



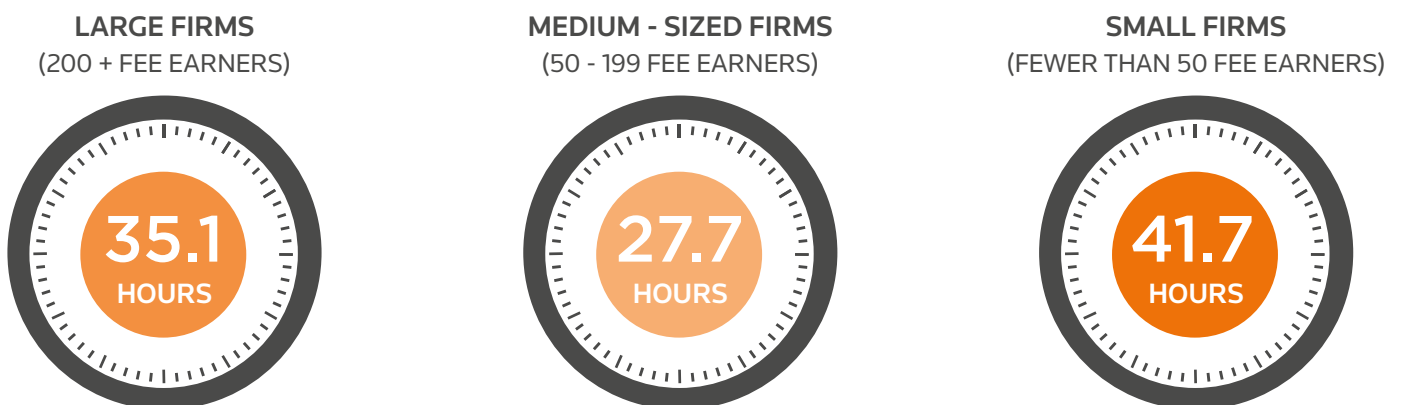
## Pro Bono And Firm Size

The 2016 Index tracked the link between the fee earner headcount at firms and the levels of pro bono engagement. In doing so, the Index has sought to establish whether, and to what extent, the size of a firm impacts the strength and success of a firm's pro bono practice, for which we are using engagement levels as an indicator.

- 45 Small Firms (less than 50 fee earners)
- 27 Medium-sized Firms (50 – 199 fee earners)
- 62 Large Firms (200 or more fee earners)

### SIZE OF FIRMS AND THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF PRO BONO HOURS

#### AVERAGE PRO BONO HOURS RECORDED PER LAWYER



The findings show that **proportionally Small Firms performed the most pro bono**, with an average of 41.7 hours per fee earner over the 12 month period. Medium-sized Firms averaged 27.7 hours per fee earner; and Large Firms averaged 35.1 hours per fee-earner.

The proportion of lawyers within these firms performing 10 or more hours of pro bono reflected a similar trend. The average proportion of fee earners doing 10 or more hours of pro bono at Small Firms was 55.3 percent compared to an average of 27.5 percent across the respondent Medium-sized Firms and an average of 26.3 percent across respondent Large Firms.

This analysis looked purely at law firm size and did not take into account the jurisdiction in which the law firm was based. Local context has an impact on the amount of pro bono done (as can be seen elsewhere in the Index), and the local economic and market conditions have a big impact on the size of the law firms that can be supported. It is of note here that there are only a handful of jurisdictions globally that support Large Firms.

These findings may be due to the fact that there may be greater flexibility at Small Firms to take on pro bono matters. Further, with a smaller total headcount, each individual lawyer has a greater impact on firm-wide engagement levels as one or two particularly passionate individuals can have a far larger impact on a small firm than they would on a larger one. At Large Firms it is likely that finances and manpower would be available to support the development of a structured pro bono practice within the firm, and the number of lawyers would mean that there would be capacity amongst the lawyers within the firm to get involved in more pro bono initiatives. So it is arguable that Medium-sized Firms suffer from having fewer resources available than Large Firms to devote to pro bono and lack the flexibility of Small Firms and this impacts their pro bono engagement levels.

A particularly interesting finding is the high average proportion of fee earners at Small Firms that have performed 10 or more hours of pro bono over the last 12 months. It could be argued that it is easier to get half of a 10-lawyer firm to perform pro bono than half of a 2,000-lawyer firm, hence the striking results. The jurisdiction in which these small firms are based may also have an impact.

While the rationale for this finding is not definitive, this data point will be closely tracked in years to come to determine if this continues to be a trend.