



## Pro Bono Projects

### Spring 2015

Each semester the Citizen Lawyer Program (CLP) partners with non-profit and government agencies to create a number of structured law-related volunteer opportunities for students at the University of Iowa College of Law. These Pro Bono Projects provide students with an opportunity to gain experience in a legal setting, develop skills, network with practicing lawyers, explore their interests, and provide public service. These are strictly volunteer positions –students are not compensated (as they would be for summer clerkships) nor do they receive academic credit (as they would for field placements or clinic).

CLP advertises Pro Bono Project openings at the start of each semester. Each Pro Bono Project has a separate description that includes information on the agency, project duties, expected time commitment, scheduling concerns, qualifications, necessary travel, number of positions available, preferences (e.g., multi-semester commitments preferred), and restrictions (e.g., required course/skills or upper-class standing). Students should carefully review project descriptions, available through Symplicity, and then apply to all positions for which they wish to be considered, ranked by preference.

Application materials (Pro Bono Project application form and the student’s resume) are submitted to CLP via Symplicity by the application deadline. CLP then makes assignments based on student applications and available positions. The number of applicants regularly exceeds the number of available positions, so students who indicate an interest in multiple projects have a greater chance of assignment. Students will be notified of assignments approximately a week after the deadline.

Symplicity can be accessed from: <http://www.law.uiowa.edu/careers/symplicity> Under the “Jobs” tab select “CSM Jobs” and then look for “Spring 2015 Pro Bono Projects.” Citizen Lawyer Program is listed as the employer.

Questions regarding the Pro Bono Project application process should be directed to the Citizen Lawyer Program at [law-clp@uiowa.edu](mailto:law-clp@uiowa.edu).

**Applications for Spring 2015 projects are due by midnight on Wednesday, January 21.**

## Chicago Volunteer Legal Services: Staff Attorney Research

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services is a nonprofit organization that provides critical civil legal assistance to low-income Chicagoans who have nowhere else to turn. CVLS is recognized as the most comprehensive, efficient, and cost-effective civil legal aid provider in Chicago. Typical cases involve problems with basic necessities, fundamental rights or safety, including:

- Preventing illegal evictions and unsafe housing.
- Fighting against denied insurance claims.
- Securing income support such as SSI, Medicaid and disability benefits.
- Protecting a child's and parental rights.
- Defending against foreclosure and helping borrowers secure modifications.

[www.cvls.org](http://www.cvls.org)

**Project Information:** Student volunteers will provide written legal analysis or gather legal research related to a question posed by a Legal Services attorney working on a civil case. Usually a one month turnaround is requested. Some shorter turnaround time may be necessary on some projects. Students will work remotely.

**Agency Contact:** Matt Hulstein at [mhulstein@cvls.org](mailto:mhulstein@cvls.org).

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** Mr. Hulstein will collect legal questions from CVLS attorneys, and he will structure the questions as memos, highlighting the issues and suggesting ways to begin research. The Citizen Lawyer Program student coordinator will then assign a student or team of students to each issue. Once a student accepts a project, the student will communicate directly with Mr. Hulstein. Mr. Hulstein expects the student(s) to regularly communicate with CVLS, including questions about the project and feedback. Volunteer students will complete one or more research projects on a specific legal issue relevant to the attorney's caseload. The final product may include a written report of identified resources, and a memorandum of potentially relevant material and legal analysis. If the student continues to be interested in the issue, he/she may help transform their research into a motion or brief to be filed with the court.

**Agency Responsibilities:** Provide student with overview of case; description of legal issue to be researched; guidance about possible sources/strategies for research; be clear about deadlines; be available for periodic progress check-ins and final comments.

**Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling:** Dependent on the project or projects assigned. Most projects are expected to take between 5 and 10 hours, and interested students should be prepared to take at least two projects over the course of the semester, depending on the needs of the agency. A mandatory initial meeting will take place via Skype.

**Criteria:** One position is available. Familiarity with legal and/or internet research is necessary. **Suitable for upper-class students only.**

## Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence: U Visa and VAWA Immigration Project

The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) seeks to engage all people in a movement to change the social and political systems that perpetuate violence against women. It does so through education, advocacy and quality services. As part of its holistic approach to serving victims, ICADV is providing immigration legal representation to victims of domestic violence.

