



2021

PRO BONO REPORT



JUSTICE FOR ALL
A Tennessee Supreme Court Initiative



2021

Pro Bono Report

This report was prepared by the
Tennessee Supreme Court Access to
Justice Commission.

The ATJ Commission's mission is to
provide collaborative leadership to
create solutions and resources that
address and eliminate barriers to justice
for all. Pro bono work plays a key role in
the completion of the ATJ Commission's
mission, and this report seeks to inform
and support that pro bono work.

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INTRODUCTION

2021 Pro Bono Report

The 2021 Tennessee Pro Bono Report is a publication of the Tennessee Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission (the “ATJ Commission”). This edition of the report compiles and analyzes data collected by the ATJ Commission, the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility, the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education and others.

The ATJ Commission provides collaborative leadership to create solutions and resources that address and eliminate barriers to justice for all. The ATJ Commission is responsible for developing strategic planning focused on educating the public about legal needs, identifying priorities for improving access to justice, and recommending projects and programs to improve access to justice across the state. One focus of the ATJ Commission is pro bono work that supports vulnerable Tennesseans.

PLEASE ADDRESS QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS REPORT TO:

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A NOTE ON THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic continued to present enormous challenges and novel impacts across access to justice efforts. In Tennessee, the legal community continued to adapt and address the challenges that the pandemic presented. Tennessee's devoted advocates consistently worked through the difficulties of the pandemic to creatively provide help across the legal field when people needed it most.

The data for this report was collected in 2021 and includes many pro bono activities that were completed in 2020; two years that saw the height of the pandemic's impact.

It is certain that the pandemic affected the pro bono efforts across the state and is reflected in the following data. It is a testament to Tennessee Attorneys to see so much pro bono activity being contributed and reported here. Tennessee Attorneys provided pro bono services valuing over \$1.26 million, and we saw more than half of Tennessee Attorneys reporting pro bono services.

Tennessee Attorneys did not stop providing for the people of Tennessee, and their services continue to help those in need.

PRO BONO DATA

BPR Reporting

The 2021 Tennessee Pro Bono Report covers pro bono initiatives and data including information submitted by attorneys to the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility (BPR) as part of its Annual Registration Statement and information submitted to the Access to Justice Commission.

Rule 6.1 of the Tennessee Rules of Professional Conduct asks that attorneys aspire to provide 50 hours of pro bono legal services every year. Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.10 encourages attorneys to provide information regarding pro bono activities completed in the past year to the BPR as part of the annual report. This means that pro bono activities reported in 2021 took place during 2020. The BPR provides that information to the ATJ Commission for the purposes of this report.

In 2021, 9,236 attorneys reported providing pro bono services to the BPR. This report separates those submissions based on the attorneys' primary address.

DEFINITIONS

All Attorneys – all attorneys licensed to practice law in Tennessee regardless of the location of the primary address provided to the BPR.

Tennessee Attorneys – all attorneys licensed to practice law in Tennessee whose primary address is located in Tennessee.

In keeping with Tennessee Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1, the annual renewal statement surveys attorneys on pro bono activities completed in the following categories:

- Legal Services without a fee or at a substantially reduced fee to persons of limited means (“Persons of Limited Means”);
- Legal services without a fee to non-profit organizations serving persons of limited means (“Nonprofit Organizations Serving Persons of Limited Means”);
- Legal services to groups and organizations at a reduced fee when payment of standard fees would create financial hardship (“Groups and Organizations”); and
- Legal services to improve the law, the legal system, or the legal profession (“Improve the Law”).

BY THE NUMBERS

2021 PRO BONO HOURS REPORTED



585,571 hours
of pro bono services



51.6% of TN attorneys
provided pro bono services



63.4 hours on avg
per attorney providing services

\$125.9
Million

worth of legal
services provided
in 2021

Tennessee Attorneys reported an astounding 585,571 hours of pro bono work provided in 2021. That means that attorneys completing pro bono activities completed 63.4 hours on average. Assuming an average rate of \$215 per hour, that's \$125,897,765 worth of legal services donated to Tennessee communities.

Since the first Pro Bono Report in 2012, over 1.2 billion in free legal services have been donated.

