



Citizen Lawyer Program

Spring 2024 Pro Bono Projects

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 12Twenty and on the CLP website, 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 12Twenty 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. We regret that we cannot guarantee placement for all applicants. Students will be notified of assignments approximately a week after the deadline.

12Twenty can be accessed from: <https://law-uiowa.12twenty.com/Login> Under the “OCI & Job Listings” tab select “Job Listings” and then look for “Spring 2024 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.

Note to international students: we are advised by International Student & Scholar Services that Curricular Practical Training authorization is not required to participate in Pro Bono Projects.

Applications for Spring 2024 projects are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, January 24, 2024.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services: AFLAN Intake

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

Project Information: Student volunteers will assist with Armed Forces Legal Aid Network (AFLAN) client intakes. AFLAN is a statewide network that provides information, brief services, and referrals to veterans and service members. Scheduling is very flexible. When an intake needs to be done, CVLS will electronically assign the file to a student, who will then conduct the intake over the phone. Phone intakes are scheduled between the potential client and student, according to their availability. Intakes will be focused on helping veterans with civil legal services issues particularly domestic relations and probate.

Agency Contact: Debi Martin at dmartin@cvls.org.

Volunteer Responsibilities: When they receive an intake assignment, students will conduct the intake telephonically at a mutually convenient time arranged with the potential client. All work can be completed remotely.

Agency Responsibilities: Train students on the use of the data base and provide regular oversight and feedback. CVLS will also ensure that all work can be done remotely.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: The estimate time commitment is 15-20 hours each semester. Flexible scheduling.

Criteria: Up to one position is available. Students should have some interest in legal aid work and be diligent and detail oriented.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services: Early Resolution Program Intake

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

Project Information: Student volunteers will assist with client intakes for eviction cases through the Early Resolution Program (ERP). The student would sign up for a 3-hour zoom shift once a week or once every other week. During the 3-hour shift, the student would join the zoom and wait for eviction cases to be referred to CVLS from eviction court. Once referred, the student would assist with a conflicts of interest check and complete the intake for the landlord or tenant referral. Students can then sit in on the consultation with the client. An attorney would be on the zoom to assist/supervise the student.

Agency Contact: Debi Martin at dmartin@cvls.org.

Volunteer Responsibilities: When signed up for their 3-hour shift, the student will join a zoom call to conduct intakes as clients are referred from court. All work can be completed remotely.

Agency Responsibilities: Train students on the use of the data base and provide regular oversight and feedback. CVLS will also ensure that all work can be done remotely.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: This option will run through the Spring Semester. The estimated time commitment is 3 hours per week or every other week. Shift options will be 9:00-12:00 every weekday morning or 1:00-4:00 Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday afternoon. Students will sign up for their shifts ahead of time. Shift times can vary each week.

Criteria: One position is available. Preference will be given to students who can commit to completing full 3-hour shifts. Students should have some interest in legal aid work and be diligent and detail oriented.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services: General Immigration

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

Project Information: Student will be assigned one or multiple projects depending on hours requested which may include:

- Drafting and submitting requests to local law enforcement and prosecutors certifying client has been the victim of a crime.
- Request records searches to all relevant Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agencies
- Prepare draft client affidavit/narrative based on interview notes and supporting documents.
- Prepare forms and supporting documents for submission of petition for immigration relief to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Agency Contact: Debi Martin at dmartin@cvls.org.

Volunteer Responsibilities: Under attorney supervision and instruction, Student will prepare affirmative requests including cover letter, forms, and supporting documents to DHS agencies/law enforcement/prosecutor.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide the student with templates, instructions, background on relief being sought in a given assignment, guidance on questions they have and feedback. CVLS will also ensure that all work can be done remotely.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: Project assignment(s) can be tailored to student's desired time commitment. Flexible scheduling.

Criteria: Up to one position is available. Students should have some interest in legal aid work and be diligent and detail oriented.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services: Immigration Pleadings

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

Project Information: Student volunteers will assist in the preparation of pleadings to obtain predicate orders for special immigrant juvenile status petitions. Requires Spanish language proficiency. All work can be done remotely.

