

— Nixon Peabody | Creating Positive Impact

# Pro Bono & Social Impact Snapshot



# Pro Bono & Social Impact @ NP

## Creating positive impact for our communities

Overreaching legislation, global instability, and ongoing fallout from COVID-19 are fueling an unprecedented need for pro bono legal services. During times of uncertainty, people look to law firms like ours that have the resources and platform to make a tangible difference. At Nixon Peabody, we embrace our obligation to meet this demand and create more equitable communities for all.

This year, we mobilized around the three core areas that define our program: **Equity** for those whose rights are under threat, **Access** for historically marginalized community members, and **Opportunity** for the places we live and work. We've achieved life-changing outcomes for our clients, and forged relationships along the way that will carry our impact well into the future.

# 43

Average pro bono hours per attorney

# 81%

Attorney participation in pro bono work

# 27K+

Pro bono hours across the firm



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Pro bono is the vehicle through which we as a legal community make equal access to justice real for our clients. It is inspiring to see colleagues across our firm come together and act on this important mission, in myriad ways that are personally meaningful to them.

— **Matt Richards**  
Pro Bono Partner  
NP San Francisco



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It's a pleasure to work for an organization that embeds pro bono and social impact in the broader fabric of the firm. People at NP want to do good—for each other, for our clients, and for community members in need.

— **Sharmaine Heng**  
Pro Bono &  
Social Impact Director  
NP WDC



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**We are proud to support the communities we serve and fulfill our professional obligation as attorneys by providing pro bono legal services. Our colleagues devote their time, energy, and experience to assist those who need representation to achieve equity, access, and opportunity. In turn, we gain valuable experience and insight into the challenges that many in our country face on a daily basis.**

— **Steve Zubiago**  
CEO and Managing  
Partner





# Equity

Through our pro bono program, we strive to root out injustice in all corners of society, and lay the groundwork for a more equitable, inclusive path forward.

Whether challenging harmful community practices, supporting underserved individuals in need of counsel, or fighting overreaching laws, we stand up for those who have been historically overlooked by our justice system.







## Protecting civil rights

**A primary area of focus is transgender rights.**

We are currently challenging laws in two states—Montana and Iowa—that threaten the constitutional rights, to say nothing of the personal dignity, of all transgender residents. Both cases have widespread consequences for LGBTQ+ communities nationwide. These matters are representative of our tireless commitment to preserving the constitutional rights of transgender people, and our trail-blazing efforts in this space.





## Coverage for gender-affirming care

**In Iowa, the NP Litigation team secured a decisive victory in our longstanding effort to end a discriminatory practice against transgender residents.**

In conjunction with the Iowa ACLU, we sued the state for the third time in four years as part of a long-running dispute over a law that allows Medicaid to deny coverage for gender-affirming surgeries.

This year, the Iowa Supreme Court preserved the district court's ruling that upheld coverage for gender-affirming care. The ruling more broadly vindicates the rights of transgender Iowans.

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I hope moving forward, for all the transgender people that come after me, that all this litigation means they can get the care they need without judgment and unfair roadblocks.

— **Mika Covington**  
Nixon Peabody—ACLU client





States across this country continue to enact laws that violate transgender rights.

— **Tina Solis**  
Litigation Partner, NP Chicago

## Challenging discriminatory birth certificate law

**In Montana, we secured a trial court ruling that permanently enjoined a law banning birth-certificate amendments by transgender people.**

Our partner in this case—the Montana ACLU—reached out to Nixon Peabody specifically because of our longstanding commitment to and experience with transgender impact litigation.

We have previously teamed up with ACLU chapters in Idaho, Illinois, and Southern California and the ACLU's National LGBTQ+ Rights program to advance transgender rights and challenge discriminatory laws. Our litigation in Montana will have a multiplier effect and benefit similar efforts across the country.





## Fighting for Transgender Rights

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We as a firm are committed to helping people fight these cases and get the protections they're entitled to under the law.

— **Seth Horvath**  
Litigation Partner, NP Chicago



# Transgender name changes

**We provide critical legal services for members of the transgender community.**

Each year, NP attorneys and staff across the country assist New York-based clients to secure legal name changes—an important step toward making their legal identities match their lived experience and align with their gender identities.

Because this process remains challenging in New York, it can be out of reach for marginalized populations who lack access to low or no-cost legal counsel.


We maximize our ability to meet this need by engaging NP professionals from different offices and practice areas across our firm.

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Although a name change may seem like a small act, it is deeply personal and has the potential for huge impact. This was aptly captured by my client’s response when we received their name change order—‘I can start living under the right name.’

