FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF BUSINESS LAW PRO BONO PROVIDERS

National Day of Service: Pro Bono Legal Help for Nonprofits Serving Vulnerable Populations

New York (February 1, 2018) Today the National Day of Service of the National Network of Business Law Pro Bono Providers (National Network) announced the successful completion of its first ever National Day of Service. The National Network, a collaboration of pro bono providers that serve different geographic regions throughout the United States, came together in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day to provide free legal consultations to nonprofit organizations serving the homeless and other vulnerable populations around the country.

Between January 17 and 24, 2018, eight legal services providers with expertise in business and transactional services for nonprofit organizations each held a National Day of Service. Leveraging the legal talents of pro bono attorneys from law firms and corporations, National Network members helped community-based and other resource-constrained organizations improve their corporate governance practices to ensure legal compliance and promote best practices. Nonprofit staff and board members learned about timely legal issues related to proper organizational documents, the board of directors in action, fiscal transparency, and regulatory compliance. Each nonprofit organization received a customized assessment of its current governance structure and legal needs.

In the eight cities where the National Day of Service took place, representatives from close to 60 nonprofit organizations received advice from more than 100 attorneys and other legal volunteers who collectively donated 300 hours of pro bono service. The participating organizations are working hard year-round to better the lives of the homeless and other vulnerable populations. Through the National Day of Service, they could focus on foundational legal issues that are important for carrying out their charitable missions in local neighborhoods, while benefitting from educational and assessment tools developed by National Network experts.

The National Network’s National Day of Service marks the first collaboration of business law pro bono providers to coordinate and offer governance consultations in different locations during the same week. The Network members that participated in this project are the Community Law Project of Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, the Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) of the Bar Association of San Francisco, Lawyers Alliance for New York, Michigan Community Resources, Pro Bono Partnership of Ohio, Public Counsel, the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, and Wayfind.

Several law firms, corporate legal departments, and other legal volunteers participated in the events, including Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP, Credit Suisse, Detroit Land Bank, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, MetLife, the Michigan Bar Association Real Property Section Members, NY Life Insurance Co., Paul Hastings, LLP, Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, Thomson Reuters, and the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law.

“The National Network is thrilled to coordinate and leverage its resources to provide dedicated nonprofit managers with better tools and information to improve their operations. With strong
governance practices in place, nonprofit organizations are better able, legally and practically, to pursue their charitable goals and mission,” said Elizabeth M. Guggenheimer, Deputy Executive Director of Lawyers Alliance for New York, one of the main organizers of the National Day of Service.

Representatives from the participating nonprofit organizations benefited greatly from the consultations.

One client in San Diego remarked, “The legal clinic provided an opportunity to get legal advice for our organization that we would not have otherwise been able to afford. The lawyer was knowledgeable, friendly, and provided actionable next steps.”

Clients in New York expressed similar sentiments: “It was a wonderful experience and it gave us an opportunity to review our governance policies and procedures”

“It allowed for an opportunity to proactively focus on governance issues in a supportive environment.”

The National Network of Business Law Pro Bono Providers is dedicated to improving the quality of life in low-income and disadvantaged communities by expanding the availability and quality of pro bono business legal services for nonprofits that serve those communities. The Network partners with law firms and corporations to implement national responses to challenges faced by the nonprofit sector by delivering expert legal assistance and educational programs to nonprofits. Network members serve geographic regions throughout the United States, including major metropolitan and surrounding areas in California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington D.C., and Washington State. Members share a goal of making nonprofits more effective in serving their communities.

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