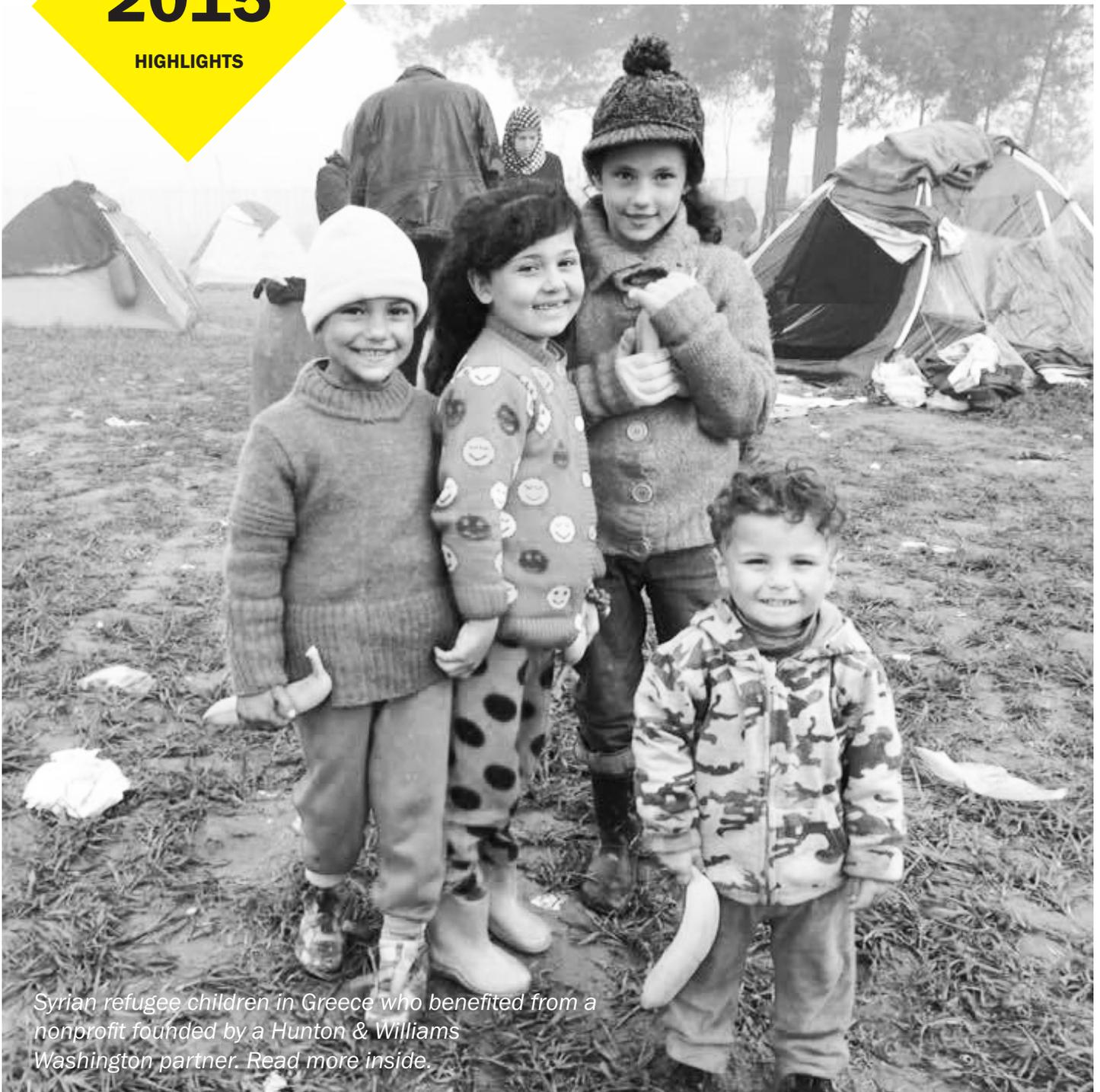


PRO BONO
2015
HIGHLIGHTS

PRO BONO MATTERS



Syrian refugee children in Greece who benefited from a nonprofit founded by a Hunton & Williams Washington partner. Read more inside.

