

Jonathan K. Baum

Senior Counsel and Director of Pro Bono Services

Litigation

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As the firm's director of pro bono services, Jonathan Baum coordinates the firm's entire pro bono portfolio. He identifies pro bono work that complements Katten's diverse areas of practice, going beyond just traditional litigation to include nonprofit corporate governance, affordable housing and community development transactions, and trust and estate planning to underserved populations.

A pro bono innovator

Jonathan has served in his role since 1993, when he became one of only a handful of law firm partners in the nation to focus exclusively on the delivery of pro bono work. He matches pro bono opportunities with the best-suited attorneys and monitors each pro bono matter at the firm. He also personally represents pro bono litigation clients. He frequently represents refugees seeking asylum in the United States and individuals experiencing racial discrimination in housing or public accommodations. In collaboration with Illinois' largest legal aid provider, Jonathan launched one of the first legal aid clinics in an urban public school, an initiative that has served hundreds of low-income clients and was recognized with an ABA pro bono publico award. In another ongoing effort, Jonathan has represented the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence in its defense of state and local gun regulations against constitutional challenges.

Prior to joining Katten, Jonathan served as a staff attorney and clinical fellow at the University of Chicago Law School's Edwin P. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic. Prior to attending law school, Jonathan served as legislative aide to then-US Representative Abner J. Mikva and following law school, as a law clerk to the late Judge Bernard M. Decker of the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. He was awarded the "Unsung Hero Award" from Action for Children in 2004 for his victory in an Illinois Supreme Court case denying local governments the authority to interfere with the operation of day care homes licensed by the State of Illinois. In 2010, he received the Distinguished Public Service Award from the Public Interest Law Initiative. In 2022, he was honored by the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights with its Champion of Justice award.

Practices

- Appeals and Critical Motions
- Litigation

Education

- JD, The University of Chicago Law School, *with honors*
- AB, Harvard University, *magna cum laude*

Bar Admissions

- Illinois

Professional & Community Involvement

- American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, past vice president
- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, past chairman
- Evanston Township High School District 202 and Evanston School District 65 Boards of Education, past member
- The University of Chicago Law School, Public Interest Advisory Board

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Recognitions

Recognized or listed in the following:

- American Bar Association
  - John H. Pickering Award of Achievement, 2026
- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
  - Champion of Justice

News

- Katten Marks National Celebration of Pro Bono With Service Awards (October 29, 2026)
- Katten's Jonathan Baum Receives American Bar Association Pickering Award for Pro Bono Work (August 3, 2026)
- Katten Team Named Recipients of Pro Bono Awards (May 1, 2026)
- Katten Announces 2025 Pro Bono Service Award Recipients (October 22, 2025)
- Katten Supports Chicago Students With Backpacks (August 18, 2025)
- Jonathan Baum Spotlighted in University of Chicago Law School's Alumni News Series (December 12, 2024)
- Katten Celebrates 25th Annual Pro Bono Service Awards (October 25, 2024)
- Katten Kicks Off School Year With Backpack Donation in Chicago (August 27, 2024)
- Chicago Bar Honors Katten for Lawyers in the Classroom Program (November 3, 2023)
- Katten Legal Clinic Featured by PLI's 'Pursuing Justice' Podcast (November 3, 2023)
- Katten Honors Attorneys for Providing Pro Bono Services (October 30, 2023)
- WGN Radio Interviews Jonathan Baum for 10th Anniversary of Katten Jose de Diego Legal Clinic (May 9, 2023)
- Katten Celebrates 10 Years of Providing Free Services at Legal Clinic in a Chicago Public School (April 19, 2023)
- L4GG Praises Katten Among Those Delivering Over $20M in Pro Bono Services (April 7, 2023)

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- Katten Pro Bono Director Jonathan Baum Honored as Champion of Justice by the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights (November 18, 2022)
- Katten Recognizes Attorneys for Outstanding Pro Bono Service (October 28, 2022)
- *ABA Journal* Profiles Janet Goelz Hoffman (July 28, 2022)
- Katten Honored With Two Pro Bono Awards in Charlotte (June 16, 2022)
- Katten Attorneys Discuss Link Between Pro Bono and Well-Being on *Pro Bono Happy Hour* Podcast (June 3, 2022)
- Katten Provides Pro Bono Support for Ukrainians Seeking Temporary Protected Status (May 6, 2022)
- Katten Attorneys Lauded for Pro Bono Service (October 27, 2021)
- Jonathan Baum Talks to *Chicago Sun-Times* and WGN Radio on Requiring ID Card for Illinois Residents to Own Firearms (May 11, 2021)
- Katten Garners More Praise for Its Pro Bono Services (May 11, 2021)
- Katten Recognized as Leader for Pro Bono Efforts to Help Underserved Communities (March 8, 2021)
- Katten Recognized as ABA Free Legal Answers 2020 Pro Bono Leader by American Bar Association (February 16, 2021)
- Katten Celebrates Commitment to Public Service in Virtual Pro Bono Service Awards Ceremony (January 20, 2021)
- Leading in a Time of Crisis: Katten's 2020 *Pro Bono Annual Review* (December 11, 2020)
- Katten Attorneys Honored for Their Sustained Commitment to Pro Bono Service Including COVID-Related Work (October 28, 2020)
- Katten Honored with Beacon of Justice Pro Bono Award (July 21, 2020)
- *Law360* Features Efforts of Katten Attorneys to Provide Pro Bono Legal Services during COVID-19 (April 24, 2020)
- Katten Attorneys Honored for Outstanding Volunteer Legal Services (June 21, 2019)
- Pro Bono Adoption Success Featured in *Law360*, *Long Beach Press-Telegram* (April 18, 2019)
- Katten Receives Pro Bono Initiative Award (December 11, 2018)

