

News & Insights

Dykema Named Recipient Of National Public Service Award From American Bar Association Business Law Section

Honor Recognizes Firm's Sustained Commitment to Pro Bono Business Legal Services and Community Leadership
March 10, 2011

DETROIT - Dykema, a leading national law firm, today announced that the firm has been selected to receive the American Bar Association Business Law Section's 2011 National Public Service Award, which recognizes the firm's sustained commitment to transactional pro bono work and its leadership role in the Michigan and greater Detroit legal communities. The firm was nominated by partner organizations Community Legal Resources, the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, and the Legal Aid and Defender Association of Southeastern Michigan.

The Section of Business Law National Public Service Award recognizes significant pro bono legal contributions of law firms, corporate law departments and individual business lawyers that demonstrate a commitment to providing services to the poor in a business context. Recipients demonstrate dedication to the development or delivery of pro bono business legal services, contribute significant work toward developing innovative approaches to the delivery of pro bono business legal services, and/or provide sustained pro bono business legal counsel to nonprofit organizations or to micro-businesses in aid of community development

"We are honored that the Business Law Section has recognized Dykema for its dedication to providing assistance to low-income and disadvantaged communities through pro bono and public interest work for nonprofit organizations and individuals," said Rex E. Schlaybaugh, Jr., Dykema's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. "Dykema's strong commitment to pro bono work has been important given the current economic challenges, and I commend all of our attorneys for their considerable efforts to helping those in need."

Leor Barak, pro bono program manager at Community Legal Resources, said: "Dykema has demonstrated one of the largest commitments to pro bono legal representation in metropolitan Detroit, and throughout Michigan. Without Dykema's assistance, nonprofit organizations serving low-income communities in our state would be sharply disadvantaged in dealing with every day legal issues that arise during the course of their operations. Dykema's actions are especially impressive given the dire economic challenges in Michigan and Detroit particularly. Despite one of the most difficult legal markets in the country, Dykema has not for one moment waived in its commitment to pro bono and public interest work."

Working with its partner organizations, Dykema regularly provides valuable pro bono legal services to nonprofit organizations serving low-income communities. Since 2005, Dykema has accepted 146 referrals from Community Legal Resources and has established five Community Partnerships, where the firm provides legal advice and assistance as needed by a nonprofit organization. These Community Partnerships and other noteworthy pro bono initiatives include:

1. **Southwest Detroit Business Association:** For more than nine years, Dykema has helped to drive economic development in Southwest Detroit and assisted in creating the first Business Improvement District (BID) in the State of Michigan.
2. **Warren/Conner Development Coalition:** Assisting with litigation matters, corporate formation, and protection from liability, Dykema works with a coalition of neighborhood organizations to improve the condition of low-income communities.
3. **Northwest Detroit Neighborhood Development:** Dykema works with the local community development organization and assists with numerous tax issues, liability, and developing affordable housing.
4. **Michigan Immigrants Rights Center:** Dykema has shown leadership in the area of immigrants' rights through the Michigan Poverty Law Program, representing clients seeking asylum, special immigrant juvenile status, U-Visas, VAWAs, T-Visas and withholding of removal claims.

Dykema Named Recipient Of National Public Service Award From American Bar Association Business Law Section (Cont.)

Dykema's Longstanding Commitment to Pro Bono

Dykema believes the practice of law, especially in a large corporate firm, is a privilege that carries with it profound societal responsibilities. Performing legal services for those who cannot afford to pay for them or for organizations that benefit such persons is a central part of the firm's effort to improve the quality of life for the underserved in its community.

In 2010, Dykema attorneys and support staff performed 9,996 hours of pro bono work. The firm and its attorneys have earned several prestigious awards for its pro-bono work, including the 2009 Exceptional Service Award from the ABA Death Penalty Representation Project, the 2009 John W. *Cumminsky* Pro Bono Award, the 2009 Detroit Metropolitan Bar Pro Bono Service Award, and the 2010 Beacon of Justice Award from the National Legal Aid & Defender Association.

Dykema will be honored at the Business Law Section's Spring Meeting in Boston on April 15.

More information on Dykema's pro bono program is available at: [probono.html](#).

Practice Areas

Litigation