Photo credit: Hendrik de Kok

A Victory for Texas Children

In 2015, truancy, or “failure to attend school,” was decriminalized in the state of Texas. For years, Texas truancy laws had disproportionately targeted low-income minorities and special education students and created a “school-to-prison pipeline” for disadvantaged youth.



Raquel and Yolanda Fontenot | Photo credit: Allison V. Smith

Raquel Fontenot, a high school sophomore in Seagoville, Texas, sat handcuffed in a criminal courtroom facing jail time and fines her family could not afford. Raquel had been charged with criminal truancy, or “failure to attend school,” a policy which made unexcused absences an adult crime in Texas.

Raquel — living with her mother, three siblings, grandfather and four dogs in their trailer home — suffered from depression and anxiety. Those issues, coupled with attention deficit and mood disorders, kept her from wanting to leave the living room she shares with her sister as a bedroom. On certain days she would tell her mother, Yolanda, that she knew she was going to get in trouble at school so Yolanda would let her stay home.

In 2015, Texas and Wyoming were the only two states punishing truancy in criminal courts, a practice that allowed children as young as 12 to face fines, and ultimately jail time, for adult crimes. Dallas County had even created special statutory “Truancy Courts” to handle the cases, prosecuted by attorneys in the Dallas County DA’s office. But there were no assigned public defenders; minors had the right to legal counsel, but only if they could afford to hire private attorneys. And, depending on the judge, parents were often not allowed to speak on their child’s behalf.

Raquel was first charged with criminal truancy when she was 14. She remembers sitting before a judge in an adult courtroom and looking to her mother for answers to the judge’s questions. But Yolanda couldn’t answer for her.

She and Yolanda did their best in navigating the system, but facing numerous court dates and fines, they were overwhelmed by the process. The pressure mounted as Raquel was told that if she or her mother did not pay the court costs, Raquel would have to pay in jail time once she was 17.

Texas Appleseed, a legal advocacy nonprofit, found in its research that 80 percent of the 115,000 children prosecuted in 2013 for criminal truancy in Texas were from low-income families. The Texas courts, meanwhile, assessed more than \$16 million in court costs and fines to the disadvantaged youth that same year. The research also showed that the system disproportionately targeted minorities and special education students and found that children who spent time in the courtroom were ultimately more likely to drop out of school.

During one of her court dates, Raquel was approached by a lawyer with Texas Appleseed who was seeking to help students in the criminal truancy court system. Texas Appleseed, familiar with the Hunton & Williams pro bono program through its board member and Hunton & Williams Austin partner Ed Fernandes, asked a team of Hunton Dallas lawyers — Joel Sharp, Kevin Brooks and Grayson Linyard — to represent Raquel and her sister Luranetta in their cases on a pro bono basis. The Hunton team, concerned that the Texas criminal truancy system was unconstitutional in its application because it burdened thousands of children by giving them a criminal record to begin adulthood, accepted the case and quickly got to work.

The efforts of Texas Appleseed and Hunton & Williams Dallas lawyers helped lead to reform to decriminalize truancy, fixing a broken system that targeted minority and low-income youth.

The Hunton & Williams team gave Raquel and Luranetta something most kids in the system never received: real trials with engaged counsel advocating for them. The Hunton lawyers filed briefs, made evidentiary objections and cross-examined the government’s witnesses — demanding the students’ rights at every turn. Among other things, Hunton’s

team argued that the school district and DA's office failed to properly consider that Raquel was missing school because she was not receiving the special education she needed for her mental illness. The school district, and the system, were failing her. After separate trials, both Raquel and Luranetta were found "not guilty" and their cases were dismissed. After one of the trials, one of the courtroom bailiffs said that, in many years of service, she had never seen an actual trial in that court.

In 2015, because of the efforts of Texas Appleseed, state lawmakers and private lawyers, including the Hunton & Williams Dallas team, reform was passed that decriminalized truancy in Texas and made "failure to attend school" a

civil rather than criminal offense. Schools now have the responsibility to handle this issue — a step forward in fixing a broken system.