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- Katten Associate Named "Young Lawyer of the Year" for Fighting Unfair Housing Practices (October 3, 2018)
- Jonathan Baum Shares Pro Bono Insights on PBI Podcast (September 7, 2018)
- Katten Pro Bono Efforts Help Save Lives, Rebuild Communities in War Zones (July 9, 2018)
- Katten José de Diego Legal Clinic Profiled in *LAF Newsletter* (May 31, 2017)
- 'Not That Kind of Lawyer:' Jonathan Baum Featured in Housing Discrimination Series (May 16, 2017)
- American Bar Association Recognizes Katten's Pro Bono Publico Award With Ceremony and Highlights Video (August 8, 2016)
- Jonathan Baum Quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* and *Daily Herald* on Hate Crime Settlement for Black Family in Mount Prospect (August 5, 2016)
- Katten UK Lauded by *The American Lawyer* for International Pro Bono Efforts (July 12, 2016)
- Katten Lauded by LAF for Its Commitment to the Pro Bono Legal Clinic (June 16, 2016)
- American Bar Association Honors Katten for Exceptional Pro Bono Work (May 4, 2016)
- Jonathan Baum Comments on Maryland Gun Control Law (February 11, 2016)
- Jonathan Baum Featured on the Pro Bono Happy Hour Podcast (February 4, 2016)
- Katten Wins Outstanding Pro Bono Law Firm Award from Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (June 22, 2015)
- Katten Legal Clinic at Jose de Diego Community Academy Profiled by *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (July 21, 2014)
- Pro Bono Director Jonathan Baum Recognized as Trailblazer in *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (October 1, 2013)
- Partner Jonathan Baum Answers the Question "Why Do Pro Bono?" for *The PBEye* (August 13, 2012)
- Eighty-Six Katten Attorneys Named 2012 Illinois Super Lawyers (February 28, 2012)
- Katten's *Pro Bono* Program Featured in *Chicago Lawyer* (September 2011)

- Katten's Jonathan Baum to Receive Public Interest Law Initiative's 2010 Distinguished Public Service Award (November 8, 2010)
- Katten to Be Honored by Chicago Domestic Violence Legal Clinic (April 15, 2009)
- Partner Jonathan Baum Featured in *Chicago Lawyer* on *Pro Bono* Work and the Economy (February 4, 2009)
- Partner Jonathan Baum Quoted in *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* on New Association of Pro Bono Counsel (March 5, 2008)
- Katten Continues Pro Bono Leadership with Charter Membership in New Chicago Bar Foundation Law Firm Leadership Circle (February 11, 2008)
- $1.3 Million Awarded to Victims of Post-9/11 Hate Crime (August 23, 2007)
- Katten Receives Center for Disability and Elder Law's 2006 Distinguished Service Award (April 26, 2006)
- Partner Jonathan Baum Quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* on the Defense of the George Ryan Corruption Trial (March 30, 2006)

Publications

- *Katten's Pro Bono Service Empowers Better Futures* (December 23, 2025)
- *Pro Bono at Its Peak: A Year of Transformational Impact* (December 18, 2024)
- *Tikkun Olam*: When public service is a sacred obligation (April 4, 2024)
- Taking a Full-Circle Approach to Service: 2023 *Pro Bono Annual Review* (December 19, 2023)
- Katten Knows and Katten Cares: 2022 *Pro Bono Annual Review* (December 19, 2022)
- Building Stronger Connections in a Disconnected World: Katten's 2021 *Pro Bono Annual Review* (December 17, 2021)

Presentations and Events

- Second Amendment Litigation and Jurisprudence Conference (May 14, 2015) | *Panelist* | *Standard of Review in Second Amendment Litigation*
- Pro Bono Institute Annual Conference (March 4–6, 2015) | *Speaker* | *Law Firm IdeaLab*

- Public Interest Law Reporter Symposium (February 6, 2009) | *Speaker* | *What Did Brown Do For You? Brown v. Board 50 Years Later*
- Success in Pro Bono (June 24, 2008) | *Speaker* | *How to Succeed in a Law Firm While Doing Pro Bono*
- The Third Annual Conference on Unaccompanied Immigrant Children (April 3, 2008) | *Panelist* | *Working with pro bono attorneys and developing pro bono resources*
- Public Service Convocation (February 25–27, 2008) | *Presenter* | *The Value of Public Service*
- Mandel Legal Aid Clinic's 50th Anniversary Symposium "Out of the Shadow: Clinical Legal Education" (February 23, 2008) | *Panelist*