analyzing the eviction information HJP collects for King County.

These tools provide a real-time visual of where evictions are happening in King County, including an evictions heatmap to help HJP show policymakers that tenants remain at risk despite the current eviction moratoriums and to advocate for effective solutions. The map will also be an important tool once the eviction moratoriums are lifted because it will allow HJP and community leaders to assess at scale where evictions are occurring.



Public Equity and Justice System dashboard

Developing tools to enable data-driven decision making in the criminal justice system

The criminal justice system impacts marginalized communities at a disproportionately high rate, but in Washington State there is no comprehensive source of criminal sentencing data. Individual counties, prosecutors' offices, and various state commissions all hold disparate pieces of an immense puzzle.

Without the ability to see complete metrics and data around various points in the criminal justice lifecycle, voters, legislators, criminal law practitioners, and the public cannot grasp the current state of the system or the impact of changes in laws or sentencing guidelines.

Anthony Powers, the Reentry Program Manager for the [Seattle Clemency Project](#), had requested and received years of public data on criminal sentencing in Washington State but had no way to collect or display the data in a useable, centralized format. He also lacked the resources to build a dashboard.

In 2020, 30 Microsoft pro bono volunteers partnered with Powers to build the Public Equity and Justice System (PEJS) dashboard, which aggregates and visualizes 20 years' worth of

adult felony sentencing data, as well as overlaying Washington State census data to reveal any unbalanced or inequitable representation of a particular demographic as applied to criminal sentences.

As a result of this project, a new nonprofit, the American Equity and Justice Group (AEJS) was created. This year, AEJS worked with 42 Microsoft volunteers along with other community partners to continue to gather and display data. The dashboard was also accepted by the [Microsoft 2022 Open Data Campaign](#) as one of the top 20 projects.

The insights extracted from this dashboard are already reforming criminal justice. On February 25, 2021, the Washington State Supreme Court issued the Blake decision, in part based on the data made available via the PEJS dashboard. The ruling stated that the possession of a controlled substance statute was unconstitutional and required a rectification plan to be put in place for any person in Washington who had been charged or prosecuted for this crime.

Using the PEJS data, AEJS discovered that between the years 2000 and 2019, 126,175 prison sentences were for, in whole or in part, a violation of the *Blake* decision.¹²

The PEJS dashboard also uncovered that racial disproportionality in the US criminal justice system is due, in part, to disparities in drug law enforcement.

According to the AEJS, "In the vast majority of Washington's 39 counties, the percentage of black or Native American people sentenced under this statute is greater than their percentage in Washington's 2019 population."¹³

With no prior access to data to make these decisions, many people would still be facing a lifetime of incarceration, with no hope of freedom.

"This tool demonstrates how we can use data and modern technology so that all people are treated equally regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status."



Anthony Powers,
Reentry Program Manager,
Seattle Clemency Project

¹² This number is based on CFC data and cited in this public memo: [American Equity and Justice Group \(wa.gov\)](#) ¹³ [American Equity and Justice Group \(wa.gov\)](#)

WIP Case Management System

Using technology to improve efficiencies in casework

Nonprofits and pro bono organizations often lack the resources and access to the tools and technology that could streamline their work and increase their impact.

In the summer of 2020, Lara Zarowsky, the Executive and Policy Director for the [Washington Innocence Project](#) (WIP), approached the Microsoft Pro Bono Program for help developing a Case Management System specifically tailored for their work. WIP provides free legal services to men and women in Washington State who have been wrongfully convicted and helps prevent wrongful convictions through data-driven education and policy reform.

Microsoft and WIP partnered with a vendor to develop a tool to meet the specific needs associated with post-conviction casework. Using SharePoint Online, Azure Cognitive Services, and Power BI, the team developed a centralized portal for internal users and external volunteers. The portal helps the WIP streamline the intake process through AI-powered document scanning, organize the numerous paper documents associated with a case, and quickly surface insights from this data with a new visual dashboard.

Now, WIP is better equipped to organize their cases through the new system, enabling them to increase the speed at which new clients are onboarded and bolster their advocacy efforts based on trends and data surfaced through the dashboard. The efficiencies WIP has gained through this tool will help amplify and extend their impact to even more people in need.

The team continues to work on ways to scale this solution to other Innocence Projects and related organizations throughout the country, so they too can benefit from having the right tool for the task at hand.



Eastside Legal Assistance Program

Transitioning in-person legal aid to virtual models

2020's global pandemic brought many nonprofit and pro bono organizations to an inflection point, as they were forced to shut down in-person pro bono services and convert to an all-virtual model. This presented a great challenge to organizations already hard-pressed for resources and technology.

The [Eastside Legal Assistance Program](#) (ELAP) had to transition to virtual clinics and requested help to improve their virtual tools. ELAP provides high-quality, no-cost civil legal aid to low-income residents of King County, Washington, including hosting pro bono clinics where lawyers help with the preparation of wills, powers of attorney, and advanced healthcare directives. To maintain uninterrupted services during a time when the need was greater than ever, ELAP partnered with Microsoft to better deliver their remote pro bono legal services.

Four Microsoft volunteers worked with ELAP to improve their website and digitize the client intake process by using Microsoft Forms. The data from the forms is also now aggregated, providing greater insights on how to adapt services to client needs.

The project is ongoing, and Microsoft is committed to helping expand ELAP's impact through greater digital efficiencies.