<http://www.icadv.org/>

**Project Information:** Students will assist ICADV's legal staff in preparing and submitting immigration applications based upon U Visa and VAWA eligibility. Students will be working in pairs and each pair will be assigned two cases at the beginning of the semester. Under the direction of an ICADV staff attorney, students will work directly with victims and their advocates collecting evidence and preparing the immigration petition for submission to USCIS.

Volunteers must participate in an initial training from 11:30-3:30 on Friday, January 30. The training will cover volunteer expectations, case management, communications, and the unauthorized practice of law.

**Agency contact:** Charissa Flege, staff attorney at Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence, [charissaf@icadv.org](mailto:charissaf@icadv.org).

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** Each student pair will be responsible for two immigration cases during the semester. Under the supervision of and at the direction of the staff attorney, students will interview ICADV clients, gather evidence, and coordinate with domestic violence victim advocates as necessary to build a viable case. In addition to compiling the immigration petition for their clients, students will be required to participate in phone conferences, submit weekly progress reports, and attend periodic webinars on relevant domestic violence/immigration topics. Students will refer questions to ICADV's supervising attorney. Some travel may be necessary.

**Agency responsibilities:** ICADV legal staff will provide basic domestic violence and immigration training for the students, provide directions for protocol and case management throughout the semester, be available at scheduled times for progress checks and concerns about legal issues.

**Time commitment/Scheduling:** Student pairs will be expected to commit approximately 5-7 hours per week, including training time. A required initial training session will take place from 11:30-3:30 on Friday, January 30.

**Criteria:** Up to 20 positions are available. **Suitable for second or third year students**, particularly those interested in immigration law or issues of domestic violence.

## Iowa Legal Aid: Self-Represented Divorce Litigant Clinics

Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) serves eligible clients (within income and asset limits, based on household size), helping with a variety of civil legal problems. ILA assists clients in matters regarding consumer law, debt collection, education, employment, family law, government benefits, health care, and housing.

[www.iowalegalaid.org](http://www.iowalegalaid.org)

**Project Information:** This project involves students assisting persons who are self-represented litigants in divorce cases using forms approved by the Iowa Supreme Court. Under the supervision of an ILA staff person or volunteer attorney, students will review forms with litigants for completeness and assist them in filling them out. Students will refer questions to the on-site supervising attorney. Clinics are scheduled at the Johnson County Courthouse in Iowa City on the following dates:

- Monday, January 25, from 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Monday, February 23, from 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Monday, March 30, from 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Monday, April 20, from 2:30-4:30 p.m.

This project requires travel to the Johnson County Courthouse.

**Agency contact:** Chris Luzzie at [cluzzie@iowalaw.org](mailto:cluzzie@iowalaw.org).

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** Students will meet one-on-one with self-represented litigants to review forms and provide assistance in completing the required information. Students will refer questions to the supervising attorney. Students will complete training and a self-study of provided materials prior to the training.

**Agency responsibilities:** ILA will provide a coordinator for the project. The coordinator will arrange for volunteer attorneys to staff the clinics, and will send reminders to the students for each clinic.

**Time commitment/Scheduling:** Students will be expected to commit approximately a total of 12 to 15 hours to the project during the semester, including training time. A required training session will be scheduled for a Monday afternoon once volunteer selections are announced.

**Criteria:** Up to three positions are available. Suitable for all students, particularly those interested in family law.

## Iowa Legal Aid: Staff Attorney Research Assistance

Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) serves eligible clients (within income and asset limits, based on household size), helping with a variety of civil legal problems. ILA assists clients in matters regarding consumer law, debt collection, education, employment, family law, government benefits, health care, and housing.

[www.iowalegalaid.org](http://www.iowalegalaid.org)

**Project Information:** Student volunteers provide oral or written legal analysis or gather legal research related to a question posed by an ILA attorney working on a civil case. Students may work remotely.

