



STATE OF PRO BONO: CORPORATE EDITION

As the field of pro bono service continues to grow, companies increasingly identify pro bono programming as a critical element of their overall social impact objectives. Taproot Foundation conducted an inaugural survey of companies doing pro bono to collect data on their programs, identify trends, and share key observations for advancing the field. This resource provides information to help practitioners compare their program design and outcomes to peers in the field, and to support them as they work to effectively tell their success stories and achieve greater impact through pro bono service.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The survey results revealed three main takeaways, detailed below. The remainder of this report summarizes responses illustrating current trends in pro bono program design.

THERE IS NO “ONE SIZE FITS ALL”

The survey results confirm what we’ve long observed in the field: companies are tailoring their pro bono programs to maximize their unique opportunities for impact. Companies consider how their social impact goals, business objectives, distinct context and constraints, and employee skills and expertise intersect to form best-fit pro bono programs (see the [Pro Bono Sweet Spot](#) for more information).

ALMOST ALL COMPANIES ARE LOOKING TO SCALE THEIR PRO BONO PROGRAMS

Pro bono programming is a key factor in helping companies achieve their overall social impact goals—about 64% of respondents reported that pro bono is a very or extremely important part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy. As such, companies want to do more pro bono and are hoping to scale their programs in a variety of ways, such as engaging more departments and lines of business, increasing the number of employee participants, and supporting more nonprofits.

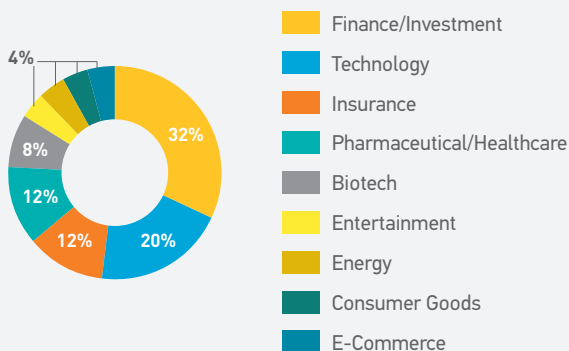
IMPACT MEASUREMENT IS A WORK IN PROGRESS

As pro bono programs mature, companies are looking to measure the impact of their programs on both nonprofits and employees to better tell their pro bono story.

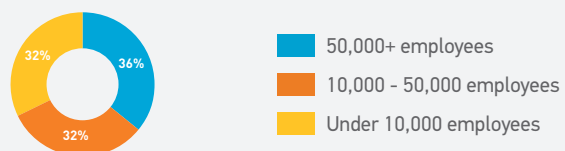
WHO IS REPRESENTED?

Taproot Foundation invited 78 companies to take the survey. The data in this report reflects the responses of 25 companies, 14 of which are Fortune 500 companies.