— **Julienne Hoffman**

Affordable Housing & Real Estate Law Clerk, NP NYC







## Advocating for those in need

**We understand that equitable laws are only as effective as the practices that support them.**

Outside the courtroom, we advocate for members of society whose voices are often silenced or marginalized by those around them. We hold communities to account when it comes to practicing the promise of equality, and provide legal representation to underprivileged populations.





## Advancing racial and gender equity

**In Upstate New York, we are helping the Black Women's Blueprint (BWB)—a nonprofit organization supporting survivors of sexual violence—to secure approvals for the construction of its Restore Forward Retreat Center in the Town of Ava, New York.**

BWB provides holistic services to women of color who are healing from trauma and violence. In August 2020, BWB purchased almost 300 acres of land to construct a retreat center but faced immediate pushback from the Town of Ava and its residents.

NP represents BWB in its zoning hearings and permitting approvals. This matter directly aligns with the goal of our pro bono racial justice work—to build more inclusive communities and to provide equitable services for marginalized populations.





**Farah Tanis**

Founder & CEO, Restore Forward retreat center/Black Women's Blueprint

## Fighting for racial gender equity with Black Women's Blueprint

## NLADA Beacon of Justice Award

We were honored to receive the 2023 Beacon of Justice Award from the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) for our work to advance racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and gender equity nationwide.

Through our pro bono and social impact program, we are committed to empowering marginalized communities and serving those in need. This recognition is a testament to the impact of our efforts.





## Supporting immigrants and asylum-seekers

Even two years after the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan, the needs of Afghan refugees remain great. Many of our attorneys are helping Afghan families and individuals who relocated to the United States with their humanitarian parole and residency applications.

Our efforts in this space began during the US withdrawal and subsequent evacuation of Afghanistan in summer 2021. In 2022 alone, more than 40 NP colleagues across different departments and offices mobilized around the cause, contributing a total of **700+ pro bono hours**.

We also partner with **Human Rights Watch, Her Justice, Kids in Need of Defense, the ACLU, and LatinoJustice**, among many others, to support asylum seekers and immigrant populations nationwide.



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Having the ability, along with the support of compassionate people here at Nixon Peabody and Her Justice, to change the course of a family's life for the better is such a wonderful feeling. It is our way of paying it forward.



— **Debra Colon**  
Practice Assistant, NP NYC

Debra received the **2023 Commitment to Justice Award** from Her Justice for her dedicated support on behalf of domestic violence survivors seeking U-visa status in the United States.

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I have been privileged to represent clients who have come to our nation, often at great peril, seeking safety and a better life, risking more than we will ever know for the freedoms that we so often take for granted.



— **Ronaldo Rauseo-Ricupero**  
Counsel, NP Boston

Ronaldo received the **Thurgood Marshall Award** from the Boston Bar Association for his pro bono efforts on behalf of refugees, deportees, and asylum seekers.



# Access

**A core principle of our pro bono program is giving voice to vulnerable populations who are overlooked by the justice system.**

We strive to empower underrepresented communities, and ensure they can enjoy the benefits, services, and opportunities promised to them under law.







## Preserving access to benefits and services

Many of our pro bono constituencies are still grappling with the effects of COVID-19 and other crises that disproportionately impact minority populations.

**We are committed to leveraging our resources in a way that will permanently ameliorate these inequities and preserve access to justice well into the future.**



# Advocating for Rochester Students

**This year, we continued our work monitoring the Rochester City School District's provision of programs and services to children with disabilities.**

For several years, we've partnered with Empire Justice Center to bring a federal court class action challenging the District's compliance with the law. In February 2021, the court approved a settlement requiring the District to reform its special education program. As part of the settlement and consent decree, the District must achieve quantifiable goals that will affect positive change for students and their families.

While we already secured a major settlement victory, we continued to monitor the school's progress this year, much of which was upended by the pandemic. We plan to see this effort through until these students receive the education to which they are entitled under law.



**Carolyn Nussbaum**

Litigation Partner, NP Rochester

Carolyn received the **President's Pro Bono Award** from the New York State Bar Association for her work on this case.





New Hampshire's nursing homes were among the hardest hit during COVID-19. Our lawsuit, which would enable thousands of residents to receive the care they need in their homes, is quite literally a matter of life or death.

— **Mark Knights**

Litigation Partner, NP Manchester  
Received 2023 New England legal  
award from Law.com for Social Impact

## Preserving healthcare benefits

**Our team joined a class action lawsuit against the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) on behalf of certain adults with disabilities and seniors receiving Medicaid.**

We challenged the DHHS's mismanagement of its Medicaid Waiver program, Choices for Independence (CFI), a program to prevent unnecessary institutionalization of disabled adults and seniors by providing them with at-home services.

