

MOSES & SINGER LLP

Pro Bono and Public Service

“Pro bono publico” (often shortened to “pro bono”) is a Latin phrase meaning “for the public good.” The term is used to describe professional work undertaken voluntarily and without payment, as a public service. *Pro bono* work is common practice in the legal profession and is increasingly being seen in marketing, technology and strategy consulting firms, as well.

The *pro bono* program is an integral part of working at Moses & Singer. The choice of matters is mostly driven by the associates, and as such, they continually infuse the work with vitality and vision. Since the associates choose to work on matters about which they are truly passionate, everyone who participates brings his or her talents and strengths and delivers the highest quality work to our *pro bono* clients.

For example, **Jared Jacobson** provides *pro bono* services to the [Hoboken Shelter](#). “I started working in the kitchen there,” he said, “and that was great, but I thought I could really serve them better if I could use my legal skills.” Jared joined the board of trustees almost 18 months ago, and is now in the process of revising their by-laws to reflect changes that he and the rest of the board have implemented.

Overall, Jared’s goal is to bring the shelter’s corporate organizational documents up to speed and align them with the organization’s mission statement, which is “to provide a safe haven for homeless men and women.” Sometimes the work feels important and full of impact, and sometimes it just feels like regular work. Part of Jared’s responsibilities include reviewing past board meeting minutes, and having numerous conversations with the Executive Director, community and religious leaders, board members and the board President, just to make sure nothing has been left out, and to stay current with the organization’s goals and needs going forward.

Similarly, **Jay Meisel** and **Jen Nigro** got involved as poll watchers for the [Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#) (AALDEF) Asian American Poll Monitoring Project. “I used to monitor polls in rural Virginia during law school,” said Jay, “and I’ve always been interested in election law, so this was something I wanted to do.”

The aim of the Poll Monitoring Project is, essentially, to oversee the voting process in Asian-American neighborhoods. For the primary election in February, Jen and Jay helped out in three different immigrant communities in Queens, observing and documenting any anti-Asian discrimination, and reporting to AALDEF racially disparate treatment of any voters – not just Asian-Americans. The project additionally aims to monitor the availability of and access to minority language voting materials, and the use of affidavit ballots. “It was eye-opening for me to get into these communities and see firsthand the challenges that communication barriers and lack of resources can pose for an election.”

Both Jay and Jen found that each polling site presented its own challenges in terms of voter access and availability of on-site interpreters fluent in Chinese and Korean. “It was really surprising,” said Jen. “Some of the interpreters that were provided to the voters didn’t appear to have a firm understanding of the process. Nobody had trained them on procedures such as the use of affidavit ballots.”

Even though the *pro bono* program is mostly associate-driven, Moses & Singer is lucky to have among us one of the 2007 [Legal Services for New York City](#) Pro Bono Honorees, **Alan Kolod**. LSNY is the largest provider of civil legal services to low-income persons in the United States, and Alan was honored for his involvement in recruiting more attorneys to work on the Bankruptcy Pro Bono Project.

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