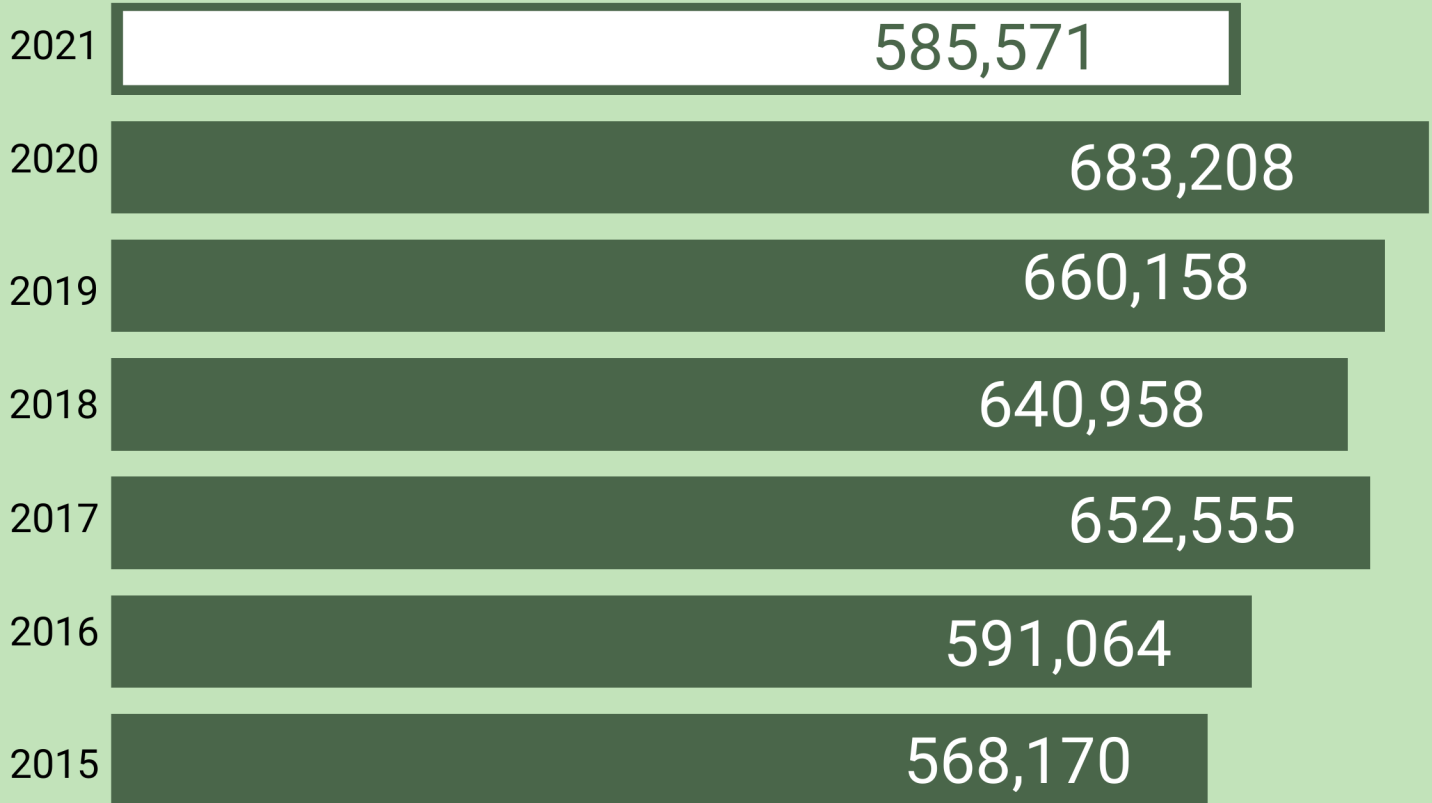


1.248
Billion

in free legal services have
been donated since the first
Pro Bono Report in 2012

YEAR OVER YEAR TRENDING

YEARLY PRO BONO HOURS OF SERVICE REPORTED



Tennessee did see a drop in hours of pro bono work reported in 2021. 585,571 hours of pro bono services were reported in 2021, despite the pandemic certainly having an impact on attorneys, clients, and the justice system.

Five consecutive years have seen over half of Tennessee attorneys providing pro bono services since the Access to Justice Commission began publishing this data; 51.6% in 2021, 53.2% in 2020, 51.9% in 2019, and 52.8% in 2018.