The DHHS has failed to deliver its services in a timely manner, prompting us to join in filing a class action lawsuit for approximately 4,000 CFI recipients. We prevailed over the state's motion to dismiss on all counts in 2021 and filed our class certification motion in August 2022. This case imposes critical checks on the healthcare delivery system for citizens whose rights have been severely compromised by the state.





## Providing safe, inclusive, and affordable housing nationwide

As home to one of the nation's largest affordable housing practices, Nixon Peabody is committed to advancing the creation of safe, stable, affordable communities nationwide. We pursue this goal through both pro bono and billable client work that creates a significant, positive impact in our communities.

We regularly embrace this obligation through our nonprofit housing partnerships that benefit people in need. This year, we advised longtime client **2Life Communities** in the site acquisition and development of Opus Newton, a community in Newton, Massachusetts, for older adults in the middle market.

This development meets the tremendous need for middle-market seniors housing and expands our relationship with one of the premier affordable housing organizations for older adults in New England.

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In Opus Newton, 2Life has combined its decades-long experience of providing high-quality affordable seniors housing with innovation and passion to meet the challenging demand of what some have called ‘the forgotten middle.’ We’re honored to help 2Life in this effort.

— **Allen Lynch**  
Affordable Housing & Real Estate  
Sr. Counsel NP Boston





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Our organization supports military spouses in the legal profession—through advocacy, enhancing opportunities for employment, and connection. We’ve secured licensing rule changes in 43 states, making it easier for them to practice law in places where their families are stationed.

— **Rachel Winkler**  
Counsel, NP WDC  
Founding member of Military  
Spouse JD Network

## Access for military veterans and servicemembers

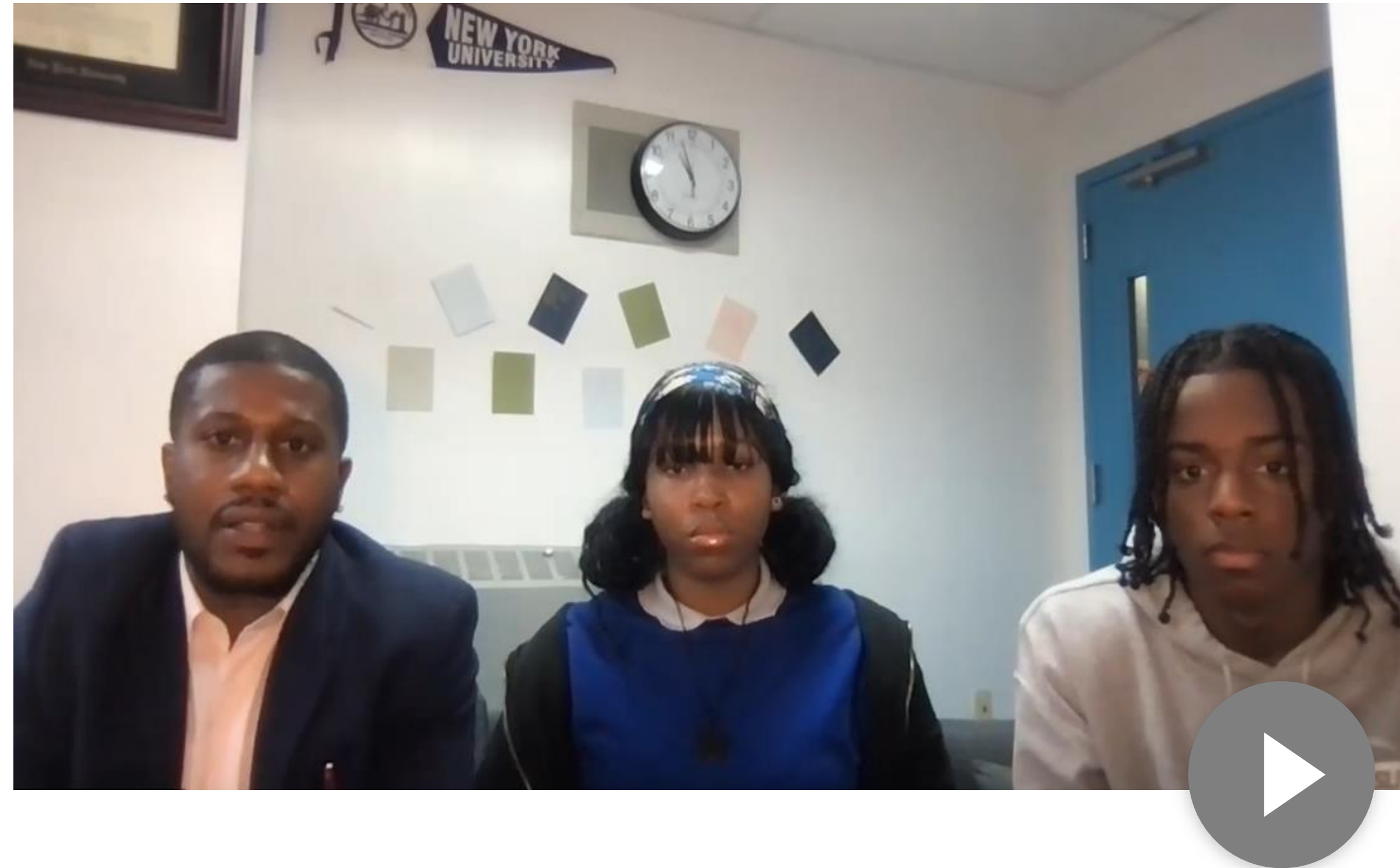
**Many of our attorneys—including former and current servicemembers—tirelessly advocate for veterans nationwide.**

