

How to Apply for CLE Credit for Pro Bono Legal Services

Effective January 1, 2014, attorneys may be eligible to receive CLE credit for providing certain types of pro bono legal services. Pro bono programs that wish to seek pro bono credit for their volunteer attorneys should read Gov. Bar R. X, Sec. 5(H) and CCLE Reg. 415.

Definition of “Pro Bono” CLE Credit

The provision of legal services by a volunteer attorney to either a person of limited means or a charitable organization in which the legal service is assigned, verified, and reported to the Commission by any of the following:

1. An organization receiving funding for pro bono programs or services from the Legal Services Corporation or the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation.
2. A metropolitan or county bar association.
3. The Ohio State Bar Association.
4. The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation.
5. Any other organization recognized by the Commission as providing pro bono programs or services in Ohio.

Eligibility for Accreditation

Volunteer attorneys may not seek CLE credit for their pro bono legal services on their own. They must seek such credit through application with the pro bono sponsor, which is responsible for submitting CLE credits to the Commission.

For purposes of CLE accreditation, pro bono sponsors are deemed to be “sponsors” as defined in Gov. Bar R. X and the CLE Regulations and, to the extent applicable, are required to comply with all sponsor obligations as set forth in the rule and regulations, such as maintaining records of pro bono work engaged in by their volunteer attorneys, verifying attorney pro bono hours, and submitting attorney pro bono hours for CLE credit to the Commission.

Process for Seeking CLE Credit for Volunteer Attorneys

If the pro bono program needs to be recognized by the Commission as providing pro bono programs or services in Ohio (see, Gov. Bar R. X, Sec. 5(H)(5)), the program must first complete a Form 21. If, after review of the Form 21, the program is recognized by the Commission, the program then should submit a Form 22 for accreditation of its specific pro bono program.

Pro bono programs that wish to seek CLE credit for their volunteer attorneys must complete a Form 22 for submission to the Commission. If the application is approved, the pro bono program will be provided with an Activity Code that the program will use to submit attorney attendance credits to the Commission. The program approval will be for one calendar year. Pro bono programs must resubmit a Form 22 for each year in which it seeks CLE credit for its attorneys.

Reporting Pro Bono CLE Credit to the Commission

Attorneys who wish to receive CLE Credit for their pro bono legal services should complete Part I of Form 23 for submission to the pro bono program. The pro bono program should review the information provided by the attorney for completeness and accuracy. After the sponsor has verified the information submitted by the attorney in Part I of Form 23, the sponsor should complete Part II of Form 23 to calculate the number of CLE Credit hours to which the attorney is entitled. The pro bono program is responsible for submitting these credit hours to the CLE Commission through the [Sponsor Portal](#). Sponsors should retain the originals of Form 23 for two years.

Calculation of CLE Credit

Attorneys are eligible to receive one CLE credit hour for every six hours of pro bono legal services performed. Pro bono programs are responsible for verifying the number of pro bono hours their volunteer attorneys have worked and dividing the total number of hours by six before submitting the CLE credit hours to the Commission. An attorney must provide a minimum of six hours of pro bono legal services to be eligible to receive one hour of CLE credit. After the minimum one-hour threshold has been met, additional pro bono hours will be rounded to the nearest quarter hour. For example, if an attorney provides six hours of pro bono legal services, the attorney would receive one hour of CLE credit; if the attorney provides nine hours of pro bono legal services, the attorney would receive 1.5 hours of CLE credit; if the attorney provides ten hours of pro bono legal services, the attorney would receive 1.75 hours of CLE credit.

Pro bono programs should submit CLE credit for their volunteer attorneys no later than thirty days following the end of the calendar year in which the pro bono services were performed.

Forms for Applying for Pro Bono Credit

Form 21, “*Application to be Recognized as an Organization Providing Pro Bono Programs or Services in Ohio.*”

Pro bono program providers should complete this form to be recognized by the Commission as an organization providing pro bono programs or services in Ohio pursuant to [Gov. Bar R. X, Sec. 5\(H\)\(5\)](#).

Form 22, “*Application for Accreditation of Continuing Legal Education Activity: Pro Bono Credit*”

Pro bono program providers should use this form to seek CLE Credit from the Commission for their pro bono programs that will be the basis for CLE credit for their volunteer pro bono attorneys. This form may only be submitted by a pro bono program to the Commission.

Form 23, “*Application for CLE Credit for Pro Bono Legal Services*”

Attorneys should complete Part I of this form to request CLE credit for the pro bono legal services they provided through a recognized pro bono program provider. Attorneys should submit this form directly to the pro bono program through which the pro bono legal services were assigned; these forms should not be submitted to the CLE Commission. Pro bono program providers should complete Part II of the form to calculate the number of hours of CLE credit to which a volunteer attorney may be entitled. Pro bono programs should maintain these forms for at least two years.