

Blank Rome: Pro Bono work for Nonprofits

Blank Rome is proud of its deep tradition of giving back to its communities, including through pro bono service. Blank Rome’s pro bono policy requires each of the firm’s attorneys and paralegals to undertake at least 25 hours of pro bono service every year, although 65 hours is encouraged. In order to achieve this goal, Blank Rome helps identify meaningful pro bono opportunities. One such opportunity is Compass.

Founded in Washington, D.C., with offices in Philadelphia and Chicago, Compass recruits, trains, and supports teams of business professionals—predominantly MBA alumni from top business schools and consulting firms, lawyers from top regional and national firms, and members of strategy departments from the cities’ largest corporations—who provide strategy consulting services to local nonprofits—free of charge. Compass’ mission is to inspire business professionals to engage with local nonprofits to transform communities. It has engaged and inspired over 2,300 unique business volunteers to collaborate with nonprofit leaders since 2001, conducting 500 projects for 365 clients, and providing over \$54 million of pro bono consulting services to the nonprofits.

Blank Rome’s business department, which includes its asset-based lending team, has partnered with Compass since it expanded to Philadelphia several years ago. Since then, more than 30 of their attorneys and paralegals have served as volunteers on Compass pro bono projects, and many are repeat volunteers. Blank Rome partners Heather Sonnenberg and Mat Rotenberg, as well as associates Marcie Landsburg, Jillian Zvolensky, and Adam Sansweet are some of the members of the asset-based lending team who volunteer with Compass. Heather and Mat have each participated on three or more Compass pro bono project teams over the past five years for nonprofits based in Greater Philadelphia, including projects for ACHIEVEability, Center For Literacy, Philadelphia Works, SeniorLAW Center, Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse, and The Women’s Center of



Blank Rome attorneys with Compass Executive Director: Pictured from left to right: Mat Rotenberg (Partner, Blank Rome), Heather Sonnenberg (Partner, Blank Rome) and Beth Dahle (Executive Director – Philadelphia, Compass).

Montgomery County.

“We volunteer with Compass because they provide a meaningful and well-designed experience for their volunteers. Each project is identified by the senior leadership of the nonprofit client based on a critical strategic need and is then jointly vetted and refined by Compass and the client. As a result of this work, the project is already well-developed, allowing the volunteer project team to hit the ground running,” shares Mat Rotenberg.

Heather Sonnenberg adds, “Each hour that we spend volunteering on a Compass project provides substantially more than an hour’s worth of value to the client—both because of the importance of the project to the client and because the initial groundwork has been completed. This makes for a successful partnership.”

For more information about Compass, visit www.compassprobono.org.