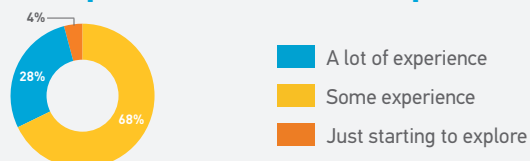
Companies by Industry



Company Size by Employees



Companies' Pro Bono Experience Level

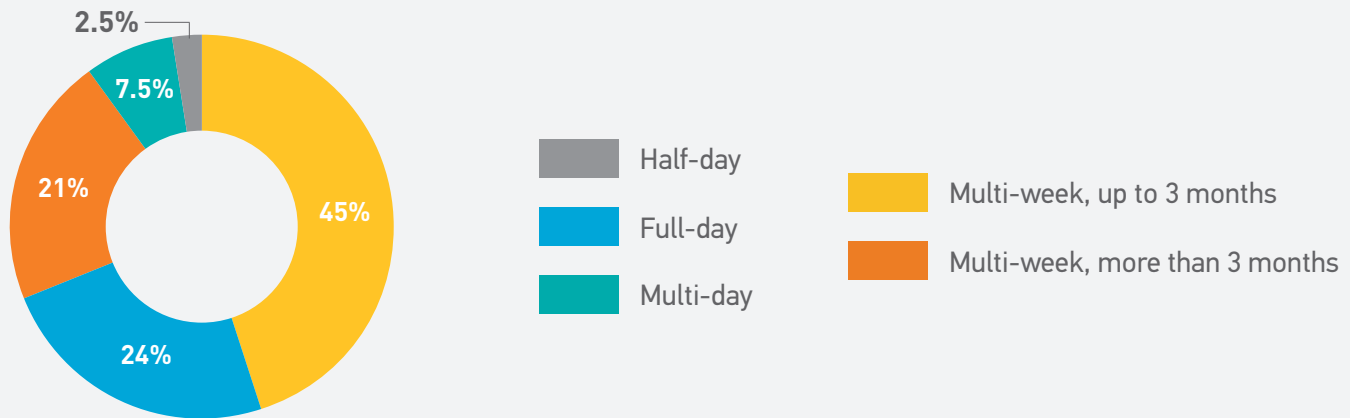


WHAT DO PRO BONO PROGRAMS LOOK LIKE?

Together, the 25 survey respondents reported on 38 different pro bono programs.

Program Type

The majority of programs span multiple weeks but are completed within three months. Multi-week programs typically require an average volunteer commitment of 1-5 hours per week.



Training and Preparation

Some sort of preparation activity—whether in-person or virtual—is mostly a given, and the majority of pro bono programs require employees to spend about 2-3 hours preparing. Respondents reported on the amount of time dedicated to training and preparing employees for pro bono engagements.



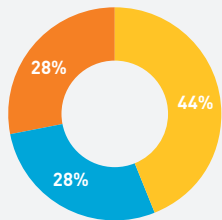
"[We offer] multiple programs that vary in terms of length, time commitment, and delivery mode (in-person, local, virtual/remote), so it gives employees options. If you can't travel far and take four weeks away from family and work commitments, there are other versions of the same program for you."

SOCIAL IMPACT GOALS

As companies consider the impact they want to achieve through their pro bono programs, most seek to support nonprofits whose missions are most aligned to the company's social impact goals and the issue areas that employees care about. Most companies are currently supporting 35 or fewer nonprofits per year (median = 15). Some companies are new to pro bono and piloting programs with smaller cohorts. As programs grow, companies will be able to support more nonprofit partners.

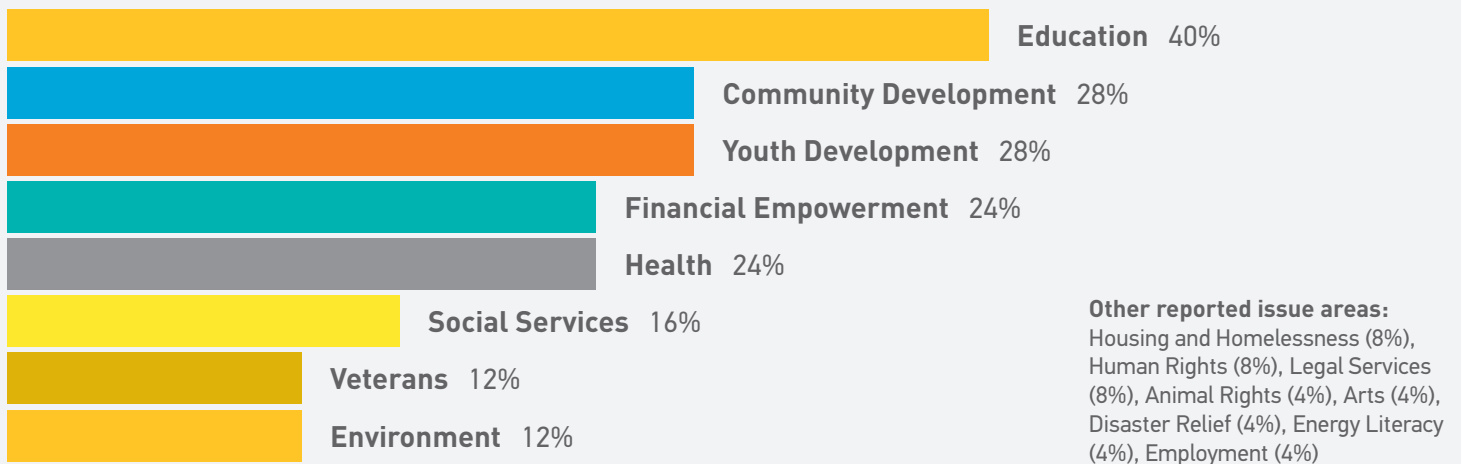
Issue Area Focus

Companies support nonprofits working in a variety of issue areas through pro bono, with most companies supporting nonprofits in more than one issue area.