Raquel is now back at Seagoville High School receiving the necessary special education to keep her in school. Her teachers are working with her to make sure she manages her anxiety and she is performing well in her classes. Yolanda is now seeing positive changes in her daughter's attitude toward school. She is relieved that Raquel and Luranetta will no longer have to face the litany of court dates and fines that once held them back. The Hunton & Williams Dallas lawyers are honored to have helped lessen the burdens for the Fontenot family and other Texas children.

Responding to an SOS with Sea of Solidarity

After experiencing the Syrian refugee crisis firsthand, a Hunton & Williams partner returns from a father/son vacation with a plan to help thousands fleeing persecution.

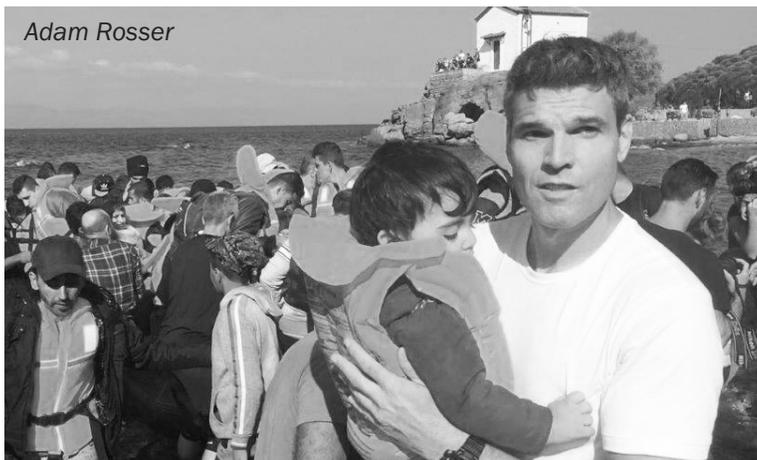
While visiting the Greek island of Lesbos in October 2015, Adam Rosser, a partner in the Hunton & Williams Washington, D.C. office, and his father were unexpectedly caught up in rescue efforts for Syrian refugees. Hundreds of refugees were arriving at a beach on Lesbos daily in life rafts and weather-beaten rowboats. Recognizing the lack of government and charity assistance, Adam and his father, with several other volunteers, approached the boats and carried refugees to the shore. Many of the refugees were families with young children, arriving hungry and vulnerable, some with hypothermia and other medical conditions.

After witnessing the crisis firsthand, Adam felt that he could not ignore refugees fleeing under such dangerous circumstances. From his law office in Washington, DC, Adam connected with a Lesbos volunteer living in San Francisco and another concerned person in Dublin, Ireland. The group recognized the need for basic comforts such as food, dry clothes, thermal blankets and medical services at refugee camps in Greece. They turned to a team of Hunton &

Williams lawyers — Bill Gray in Richmond, Heather Eastep in McLean and Samantha Bollers in Washington — to help incorporate and obtain 501(c)(3) status for "Sea of Solidarity," a nonprofit that would raise and direct funds to existing volunteer groups on the ground.

In mid-November 2015, after cofounding Sea of Solidarity, Adam returned to Greece for three weeks to continue to volunteer and find local vendors and other nonprofits who were committed to helping the refugees on a long-term basis. With the support of hundreds of donors, Sea of Solidarity has funded more than a thousand sleeping bags, a thousand baby bottles, tens of thousands of hot meals and thousands of pounds of fresh fruit, thousands of pairs of wool socks, hundreds of pairs of shoes, hundreds of gallons of fuel for rescue boats and all funding for two schools in Turkey that serve dozens of Syrian children, and much more. Adam is now organizing and funding a project for volunteer lawyers to assist the 50,000+ asylum seekers throughout Greece. Over the past six months, Sea

Adam Rosser



Over the past six months, Sea of Solidarity has raised and spent over \$130,000, with less than 1 percent of revenues spent on administrative costs.

of Solidarity has raised and spent over \$130,000, with less than 1 percent of revenues spent on administrative costs. The crisis is monumental but the efforts of compassionate individuals can provide aid and relief to people who are vulnerable and displaced.

