



## May 2026 Tip of the Month

# CLE Compliance and Pro Bono

Rule 9 of the [Rules of the Board of Continuing Legal Education](#) requires that every lawyer licensed in Minnesota must report taking at least 45 Continuing Learning Education (CLE) credits every three-year reporting cycle. Of those 45 credits, 3 must be ethics credits, 2 must be elimination of bias credits, and 1 must be a mental health and substance abuse credit.

While there is no shortcut to completing these credit requirements, actively engaging in pro bono work, along with learning the ropes on how to volunteer, can help launch you towards the CLE reporting finish line. Here is what you need to know:

1. **You can earn CLE by volunteering:** Rule 6 of the Rules of the Board of Continuing Legal Education provides that lawyers may request one standard CLE credit for every 6 hours of volunteering, for up to 6 CLE credits per reporting cycle. Don't remember how much time you spent volunteering in the last three years? Send anyone at VLN an email asking how much time you reported to us, and we can tell you how much time you reported to us.
2. **You can receive CLE credit for your volunteer training.** There are numerous places that provide free CLEs on the issues and areas of law you will need to know to engage in your pro bono practice area. Here are a few:
  - a. **VLN:** Because this is a VLN tip, we would be remiss if we did not start with VLN's free live and on demand CLEs! All upcoming CLEs are listed on [VLN's events page](#), and on-demand trainings are listed within the [program sponsoring the CLE](#). So, if you are volunteering or interested in volunteering in a specific area with VLN, looking into that programs resources is a great place to look for CLE credit.
  - b. **Minnesota Legal Services State Support (LSSS):** [Minnesota Legal Services State Support's](#) website hosts VLN's live and on-demand CLEs, but their website contains many, many more CLEs. There is a cost for these trainings unless you volunteer, so if you are not already volunteering, this is a good incentive to get your CLE credits and train to volunteer at the same time.
  - c. **MN Attorney General's Office:** The [Minnesota Attorney General's Office](#) has a broad variety of free upcoming and on demand CLEs on their website, along with a few low-cost options. Some of these trainings are focused on access to justice issues, and some are of more general interest to lawyers.

d. **MN State Law Library:** The [Minnesota State Law Library](#) maintains a website with a list of upcoming CLEs and database of free on-demand CLEs. Many of the on-demand CLEs here qualify for ethics, elimination of bias, or mental health credits. Again, many of these are of general interest to lawyers, but many also focus on access to justice issues.

e. Still looking? [Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers \(LCL\)](#) maintains a website of low-cost or no-cost CLE programs, some of which are provided by LCL themselves. LCL's CLEs are an excellent place to look for free mental health credits.

So, next time you are getting closer to the August 31 deadline of your reporting cycle and find yourself nervous obtaining enough credits, don't forget about your volunteering. Or, you know, use it as an incentive to start volunteering.