- Do not focus their programs on specific issue areas
- Focus on specific issue areas, but also serve nonprofits outside of those areas
- Focus only on specific issue areas

Nonprofit Issue Areas



Impact of Pro Bono

Through their pro bono programs, companies are able to make both a social and a financial impact on the nonprofits they serve. As a result of pro bono projects, companies report that they see the following impacts on nonprofits (in order of reported impact):

- 1 Increased Effectiveness** Rate of success in achieving the organization's mission or desired end outcomes
- 2 Increased Reach** Number of beneficiaries served by the organization
- 3 Reduced Cost** Dollar amount saved by implementing the pro bono program outcomes
- 4 Increased Revenue** Dollar amount generated by the organization

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Companies recognize that their pro bono programs not only equip nonprofit organizations with the support they need to deliver on their missions—their programs also provide an opportunity to positively impact their overall success as a business.

Business Value of Pro Bono

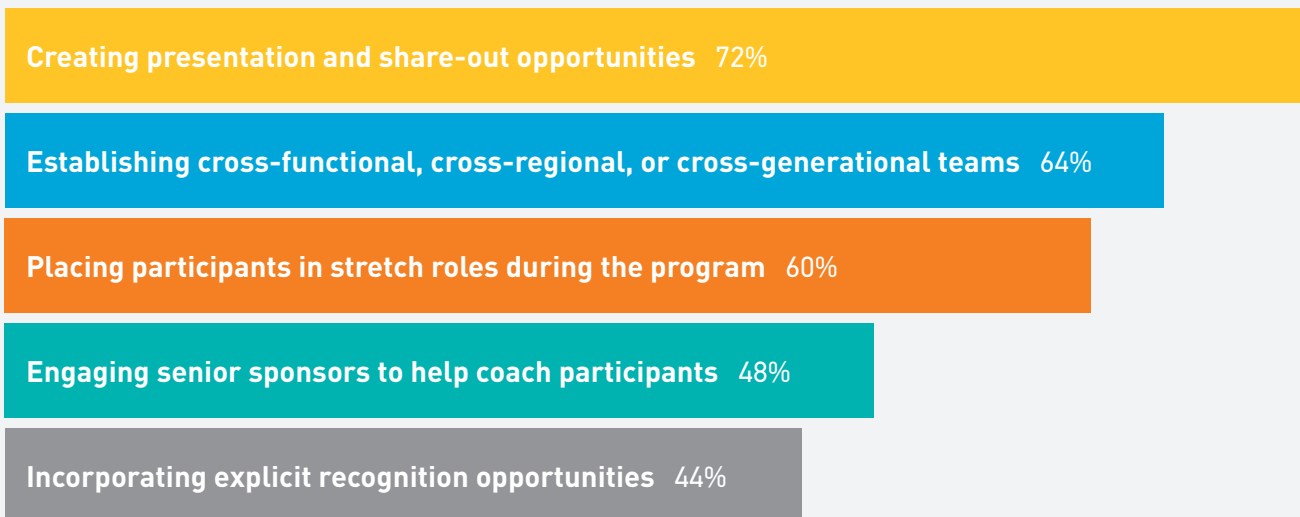
Most companies see their pro bono programs as an opportunity to meaningfully connect with or build their people, positively impacting not only employee satisfaction and engagement, but also employee retention and promotion. We asked companies to rank the six most common business objectives companies strive to achieve through their pro bono programming (described in the [Business Value of Pro Bono resource](#)). Respondents reported the following in order of importance:



Developing Talent

On average, each company incorporated four talent development components across their pro bono programs. Many companies hope to add more talent components as they continue to grow their programs, including engaging managers to provide feedback on development gains among participants.

Most often incorporated talent components:



SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

The expertise companies elect to engage in their pro bono programs is a reflection of the major groups of talent they tend to hire, the groups or departments that are interested in participating, and the needs of the nonprofits they want to serve. While 80% of companies represented in the survey are currently engaging 200 employees or fewer annually (median = 100), a few companies engage thousands of employees per year through their pro bono programs.

