

Community Engagement

Both as a firm and as individuals, we are deeply engaged with the communities where we work and live.

The firm operates a multimillion dollar grantmaking entity called the Cozen O'Connor Charitable Foundation. Formally incorporated in the early 2000s, the mission of the foundation is to promote charitable giving in seven distinct areas, one of which is Diversity & Inclusion. The firm gives substantial annual donations to support organizations working on racial justice, gender equality, LGBTQ rights, and veterans' services. Examples of grantees include the Urban Affairs Coalition, Hispanic Federation of New York, Women's Way, and Human Rights Coalition.

It is important to note that our foundation guidelines require that requests for money come from a Cozen O'Connor lawyer who is "closely" involved with the organization, meaning they serve as a board member, event chair, or longtime adviser. As such, foundation donations reflect not only a firmwide monetary commitment but also a time commitment by individual attorneys as well.

Indeed, on an individual basis Cozen O'Connor attorneys are active in a range of bar associations and bar programs that are specifically focused on promoting diverse attorneys, including as leaders in the Gate City Bar Association in Atlanta, the Hispanic Bar Association in Houston, the Hispanic National Bar Association, the National LGBT Bar Association, and diversity officer of the American Bar Association's Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section.

Cozen O'Connor attorneys also provide pro bono services that promote diversity and inclusion, under the direction of our full-time director of Pro Bono Engagement.



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Cozen O'Connor actively seeks out opportunities to participate in pro bono litigation to protect and advance the civil rights of vulnerable groups, including minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQ community. For example, the firm was co-counsel with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in a critical voting rights case in Terrebonne Parish, La. The plaintiffs, four individual black voters, filed suit in 2014 to challenge the at-large method for judicial elections, a deliberately discriminatory system used to dilute the votes of black voters, which had persisted in the parish for nearly 50 years. The district court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in 2017 and an affirmative remedy will be implemented. We are also co-counsel with the Pennsylvania ACLU on behalf of intervenors, defending the Boyertown School District's policy of permitting students to use the facilities that are consistent with their gender identities.

Many of our attorneys also handle critical pro bono cases on behalf of individuals whose needs align with our diversity initiatives. We routinely represent immigrants and refugees through the complicated and often byzantine process of acquiring status that will permit them to live and work in the United States. We protect the rights of military personnel and veterans, assisting them to get the benefits they need and deserve, and representing them in family law, consumer protection, landlord-tenant, and other matters to ensure their rights are protected while they are on active duty. And we represent people with disabilities to ensure that they receive appropriate accommodations in their housing.



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