Because of Adam's efforts, tens of thousands of refugees are receiving comfort in the form of food and clothing and other critical needs, all of which was made possible through the nonprofit that Hunton & Williams lawyers helped form.

Combating Slumlords in California

The surging cost of housing in metropolitan areas is also giving rise to the power of slumlords. A team of Hunton & Williams lawyers sought to level the playing field for low-income tenants who were given uninhabitable housing in Hollywood.

Los Angeles is home to the least affordable rental market in the country and to one of the largest gaps in income equality. These disparities have led to an increase in illegal housing practices by landlords who can take advantage of low-income tenants who may not have other safe and affordable housing options. Hunton & Williams Los Angeles lawyers, in partnership with the Inner City Law Center, represented 18 young and impoverished artists and students in a lawsuit filed against their landlord — a notorious Los Angeles slumlord — after they had suffered through years of filthy and dangerous living conditions in their rundown Hollywood apartment complex.

Suites became sick and suffered severe distress while enduring these dilapidated conditions.

The Inner City Law Center in Los Angeles has developed a large practice combating slumlords over the last three decades. The ICLC staff of 40 spends thousands of hours each year combating homelessness, habitability violations and illegal housing practices that victimize low-income tenants. Because of ICLC's reputation in the LA community, the 18 tenants of the Hollywood Dream Suites reached out to ICLC to help them obtain relief from their substandard housing. Then, seeking the assistance and substantial resources of a private law firm for this case, ICLC turned to Hunton & Williams to partner with them to manage the highly contentious litigation.



The tenants of the Hollywood Dream Suites sought legal recourse after growing tired of seeing roaches in their kitchens. Many had sewage overflowing from their sinks and bathtubs, unhealthy levels of mold growing on their walls and plaster dropping from their ceilings and crumbling onto their floors. Some took cold showers when they did not have heat in their apartments or bathed using buckets of water heated on their stove. Some also had broken locks on their doors amidst a gross lack of security and in a neighborhood known for dangerous transients. On top of these deplorable conditions, the landlord also violated the tenants' privacy by entering their units while they were not home, taking their belongings and confiscating letters from the housing department notifying the tenants of their rights. It is no surprise that many of the residents in the Hollywood Dream

The team of Los Angeles attorneys, paralegals and staff members, led by second year associate Paul Moura, aggressively prosecuted the case, devoting more than 1,000 hours to litigating the case through fact and expert discovery, including more than 30 depositions. After heated litigation continued up until what was sure to be a lengthy trial, the landlord defendants ultimately agreed to a settlement with the Hunton & Williams and ICLC team — just hours before trial was set to begin — providing a favorable result for the tenants. The clients were immensely thankful and some have become inspired to do more to advance housing rights for other tenants in their community.



of full-time lawyers dedicated time to pro bono projects for the seventh consecutive year

Neighborhood Offices

Church Hill Office (Richmond, Virginia) (2,402 hours, 53 lawyers)

To assist in this endeavor of supporting local legal aid organizations in each of our office locations, Hunton & Williams opened its first “neighborhood” office in the Church Hill neighborhood of Richmond, Virginia, solely dedicated to legal aid overflow or persons falling just above the federal poverty guidelines. To date, more than 800 different Hunton & Williams lawyers and staff have served, in the Church Hill office, more than 5,000 low-income clients who otherwise would have been unable to afford legal services. The office supports low-income residents with guardianships and family

and real estate law. Sandy Reynolds has coordinated the office’s efforts since its opening. Carla Laroche, the Richmond pro bono fellow, spends 100 percent of her time on pro bono projects through Central Virginia Legal Aid and the office’s referrals. During the fiscal year of 2016, Hunton & Williams lawyers dedicated 2,402 hours to pro bono clients in the firm’s Church Hill office, helping low-income residents with uncontested divorces and guardianship, custody, immigration, domestic violence and landlord/tenant matters.