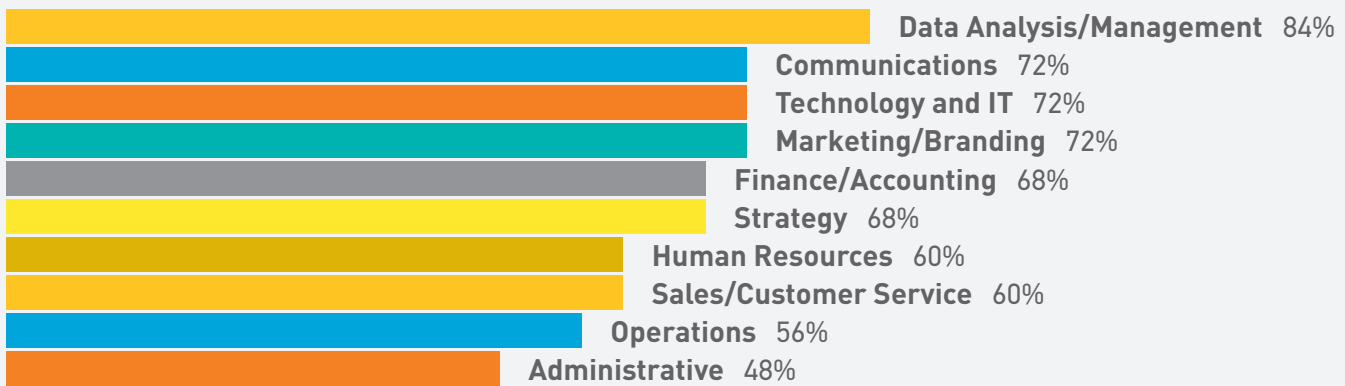
Experience Level

There is interest in and precedent for engaging emerging talent in pro bono as well as an opportunity to think strategically about what it might mean to more regularly engage seasoned talent. Respondents reported on the average years of experience program participants had in their field of expertise.



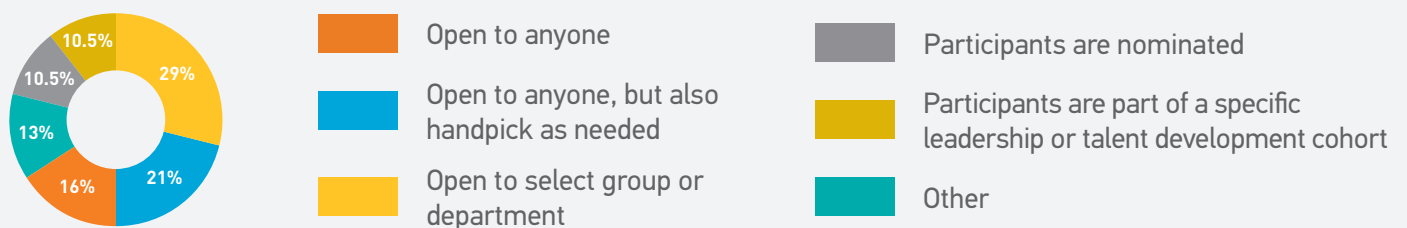
Types of Skills and Expertise Engaged

On average, each respondent engaged eight different talent categories across its pro bono programs.



Employee Recruitment

Most pro bono programs are targeted to a specific subset of employees.



“Our partnership with Talent Management is best-in-class. We have worked to develop shared goals and metrics, and we utilize our partnership to identify high-potential and high-performing leaders to participate in the program.”

CONTEXT AND CONSTRAINTS

Each company's unique structure, culture, and context play a critical role in pro bono program design. These elements also influence where a company might experience successes and challenges.

Program Management

While the strong majority of programs are managed by CSR teams, there are a number of instances of HR and other departments getting involved. 64% of companies engage a third-party intermediary to help them manage and implement their pro bono programming.



Successes and Challenges

Companies experience different successes and challenges in their pro bono programming depending on their unique context—what's challenging for one company may be an area in which another company excels. Here are some common themes we saw respondents highlight for their programs, in an open answer question.