Breakdown: Types of Services Provided for 2021

71%

Persons of Limited Means

13%

Nonprofit Orgs Serving
Persons of Limited Means

5%

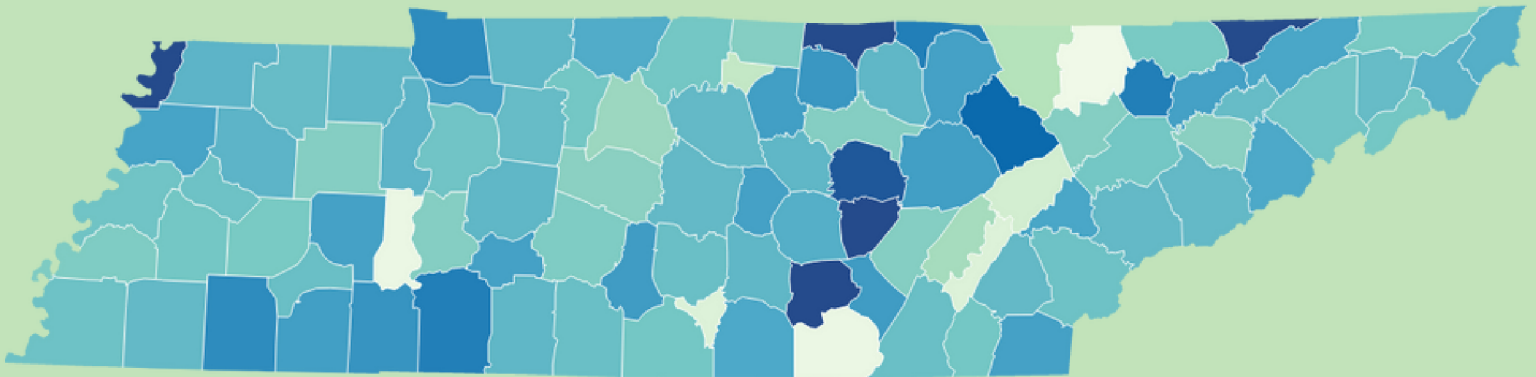
Groups and Organizations

10%

Improve the Law

A LOOK ACROSS TENNESSEE

Percent of Attorneys Providing Pro Bono Services by County



Percent calculated against all attorneys that reported for that county
Pro Bono reporting without an accurate county listed was not included in this visualization

100% Pro Bono Service Participation

Clay | Grundy | Hancock | Lake | Van Buren



Highest Number of Pro Bono Attorneys

Davidson | Shelby | Knox | Hamilton

Despite the slight drop in Pro Bono hours, there remained a wide range of participation across the state.