Charlottesville Neighborhood Office (Charlottesville, Virginia) (2,205 hours, 23 lawyers)

In 2005, Hunton & Williams opened a pro bono office on the campus of the Legal Aid Justice Center in Charlottesville. Housed at the historic “Rock House,” the partnership teams Hunton & Williams lawyers with University of Virginia School of Law students to handle protective order and child custody cases for victims of domestic violence. The office also accepts housing cases from the Legal Aid Justice Center

and is supporting a major case through the UVA Law School Innocence Project. Support and assistance with cases is provided by a full-time pro bono Hunton & Williams associate, Geri Greenspan, in Charlottesville. During the fiscal year of 2016, Hunton & Williams lawyers dedicated 2,205 hours to more than 75 pro bono clients in the Charlottesville office.

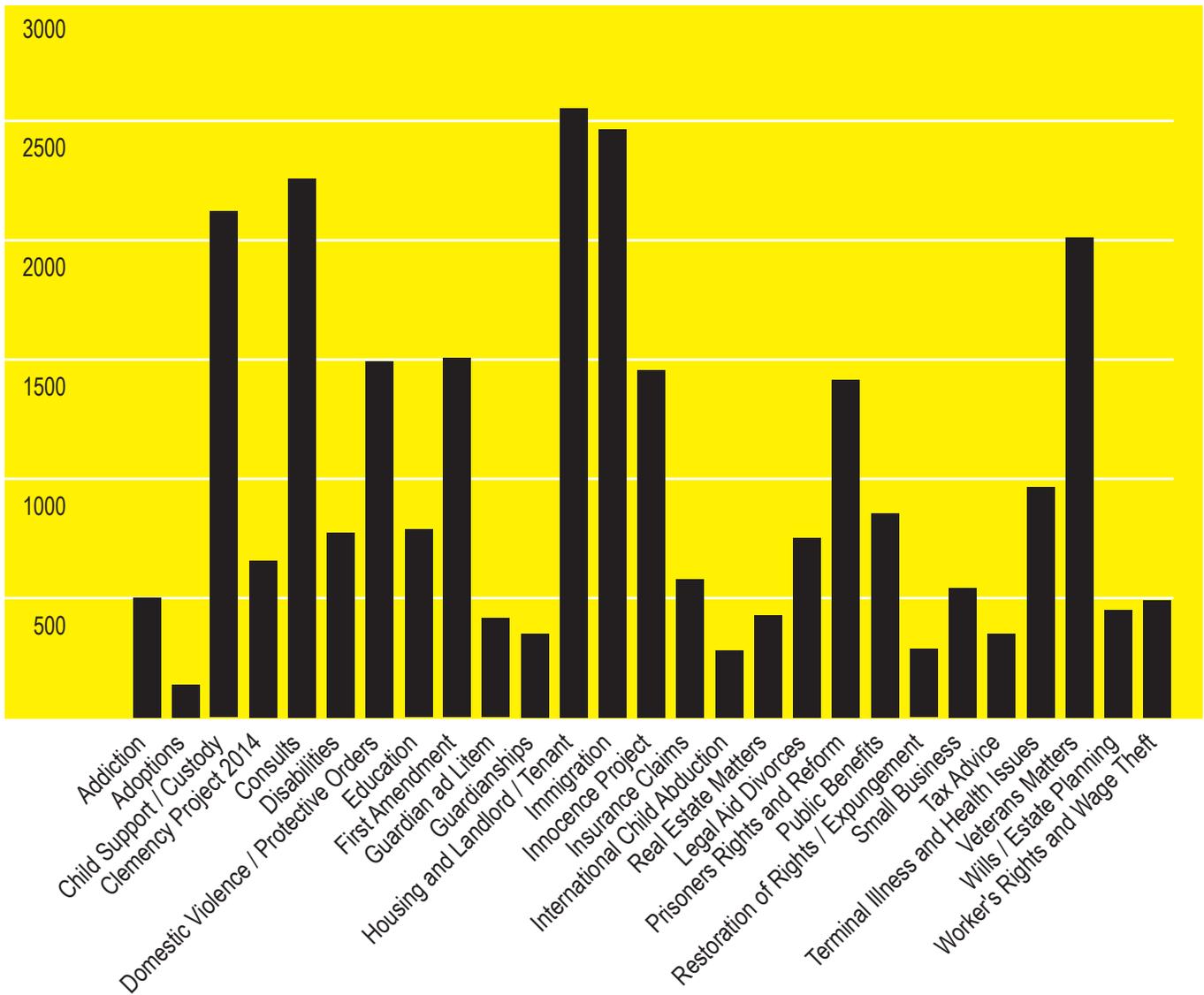
Legal Service Providers We Assist on a Pro Bono Basis Include:

