



## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Our Mission Statement sets out that “we cultivate a working environment that provides a humane, sustainable approach to earning a living and living in our world – for ourselves and for our clients.” We believe that being socially responsible for our community and ourselves creates better service for our clients. These are not mere words to us. We believe in action. As such, we have several programs and policies that support these endeavors.

### **Sustainability**

Law office operations traditionally have a relatively large carbon footprint when compared to other office environments. Law practices consume large volumes of paper. Long hours and weekend workers increase power consumption for lighting, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and equipment.

Our carbon footprint matters to us. We strive to leave things better than we find them. From the onset, our firm has been conceived to minimize our impact on the environment. By way of example, we are entirely virtual as a firm. All of our mail goes to a single location and is scanned contemporaneously to our lawyers and staff. This means that emissions related to offsite transfer and storage of files is saved. All of our staff works from mobile devices that have a second business line and extension transfer, etc. The system is identical to a landline VOIP system in capability. However, it does not consume the additional plastic, materials and ultimately waste when replaced. Our mobile devices are kept current and recycled. Our IT environment is housed securely in the cloud. It is kept at locations that meet LEED Green certification. By not housing these items locally, we save environmentally harmful cooling, replacement and disposal.

We take seriously our commitment of corporate leadership and citizenship. In addition to supporting the businesses and local organizations in the communities where we live and work, we are dedicated to doing all we can to make sure that, as a firm, we tread as gently upon the earth as possible. As good stewards of our environment, we have implemented sustainability practices throughout our office locations to reduce paper and energy waste. Some of our sustainability efforts include:

- Powering off of computers, printers, copier, lights and other equipment when not in use;
- Recycled-content office supplies: stationery, business cards, copy paper, legal pads, envelopes;
- Sponsor recycling programs for toner cartridges, glass, batteries, plastics, and metal

containers;

- Locally sourced goods and repurposed materials;
- Client bills in PDF sent by email and electronic billing;
- Paper independence: avoiding printing whenever possible and maintaining digital copies of client files;
- The firm has instituted a policy of double-sided copying and printing for drafts and internal documents with a goal of ensuring that at least half of all printing and copying in each office is double-sided;
- Dishes, flatware and mugs instead of disposable paper and plastic products;
- Filtered water instead of plastic water bottles;
- Utilizing Energy Star appliances, which promotes energy efficiency and conservation;
- Electronically distribute firm communications such as client advisories, seminar notices and event invitations;
- Email incoming faxes directly to recipients' computer;
- Reviewing as much as possible on the computer;
- Offering telecommuting opportunities and flexible schedules to avoid heavy traffic commutes;
- We encourage our team to participate in "ride your bike to work" programs, use public transportation and carpool;
- The firm purchases computer equipment and appliances that are Energy Star compliant, meeting efficiency standards set by EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy;
- All of the firm's old equipment is donated for reuse or recycling.

The Firm has established a Green Team with at least one representative from each Firm office. This team structures and implements the Firm's sustainability efforts. The Green Team includes lawyers, managers and other staff members.

## **Supporting Our Team In Difficult Times**

Vulnerability does not match the general impression society has of lawyers as tough and ambitious. But research suggests that those in the profession (and those that support them) are at much higher risk of depression, anxiety and substance abuse issues than people in the broader population — and may even be more susceptible than those in other high-stress professions, such as medicine. A study published in the Journal of Addiction Medicine in February 2016 found the rate of problem drinking among lawyers was between two and three times higher than among other highly educated professionals, including physicians. The American Bar Association and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation funded the study. The rate of depression was about three times higher than the general population in the U.S.

We chose not to turn our heads and ignore the problems our community might face. We have established a "Safe Harbor" Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides confidential assistance to deal with various personal problems such as stress, relationship issues, depression, peer conflict management, and other issues that affect work-life balance.

We are also conscious of the stress and disruption caused by the loss of a close loved one. We have a formal bereavement policy to offer support and flexibility when it is needed most.

## **Team Wellness**

We have a workplace designed to support healthy behaviors and improve health outcomes

while at work. These programs consist of activities such as health education and coaching, weight management programs, medical screenings, on-site fitness programs, and more.

We believe in enabling team health, including allowing time for exercise, providing on-site kitchens and eating areas, offering healthy food options in vending machines, holding “walk and talk” meetings, and offering financial and other incentives for participation.

## **Telecommuting**

Lawyers have all kinds of reasons to be out of the office, and the world accepts this. But if a lawyer wants to replace office time with work at home, often people think the whole foundation of collective effort is undermined. We, however, cannot think of a profession more suited to telecommuting than the legal profession.

We believe that telecommuting results in increased productivity for lawyers. Full-time lawyers who telecommute often work more hours than full-time non-telecommuters. Because our cloud-based tools are always available, telecommuters often have a more productive week than their office-bound colleagues. We believe telecommuting also allows our team more flexibility to attend to such personal commitments as medical appointments (for themselves, their children, or their elderly parents) or for school functions. Telecommuters can keep such appointments and still put in a full day by working before and after those events. We believe that because telecommuters have more limited personal interaction with colleagues, their communication with colleagues necessarily becomes more valuable and more precise. Telecommuting also reduces the firm’s need for office space and overhead expense, which we invest in our team to ensure they continue to be available for client service.

## **Flexible Work Policy**

Flexibility in work schedule is a win-win scenario. Our team is our main asset. Motivating and enabling our team to work more efficiently and effectively is thus a key objective. In a firm such as ours, unpredictability of workload can make flexible working more difficult to accommodate – but not impossible. Where there is clear communication between colleagues about their working arrangements and expectations, there are enormous benefits to both the firm and its team members in a flexible work schedule.

Common types of flexible working at our firm include:

- Lessened percentage of annualized hours on a permanent basis;
- Job sharing;
- Part-time;
- Working less or more than the normal hours, perhaps by working a four day week;
- Staggered hours — shifting hours of work to earlier or later in the day or breaking up the day;
- Lessened percentage of hours after leave on a temporary basis.

## **Charitable Giving**

Our team is committed to giving back. Our employees organize firm sponsored fundraisers and challenges for various charities. We have fun with it and invest in events that bring the team together for these events and endeavors. Several team members volunteer with various local

and national charities. Others serve on charitable boards of directors. We believe charity starts at home, and give special consideration and focus to charities that have a direct or indirect benefit to our team and their family members. Our partnership agreement sets out that a specific amount of profit be allocated to charitable endeavors. To encourage volunteerism, after a team member has given 20 hours of service to a charity in a year, the firm donates \$250 to that charity. After 40 hours, the firm donates \$500. The firm has a donation matching policy applicable to team members who have been employed 18 months. This match also applies to fundraising efforts. For example, if a team member has secured several sponsors for a volunteer walk, then the firm's matching policy will apply. We also have a grant program that team members may apply to for additional charitable efforts.