Within the past year, NP colleagues have secured Combat-Related Special Compensation benefits for injured veterans in partnership with the National Veterans Legal Services Program, hosted fundraisers focused on veterans’ mental health, and leveraged community board memberships to holistically serve this population.

At the firm, we offer a robust Veterans Resource Group, where colleagues share their stories and discuss opportunities to bolster veterans’ initiatives throughout our regions.







**Teaming up with Adams Street Foundation**

## Expanding opportunities

We partner with nonprofits in our communities that meet an array of socioeconomic needs, including **Adams Street Foundation**, which provides high-quality, individualized programming for underserved high school students; **JustCause**, which empowers entrepreneurs in economically distressed areas; and **Cabrini Green Legal Aid**, which helps racial minorities that were disproportionately impacted by the cannabis prohibition in expunging related convictions from their criminal records. We also teamed up with **LatinoJustice**, one of the country's leading civil rights organizations, to create a fellowship for Latinx law students.



# Opportunity

Through our firmwide Social Impact Strategy, we pool our time, resources, and talent to maximize the positive impact we're creating in our communities.

This year, we acted on our Social Impact goals in many different ways, including through our first-ever NP Impact Week of Service, our sustainability initiatives, and our regular and continuing involvement in community organizations. We strive to serve the places we live and work each day, broadening opportunity for our neighbors and powering the long-term success of our communities.





## Week of Service

This year, we hosted our inaugural NP Impact Week of Service, which engaged 500+ attorneys and staff across the firm in service projects and pro bono activities that supported people and places in need.

Throughout the week, we worked alongside members of local organizations to advance various causes throughout our communities.

Our work directly benefited the organizations we partnered with and the populations they serve.



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Shout-out to the entire Nixon Peabody team for being here and present, helping out students. It's incredible that you guys opened your doors for us.

— **Student, Adams Street Foundation**  
Participated in college essay writing workshop with NP colleagues in NYC



# Snapshot: Week of Service projects



**NP Boston** teaming up with **2Life Communities** to host a Fall Festival for residents of the organization's Brighton Campus for senior living



**Firmwide donations** supporting organizations across the country to collect donations and package care kits for people in need



**NP Albany** serving lunch to community members experiencing homelessness with **Capital City Rescue Mission**



**NP San Francisco** partnering with **Friends of the Urban Forest** to help plant a sidewalk garden for residents of the Richmond District