AIDS Service Center in New York | Alliance for Children’s Rights in Los Angeles | **Atlanta Legal Aid Society** | Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation | Bet Tzedek in Los Angeles | CAIR Coalition | **Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services** | Catholic Charities of Dallas | Central Dallas Ministries | **Central Virginia Legal Aid Society** | **Central Virginia Victim/Witness Organizations** | Children’s Law Center in Washington | City Bar Justice Center in New York | City Square in Dallas | **Coast Guard Referral Program** | Commonwealth Catholic Charities | Community Tax Law Project | Council for Children’s Rights in Charlotte | Cuban American Bar Association Pro Bono Project | Dallas Bar Association Legal Line | DC Bar Pro Bono Program | DeKalb County Child Advocacy Center | **Disability Rights Legal Center in Los Angeles** | Drive to Work in Richmond | Fairfax Bar Association Attorney of the Day Program | Federal Drug Court Program | Fulton County Juvenile Court | Georgia Appleseed | Georgia Justice Project | Georgia Lawyers for the Arts | Greater Richmond Bar Foundation | **Hague Abduction Convention** International Child Abduction Cases | Her Justice in New York | Housing Crisis Center Dallas | Housing Opportunities Made Equal | Houston Volunteer Lawyers | **Inner City Law Center in Los Angeles** | International Refugee Assistance Project | Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) | Lawyers Alliance of New York | **Legal Aid Justice Center in Central Virginia** | Legal Aid of Los Angeles Foundation | Legal Aid of North Carolina | **Legal Aid of Northwest Texas/DVAP** | Legal Aid Society of New York | **Legal Counsel for the Elderly in Washington** | Legal Information Network for Cancer in Richmond | Legal Services Corporation | Legal Services of Greater Miami | Legal Services of Northern Virginia | **Legal Services of Southern Piedmont in Charlotte** | Mecklenburg County Teen Court | **Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project** | Mosaic Family Services in Dallas | National Center for Refugee & Immigrant Children | National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty | **National Veterans Legal Services Program** | New York Legal Assistance Group | Pro Bono Partnership Atlanta | Pro Bono Partnership New York | Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press | Richmond Behavioral Health Authority | Sanctuary for Families in New York Search for Common Ground | Shelter for Help in Emergency in Central Virginia | **Southern Center for Human Rights** | St. Vincent de Paul in Dallas | **Student Press Law Center** | Tahirih Justice Center | Texas Appleseed | Texas C-Bar | U.S. Courts Pro Bono Referral Programs | **University of Virginia School of Law Innocence Project** | U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants | Virginia Hispanic Chamber Legal Clinic | Virginia Poverty Law Center | Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program | Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts - New York | Volunteer Legal Services of Central Texas | **Volunteers of Legal Service in New York Washington Lawyers Committee** | Whitman Walker Legal Clinic in Washington

Hunton & Williams dedicated 250 hours or more to the organizations in bold

In 2015, Hunton & Williams lawyers and staff dedicated more than 25,000 hours to the legal needs of low-income individuals. The issues our clients faced were broad ranging. Below is a snapshot of the hours dedicated to different areas of law:

Hours donated



15,904 hours donated to non-profits

40,236 total hours donated globally to pro bono service

For more information about the Hunton & Williams pro bono program, please contact:
George H. Hettrick, pro bono leadership committee chair, at 804.788.8324 or ghettrick@hunton.com.