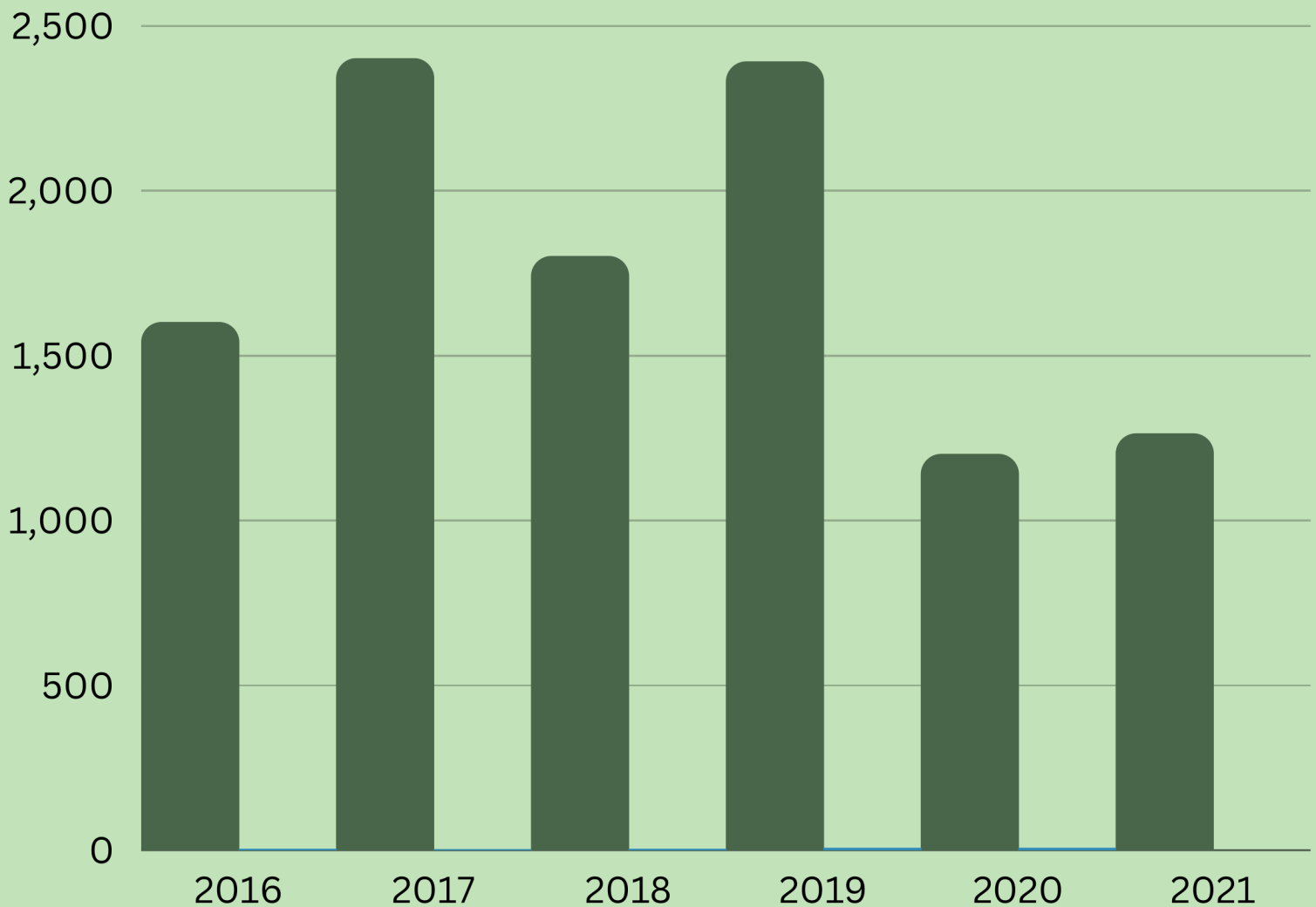
- 5 Counties had 100% participation: Clay, Grundy, Hancock, Lake, and Van Buren.
- 8 counties had 75% or more: White 95%, Morgan 88%, Pickett 80%, Union 80%, Wayne 80%, Hardeman 75%, and Stewart 75%.

As expected, we see the highest number of Pro Bono Attorney participants in the most populated counties of Davidson, Shelby, Knox, and Williamson; with just over 5,800 attorneys participating across these 4 counties.

CLE PRO BONO DATA

The Tennessee Continuing Legal Education Commission provides pro bono credit to attorneys providing pro bono services in accordance with Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 4.08(c). This rule gives the CLE Commission the power to award CLE credit for pro bono legal services.

The chart below shows the number of pro bono hours reported to the CLE Commission for credit.



ATJ SURVEY DATA

Here is What Attorneys Providing Pro Bono Services Shared With Us

The Impact

- 2,322 Individuals Helped
- 30,000+ Pro Bono Hours Worked
- 76% reviewed or drafted documents
- 78% provided services for free or at a reduced fee to persons of limited means
- 64% provided multiple Pro Bono services



Who Are Firms Helping

Victims of Domestic Violence
Persons with Disabilities
Immigrants
The Elderly
Students Single Parents
Rural Residents Veterans
Incarcerated Persons
Minorities Children
Juveniles
LGBTQIA+
Homeless Individuals

Our office administered a survey to those attorneys that provided Pro Bono services in 2020.

We had 59 respondents answer questions about their Pro Bono work. Those questions ranged from type of pro bono services provided to information about the people they were able to help and how much time and effort an individual or their firm was able to provide.

CONCLUSION

Tennessee Attorneys carry so much impact across the state when they provide invaluable services to their neighbors. The state feels that impact, and here in this report, it is easy to see that impact.

Despite the difficulties presented by the pandemic, Tennessee Attorneys continued to come out in astonishing numbers to provide time, energy, resources, knowledge, and expertise when people needed it most. Volunteer attorneys generate lasting help for all types of people across Tennessee; helping families, veterans, minorities, and so many more that don't have access to legal resources. Pro bono efforts make a significant difference in the lives of Tennesseans, and the ATJ Commission is proud to celebrate and support those efforts.

This report is made possible because of the tireless efforts of so many legal service organizations, mediation providers, law schools, clinical providers, faith-based organizations, bar associations, law firms, and individual attorneys. The ATJ Commission thanks you for all of your hard work and cooperation in creating the 2021 Pro Bono Report.