# Environmental initiatives

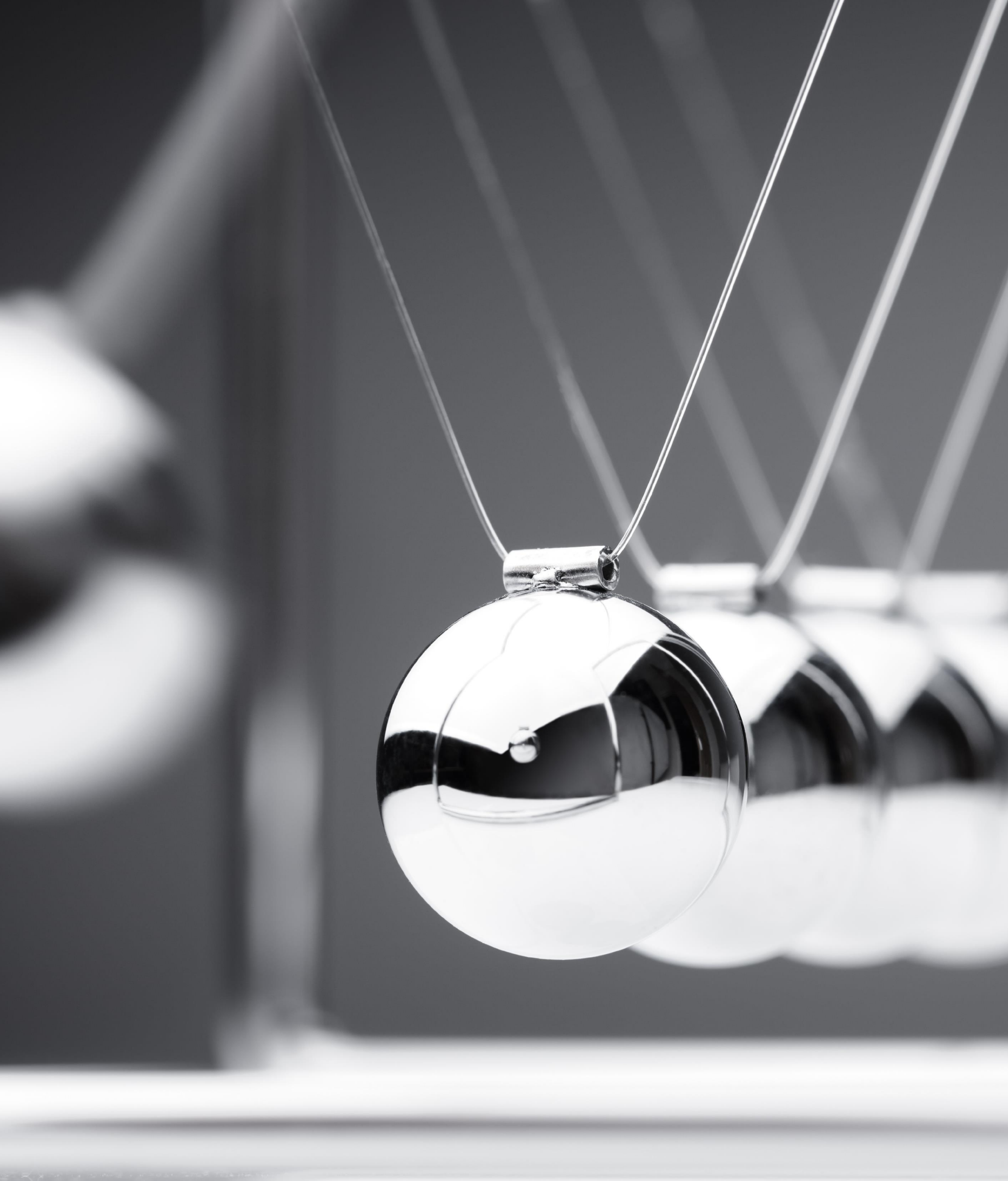
**We embed sustainability in all our pro bono and social impact initiatives. From supporting energy-efficient affordable housing developments to representing green entrepreneurs, we advance projects that preserve the integrity and long-term viability of our environment.**

In 2022, we continued our support of nonprofit partner New Partners Community Solar to promote economic equity and renewable energy use in Washington, DC, and surrounding areas. As a result of this partnership, we assisted on a new solar project at a downtown commercial office building and expanded opportunities for investment created by the Inflation Reduction Act.



**NEW  
PARTNERS**  
COMMUNITY SOLAR





## Leading nonprofits

**NP attorneys and staff are active stewards of the principles that underpin our Pro Bono & Social Impact program.**

Across the country, our people serve in leadership roles and as dedicated members of community boards, all mirroring the mission of our firm. From education, affordable housing, community and economic development, to healthcare, social services, and civic legal aid—we act on our commitment to equality every day.



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I think it's rewarding to work with people who truly appreciate every minute of your time. Investing in your community and yourself benefits everyone.

— **Kate Letcher**

Associate, NP Chicago  
Co-chair of ABA public service committee,  
Vice chair of the ABA's Women Business  
and Commercial Advocates Subcommittee



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The mission of AIDS Legal Referral panel—to serve people with HIV—deeply resonates with me. It's gratifying to know that our efforts have a direct impact on minority communities.

— **Aldo Ibarra**

Litigation Partner, NP San Francisco  
AIDS Legal Referral Panel Board Member  
and Co-Chair of fundraising committee





# Pro Bono and Social Impact team



**Matt Richards**  
Pro Bono Partner



**Sharmaine Heng**  
Pro Bono & Social  
Impact Director



**Emery Lewis**  
Pro Bono & Social  
Impact Specialist



**Julie Seymour**  
Strategic Impact  
Partner



**Greg Doran**  
Strategic Impact  
Partner



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