

New England Regional Mini-Seminar, Second in a Series, Held January 30, 2007.

The Pro Bono Institute held a [Regional Mini-Seminar](#), the second in a series of such events, at the Boston offices of Brown Rudnick, on January 30th. This informative and exciting two hour program on the topic of signature projects was hosted by Robert Harris of Brown Rudnick and was open to law firm leaders from the following states: Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.

Signature projects – targeted firm-wide pro bono efforts that focus, across different offices, practice areas, and levels of seniority, on a single substantive area or type of client -- have proven to be highly effective tools for enhancing pro bono participation, developing in-depth expertise, achieving greater public recognition for pro bono efforts, and creating and strengthening partnerships with in-house counsel and public interest organizations. Designing, implementing, administering, and sustaining successful signature projects, however, is a complex challenge. The Mini-Seminar offered practical and creative guidance on determining whether a firm might be ready to pursue a signature project; on identifying, assessing, and structuring potential signature projects; on obtaining firm management buy-in and the other resources, expertise, and support needed for a successful project; on creating a budget for signature projects; on identifying and approaching public interest and corporate partners; on evaluating the effectiveness and value of signature projects; and on the true definition of a signature project.

Some of the most practical guidance offered by the mini-seminar included concrete examples of successful and unsuccessful signature projects. Another useful topic was the use of signature projects as a means of establishing a partnership between law firms and in-house legal departments.