**Agency Contact:** Alex Kornya at [akornya@iowalaw.org](mailto:akornya@iowalaw.org)

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** Under the direction of a staff attorney, the student will complete one or more research projects on a discrete legal issue relevant to the attorney's caseload. The final product may include an oral or written report of identified resources, and a memorandum of potentially relevant material and legal analysis. A two or three week turnaround is usually requested. Some shorter turnaround time may be necessary on some projects. Communication will occur by telephone or e-mail.

**Agency Responsibilities:** Provide student with overview of case; description of legal issue to be researched; guidance about possible sources/strategies for research; be clear about deadlines; be available for periodic progress check-ins and final comments.

**Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling:** Dependent on the project or projects assigned. Most projects are expected to take between 5 and 10 hours, and interested students should commit to taking at least two projects over the course of the semester.

**Criteria:** Up to three positions are available. Familiarity with legal and/or Internet research is necessary.

## Iowa State Bar Association: Access to Justice Committee

This committee of Iowa's voluntary state bar association is concerned with the problem of lack of access to civil legal services experienced by indigent persons in Iowa. As part of its work this year, the committee will gather information on (1) the scope of the problem, (2) geographic areas where the problem is greatest, (3) the types of services most needed, (4) existing organizations that provide or could be used to provide services, and (5) what programs exist in other states to address the needs of indigents. Ultimately, the committee will make recommendations to the Iowa State Bar Association regarding actions it should take to assist in providing civil legal services to low income Iowans.

<http://www.iowabar.org/members/group.aspx?id=119864>

**Project Information:** Volunteers may conduct general research on legal services delivery in Iowa and other states, and may also be assigned to perform research for subcommittees with mandates on human trafficking, undocumented immigrants, and legal job corps.

**Agency Contact(s):** Steve Eckley, Committee Chair, at [sreckley@belinmccormick.com](mailto:sreckley@belinmccormick.com)

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** Volunteers will conduct research as directed by the committee or subcommittee chairs. Most work will be performed on your own from campus with communication by telephone and e-mail, but it is expected that there will be opportunities to participate in committee meetings and other activities. Work schedules will be determined by agreement of the volunteer and supervisor.

**Agency Responsibilities:** Assign and direct projects, be available as agreed upon for periodic progress checks.

**Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling:** The anticipated time commitment is 3-5 hours per week, but specific arrangements can be made based on schedules and other factors. An initial meeting will be scheduled by Skype or in person.

**Criteria:** Up to two positions will be available. Suitable for all students.

## Iowa Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts

The IVLA is a nonprofit organization in Iowa devoted to helping artists and arts organizations gain legal assistance and education on matters that affect them. IVLA's mission is to contribute to the development and preservation of the cultural community in Iowa by providing volunteer legal services, technical expertise and educational programs to individual artists, nonprofit arts organizations, and other arts constituents. Through IVLA, qualifying artists or arts organizations can have their legal issues referred to volunteer attorneys for review and for possible low-cost representation. Its mission is helping artists and arts groups succeed on their creative abilities so that success or failure does not hinge on legal pitfalls.

[www.iavla.org](http://www.iavla.org)

**Project Information:** Students volunteering with this project will have the opportunity to serve Iowa's arts community while learning about the world of art and entertainment law. Volunteers are exposed to numerous substantive areas of the law including intellectual property (copyright, trademark and patent), First Amendment, immigration, labor and employment, nonprofit organizations, and business associations. IVLA is a relatively new organization, and during this semester of partnership with IVLA, law student volunteers will help to build and maintain the infrastructure of IVLA by maintaining its social media platforms and website, drafting white papers and other research materials and by coordinating and executing educational outreach efforts to Iowa's arts community. Volunteers will work on their own using a computer with an Internet connection and webcam. Volunteers and supervisors will have regular conferences in person or by telephone.

**Agency Contact:** David Bright, President of the IVLA Board, at [djbright@nyemaster.com](mailto:djbright@nyemaster.com)

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** Students should be prepared to complete one or more research projects on a discrete legal issue relevant to the arts and entertainment law. The final product may include an oral or written report of identified resources, and a memorandum of potentially relevant material and legal analysis. Working as a team with IVLA staff and volunteers, students will also be responsible for education and outreach to Iowa's current and future artists, as well as IVLA's communications, including maintenance of IVLA's Internet presence.