“Microsoft Pro Bono volunteers have been a great help to Eastside Legal Assistance Program. We appreciate the focus on a user-centered design approach the technical experience Microsoft volunteers bring to help improve services to our low-income clients.”



Sarterus Rowe,
*Technology and Innovation Director,
Eastside Legal Assistance Program*

IMPORTANCE OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Pro bono work is not just for attorneys.

Through the collective efforts of legal, business, engineering, and administrative professionals, the Microsoft Pro Bono Program provides partners and clients with direct legal services, technical capabilities, and project management support.

For example, Microsoft's pro bono work with KIND includes a multidisciplinary team: an attorney, paralegal, or business professional and an employee from outside the legal department who can serve as an interpreter. The team works together on a case for a child in immigration proceedings. Additionally, Microsoft volunteers have also provided KIND with technical and operational support by building a secure internal SharePoint site for maintaining KIND case information, templates, and training resources.

This multidisciplinary approach allows for a more thorough and customized pro bono offering to people or organizations in need of help beyond legal aid. It also brings together employees with diverse backgrounds and skills, thereby creating meaningful opportunities to develop new competencies, build community, and make a difference.



AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Seattle Clemency Project, Luminary Award

This year, Microsoft was honored to receive the Luminary Award from the Seattle Clemency Project. The annual award is bestowed upon a person or an organization who has made a substantial impact on SCP's work by contributing in a variety of ways. SCP shared that Microsoft stood out because the program changed the organization's ability to provide meaningful and successful experiences to both legal professionals providing pro bono services and, most importantly, to the clients. Over 70 Microsoft volunteers contributed since the partnership started in 2018 in services such as litigation, social media, website management, marketing, event planning, and the [2020 Public Equity and Justice System dashboard](#).

[Read more here](#) about the partnership between SCP and the Microsoft Pro Bono Program.



Due to Microsoft's dedication, we are able to succeed in our mission of giving second chances to individuals that we believe would make positive impacts in our community.”

~ Seattle Clemency Project



Grady Mitchell received clemency in January 2021 through the work of the Seattle Clemency Project. He then began a mentorship with a Microsoft employee. Now Grady has his own business and a friend for life. Learn more about Grady and other pro bono stories by visiting [Microsoft Pro Bono Program](#).

APEX Award for Pro Bono and Public Service | Washington State Bar Association (WSBA)

The APEX award—Acknowledging Professional Excellence —honors exemplary member of the legal community in Washington state. Microsoft, Perkins Coie, and The WAVE Foundation received this award for their work on the [Virtual Help clinic](#) to aid survivors of domestic violence receive the legal aid they need in a virtual environment.

Corporate Partner of the Year Award 2021 | National Veterans Services Legal Provider (NVLSP)

NVLSP awarded Microsoft’s pro bono work with the Corporate Partner of the Year award on behalf of veterans, service members, and their families. *"Microsoft is an incredibly valuable pro bono partner to NVLSP and is one of our Lawyers Serving Warriors program’s leading corporate pro bono partners for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) cases. Through the partnership, veterans receive top-notch legal representation."* ~ NVLSP

2021 Pro Bono Team of the Year | Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

Asel Neutze, Mike Pressman, and Mari Tome were selected as KIND's 2021 Pro Bono Team of the Year. This recognition is based on their exceptional contributions to a case supporting an unaccompanied immigrant minor, and the tireless work on their behalf. *"The team is always ready to advocate for the client and they never balk at unfamiliar legal territory. Our client could not navigate these systems like this without this team."* ~ KIND



Asel Neutze,
Senior Corporate Counsel

"This is one of the most meaningful projects I have done in my life. The difference you can make is immeasurable and KIND mentors and attorneys are there to assist and provide guidance every step of the way."



Mike Pressman,
Assistant General Counsel

"Working with KIND is an extraordinary opportunity to change the course of a child's life. Working with KIND has been one of the most gratifying and rewarding experiences of my professional career."



Mari Tome,
Senior Program Manager

"This amazing experience has allowed me to connect with a child through my native language during a pivotal moment in their life. As a team, we fostered an environment that made our client feel welcome, safe, and supported while learning from his resiliency, optimism, and dreams for the future."

2021 Microsoft pro bono steering committee

Special thanks to the members of the Pro Bono Committee for organizing and developing the program, promoting the pro bono work throughout the department, attending committee meetings, participating in curated activities, and for serving as ambassadors and pro bono champions to their respective teams.



Angela Walker,
Senior Paralegal



Avani Patel,
Corporate Counsel



Beth Henderson,
Senior Corporate Counsel, Pro bono Leader



Cindy Randall,
Associate General Counsel, Litigation



Dan Choi,
Assistant General Counsel



Ellen Wong,
Principal Corporate Counsel



Jenna Wolfe,
Principal Corporate Counsel



Jennifer Cooper,
Business Manager



Joe Nord,
Senior Corporate Counsel



Julie Florida,
Assistant General Counsel



Keri Banghart,
Business Administrator



Laura Sierra,
Senior Corporate Counsel



Michele Burlington,
Chief of Staff, Tech and Corporate Responsibility



Pablo Castro,
Business Program Manager



Phong Dinh,
Senior Corporate Counsel



Sima Sarrafan,
Assistant General Counsel



Stephanie Chavez,
Executive Business Administrator



Stephanie Hong,
Corporate Counsel



Tracy Cooke,
Paralegal