Agency Contact: Debi Martin at dmartin@cvls.org.

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will work under attorney supervision to assist in the preparation of petitions.

Agency Responsibilities: Train students and provide regular oversight and feedback. CVLS will also ensure that all work can be done remotely.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: CVLS prefers volunteers who will commit for the entire school year. The estimate time commitment is 15-20 hours each semester. Flexible scheduling.

Criteria: One position is available. Spanish language proficiency is required. *Please indicate language proficiency on your application.*

Disability Rights Iowa: Communication & Outreach

Disability Rights Iowa (DRI) serves eligible individuals with disabilities in a variety of legal rights. DRI aims to defend and promote the human and legal rights of Iowans with disabilities. We promote safety, opportunity, access, and self-determination for all Iowans through a program of self-advocacy, education, information and referral, non-legal advocacy and legal and systems advocacy. DRI is the official Protection and Advocacy system for Iowa. Federal law charges us with access authority to enter locked facilities to investigate conditions of the facilities and to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not abused or neglected. Our current work focuses on protecting the educational rights of students with disabilities, ensuring individuals with disabilities have equal access to services and places, removing barriers to employment, increasing alternatives to guardianships, protecting access to long-term health services and supports, protecting and improving the lives of youth. <https://disabilityrightsiowa.org/>

Project information: Students will assist Executive Director and Communications Coordinator in developing a social media plan for DRI's 40th anniversary year. The social media campaign will include weekly posts highlighting the impact of DRI over the past 40 years, Disability History in Iowa, federal disability history, the connection between pop-culture and significant DRI advocacy, etc. Work can be done either remotely or in-person at DRI's office in Des Moines and will involve working primarily with the Communications Coordinator and the Executive Director.

Agency Contact: Catherine E. Johnson, cjohnson@driowa.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Assist in developing a weekly social media campaign to celebrate DRI's 40th Anniversary. Students will have an opportunity to research disability history in Iowa, prepare a social media campaign highlighting this history and DRI's impact in Iowa, and create a social media campaign connecting pop culture with DRI's history over the past 40 years. Students will learn about disability history, on both the state and federal level, how to develop and post accessible social media content, as well as assisting in developing monthly blogs on disability rights issues of significant to Iowans with disabilities. Students must be reliable and commit 3-4 hours a week, remote or in-person, during DRI's office hours (9:00 am to 5:00 pm).

Agency Responsibilities: Provide students with training and other instruction regarding applicable history, law, DRI history, and accessible social media posts. Provide supervision and guidance as needed about social media campaign, blogs, etc. Be available as agreed upon (email/phone/in-person) for periodic progress check-in. Contact the law school to discuss any concerns with the volunteers or program.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: Students will be assigned to the Executive Director and will work with DRI's Communications Coordinator. Students will assist with completing weekly social media posts and monthly blog posts. Additional volunteer time is available upon request. Shifts must be arranged.

Criteria: One position is available for the spring semester. Suitable for all students. Students must be able to commit 3-4 hours and participate in the required training session. *Applicants should indicate on the application what days and hours they have available to volunteer.*

The Immigration Project: Language Team

The Immigration Project was founded in 1995 with the goal of ensuring legal access to the immigrant populations of downstate Illinois. Since then, The Immigration Project has been growing and changing, bringing immigration legal services to the immigrants of Central and Southern Illinois.

Project Information: Interpreters work using Zoom or the phone to communicate with clients and tell their immigration story to their lawyer. Technical vocabulary is not needed; volunteers will be trained on relevant terms. French and English are the most needed. Translators will help with translating birth certificates and other government documents or client letters to support a client's immigration legal case.

Agency contact: Volunteer Coordinator, volunteercoordinator@immigrationproject.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students are expected to be engaged, reliable, and open to helping as needed. Flexibility is a must. Volunteer responsibilities will include communicating with client's and relaying information to the attorney.

Agency responsibilities: The agency will provide training, guidance and supervision for volunteers.