**Agency Responsibilities:** Provide student with overview of research topics; description of legal issues to be researched; guidance about possible sources/strategies for research; be clear about deadlines; be available for periodic progress check-ins and final comments.

**Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling:** Dependent on the project or projects assigned. Students should spend anywhere from 3-5 hours a week working on various projects for IVLA. Periodic meetings with volunteer students and agency staff will be scheduled.

**Criteria:** Up to three positions will be available. Familiarity with legal and/or internet research is necessary. Project is open to all students, though upper-class students are preferred.

## Johnson County Attorney's Office: Rocket Docket

The Johnson County Attorney, based in Iowa City, is the chief legal representative for the county and serves as the legal advisor and chief law enforcement officer for the county. Among other powers and duties set out in Iowa law, the County Attorney prosecutes all violations of state criminal laws and county ordinances.

[www.johnson-county.com/dept\\_attorney.aspx?id=8194](http://www.johnson-county.com/dept_attorney.aspx?id=8194)

**Project Information:** The Johnson County Attorney is the prosecutor of state and county charges that occur within the county borders. One Thursday morning each month, starting at 8 a.m., persons charged with Driving Under Suspension (DUS) charges are called to court to respond to the charges by entering a plea (guilty or not guilty) or by negotiating a plea agreement. Dates for the spring semester are Jan. 22, Feb. 19, Mar. 19, and Apr. 16. This project requires students to travel to the Johnson County Courthouse in Iowa City.

**Agency Contact:** Jude Pannell, Assistant Johnson County Attorney, at [jpannell@co.johnson.ia.us](mailto:jpannell@co.johnson.ia.us)

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** Student volunteers will work as arranged to do the pre-hearing checking on compliance for those participants already in the program. On Thursdays, students may assist with the actual court's docket review session.

**Agency Responsibilities:** Provide guidance as needed about protocol, case management and other procedures. Be available to the student and law school as agreed upon (email/phone/in-person) for periodic progress check-in. Contact the law school coordinator to discuss any concerns with the volunteers or the program.

**Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling:** Approximately 40 hours for the semester. Students will arrange times to work on their own to conduct compliance checks for program participants. Students wishing to assist with docket review sessions should be available between 8:00 a.m. and noon on Jan. 22, Feb. 19, Mar. 19, and Apr. 16.

**Number of volunteers needed:** On position is available. Suitable for all students, especially those interested in criminal law.



## **CLE Development: Planned Giving of Agricultural Land**

David Hayes, a 1996 Iowa Law alumnus, is developing materials and a training session on planned giving of agricultural lands for legal practitioners and financial planners. He is Vice President for Advancement and Associate Professor of Business Administration and Economics at Coe College in Cedar Rapids.

**Project Information:** The student will assist Prof. Hayes by conducting research related to the planned giving of agricultural lands.

**Agency contact:** David Hayes at [dhayes@coe.edu](mailto:dhayes@coe.edu).

**Volunteer Responsibilities:** Under the direction of Prof. Hayes, the student will complete a literature review of scholarship and practice guides, and will conduct research on taxation and property issues related to this topic. The student will help develop content to educate Eastern Iowa lawyers and financial planners on this topic. It is hoped that these materials will provide the basis for a free Continuing Legal Education program (CLE), and the student may have an opportunity to help organize and participate in the CLE. If interested, the student will have an opportunity to learn about collegiate advancement operations. The project may involve travel to Cedar Rapids once or twice during the semester.

**Agency responsibilities:** Prof. Hayes will provide direction on research and feedback on assignments; be available to answer questions; and set clear deadlines.

**Time commitment/Scheduling:** The anticipated time commitment is 3-5 hours per week, but specific arrangements will be made. Occasional telephone or in-person meetings will be scheduled; the student will also communicate regularly by e-mail.

**Criteria:** One position is available. Facility with research and familiarity with estate planning, property, and tax law is desired.