Successes

- ▶ Employee Engagement
- ▶ Strategic Alignment
- ▶ Team Matching
- ▶ Leadership Buy-in
- ▶ HR Partnership
- ▶ Diversity of Programs
- ▶ Mission Area Focus
- ▶ Community Partnerships

Challenges

- ▶ Quality at Scale
- ▶ Employee Engagement and Recruitment
- ▶ Time Constraints
- ▶ Project Scoping and Matching
- ▶ Limited Resources

"[Our challenge is] awareness, i.e. communicating the value of pro bono programming and our available offerings. My company does not have clear communication channels, so I rely on functional partnerships or creative marketing strategies. Also, most employees aren't familiar with pro bono and the impact pro bono can make (compared to hands-on volunteering)."

LOOKING FORWARD

When asked about their vision for the future of pro bono at their company, most respondents emphasized how they hope to scale their pro bono programs and create a culture of employee engagement through pro bono service.

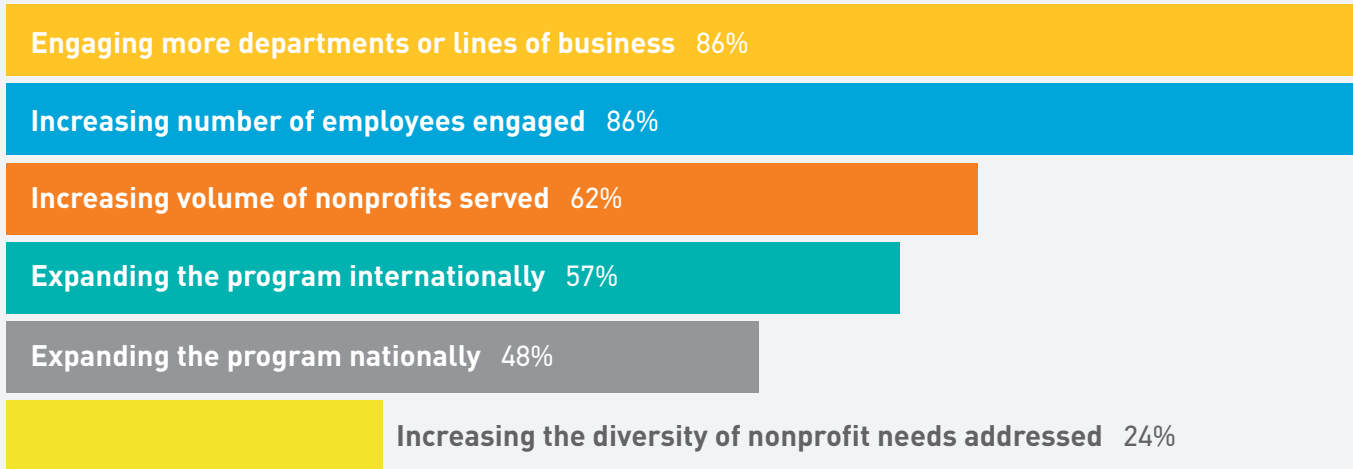
"[We want to] continue scaling and growing pro bono. We would ultimately love to have everyone participate in pro bono of some form."

"[We hope to] increase the impact and scale of our pro bono programs, leading to more community impact, better employee experiences, and greater talent development."

"[Our vision is to] create an environment where being involved is an expectation of employees, rather than a nice-to-have."

Scaling for Impact

The 84% of respondents who hope to scale their pro bono programs intend to do so in the following ways:



NOW WHAT?

The field of corporate pro bono service is growing rapidly; more companies are developing pro bono programs than ever before, and companies are getting more sophisticated in their approach. We look forward to continuing to release the State of Pro Bono: Corporate Edition in the coming years to help companies everywhere make the case for pro bono, identify trends that may help increase the impact of their existing programs, and glean ideas for scaling their impact.

Ready to get started? Connect with us today.
advisory@taprootfoundation.org

FOUNDATION

Taproot Foundation, a national nonprofit, connects nonprofits and social change organizations with skilled volunteers through pro bono service. Taproot is creating a world where organizations dedicated to social change have full access—through pro bono service—to the marketing, strategy, HR, and IT resources they need to be most effective. Since 2001, our Advisory Services practice has partnered with over 85 leading companies across the globe to develop best-in-class, customized, in-house pro bono initiatives. For more information, contact advisory@taprootfoundation.org

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