



Goldman Sachs Group Inc. headquarters stands in New York, U.S., on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2016. Photo by John Taggart/Bloomberg

## Goldman Sachs Lawyer On Joining Cadwalader Immigration Clinic

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Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft and Goldman Sachs are teaming up on an unusual project given their lines of business: helping eligible undocumented immigrants apply for lawful permanent residency in the U.S.

Cadwalader's Black & Latino Association, a mentorship, leadership and advocacy group for attorneys at the firm, originally started the clinic two years ago as a way to train the firm's corporate attorneys to take on a new area of law.

"Attorneys are concerned about whether they will be able to handle these matters, and the idea behind the clinic was to demystify this process and show them that they're capable of it," said Osvaldo Garcia, a Cadwalader associate who founded and directs the clinic.

Roughly 60 of the firm's 400 attorneys are working on the clinic and another 50 to 60 of Goldman's staff, roughly half of them attorneys, have just signed on to lend their legal services and language skills.

Garcia emphasized that the clinic is only aiding "individuals who have an avenue for relief" such as undocumented immigrants with asylum and green card applications and those seeking protection under the Violence Against Women Act or other legal guidance related to their immigration status.

"Often they are denied because they don't have the legal know-how," said Garcia, who said he created the clinic to create a clearinghouse for immigration-related legal resources.

Goldman Sachs has sent several high profile alumni to the Trump Administration including Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, chief economic advisor Gary Cohn and top advisor Stephen Bannon; but Benjamin J. Rader, general counsel of The Goldman Sachs Foundation and chair of Goldman Sachs pro bono steering committee was reluctant to frame the bank's involvement as purely a reaction to President Trump's comments and policies about immigration.

"I think the political atmosphere has added a sense of urgency," said Rader. "I don't think as a general matter we view it [as a political issue]."

He added, "We're also reacting to a bit of the climate of fear that's taken over in the immigrant community, and we're responding to that, which I think is a very important thing to do."

Big Law Business interviewed Rader about the Goldman's decision to join Cadwalader's immigration clinic and what it means for the financial services company. The following has been edited for length and clarity.

**Big Law Business:** *How did you get involved with the Cadwalader immigration clinic?*

**Rader:** Over the last few years we've had a lot of interest from people in the legal department and across the firm, given the diversity in where people come from, in doing pro bono immigration work. Cadwalader is really on the cutting edge in doing this type of work, so the partnership was in the planning stages through the middle to end of last year, and we are very happy to be well on our way to representing clients. It's moving quite quickly, we have a lot of people signed up. We have attorneys and non-attorneys, a lot of the non-attorneys as translators.

*[Editor's note: At least one high-paid Goldman Sachs banker has been undocumented, as BloombergBusinessweek reported in 2015 (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-02-25/how-an-undocumented-immigrant-from-mexico-became-a-star-at-goldman-sachs>)]*

**BLB:** *Has there been any uptick in interest among Goldman staff since the election or the beginning of the Trump Administration?*

**Rader:** I think the political atmosphere has added a sense of urgency. I don't think as a general matter we view it [as a political issue]. We're very focused on helping eligible people that want to naturalize or get green cards or sustainable immigration status. We're also reacting to a bit of the climate of fear that's taken over in the immigrant community, and we're responding to that, which I think is a very important thing to do. It's an important thing to do as citizens, to respond to needs and concerns of the parts of the population that aren't well represented.

We're not doing this out of any general position on policy. We're primarily motivated by making sure that these marginalized and under-served parts of the community get the representation that they deserve.

**BLB:** *What are the benefits to joining one of your law firms' pro bono initiatives?*

**Rader:** I think building working relationships through pro bono is a great way to meet people, it's a great way to network, and we're really benefiting from the innovation and the energy that the young associates at Cadwalader, who conceived of and run this program, bring. In a way, the in-house departments are following here and benefiting from the youth and energy of the law firms. I don't like to put myself in the elderly camp, but there's certainly a lot of great things going on, and we're benefiting from that. Cadwalader is benefiting from networking with our attorneys, there are business engagements happening between the two firms as well, and it strengthens our mutual knowledge of each other and then adds value to the community.

I think pro bono practice at law firms is much more institutionalized and ingrained than it is in corporate law departments. In some ways the law firms are thought leaders here, in terms of how they implement and design their pro bono programs. I think the corporates can be leaders in terms of direction and [finding] areas where there is the most need, but there is certainly a lot more history on the law firm side.

**BLB:** *How do you think corporations are approaching pro bono work right now?*

**Rader:** I think it's something that's catching on. It's new and gaining steam. The Pro Bono Institute is a nonprofit that works in this area, and I think they're getting some traction and they're getting corporations to be more organized and expand their pro bono activities. We've really tried to find pro bono initiatives like the ones having to do with women's rights, immigration, and veterans, that make sense for the firm's culture and priorities. For example the women's research project [about the legal barriers to women entrepreneurs in 14 different countries] was in conjunction with our 10,000 Women philanthropic initiative. What corporations bring to bear is that the focus of their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) priorities can add some subject matter leadership to their pro bono work.

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