Time commitment/Scheduling: Volunteers will be expected to commit approximately a total of 1.5 hours per month minimum (one document or one intake consultation).

Criteria: Up to four positions available. Suitable for students with foreign language aptitude (fluent or advanced second language) particularly those interested in issues experienced by the immigrant community. Proficiency in Spanish and French is especially valued. *Please indicate language proficiency on your application.*

Iowa State Public Defender - Davenport

The State Public Defender of Iowa (SPD) coordinates provision of legal representation to indigent persons under arrest or charged with a crime, in juvenile cases, and on appeal in criminal and post-conviction relief cases. This legal representation is provided through SPD offices or through private attorneys who contract with the SPD or who are appointed by the Court. By specializing in criminal defense work and juvenile matters, public defenders, investigators, and support staff provide high-quality, efficient, cost-effective legal representation to indigent clients.

<https://spd.iowa.gov/>

Project Information: Students assist with the operations of the SPD's Davenport office as needed, including discovery review, research, and document/exhibit organization. A specific focus will be assisting attorneys organize and review discovery in preparation for trial. Duties may include transcribing video/audio files, analyzing cell phone downloads, and listening to jail phone calls.

This project will primarily be conducted remotely. There are opportunities for students to personally observe attorneys in action; however, tasks are generally designed to be completed off-site. The time commitment will be an average of 2-3 hours per week, and the hours can be adjusted based on the availability of the volunteers and supervising attorney. In-court observation opportunities can be scheduled as necessary with the supervising attorney.

Agency Contact: Spencer Roudabush, sroudabush@spd.state.ia.us

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will assist public defender staff in the Davenport office as requested with reviewing documents, reviewing video and audio files, and drafting requested work product. Students may observe in-court appearances.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide guidance as needed about protocol, case management and discovery review 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: Students are expected to commit to an average of 2-3 hours per week. Work can be completed remotely and on the student's own schedule, so long as tasks are completed by any agreed-upon deadlines.

Criteria: Up to three positions are available. Suitable for all students. Students must have familiarity with Google Drive and be able to meet agreed-upon deadlines.

State Public Defender – Iowa City

The State Public Defender of Iowa (SPD) coordinates provision of legal representation to indigent persons under arrest or charged with a crime, in juvenile cases, and on appeal in criminal and post-conviction relief cases. This legal representation is provided through SPD offices or through private attorneys who contract with the SPD or who are appointed by the Court. By specializing in criminal defense work and juvenile matters, public defenders, investigators, and support staff provide high-quality, efficient, cost-effective legal representation to indigent clients.

<https://spd.iowa.gov/>

Project Information: Students assist with the operations of the SPD's Iowa City office as needed, including case management and document/exhibit organization. Other duties as assigned may include covering phones or calling defendants regarding court hearings. **This project requires students to travel to the Iowa City office located at 725 S. Clinton St., Iowa City.**

Agency Contact: Peter Persaud, ppersaud@spd.state.ia.us

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will assist public defender staff in the office as requested with filing, other case management tasks, and answering phones.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide guidance as needed about protocol, case management and intake 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: Students are expected to commit to 3-5 hours per week during set shifts at the SPD offices in Iowa City, to be determined by agreement with the supervisor.

Criteria: One position is available. Suitable for all students.

Lavender Legal Center

Lavender Legal Center provides legal representation and related advocacy by and for LGBTQ people. Upon seeing there was no specialized legal assistance for the LGBTQ community, Lavender Legal Center was founded in October 2020. Lavender provides direct representation, advocacy, and referrals, with a priority for serving those with low income and our LGBTQ youth. From name changes to adoptions, to collaborating with other institutions, Lavender provides vital and understanding advocacy to those in the LGBTQ community. The ultimate goal of Lavender is to provide a safe space for everyone in the LGBTQ community to access legal representation and related advocacy.

<https://www.lavenderlegalcenter.org/>

Project Information: Student volunteers will help LLC in both the creation of and fine-tuning of various client forms to ensure we meet our high inclusivity standards. There will also be research opportunities ranging from legal in nature to resource gathering. For example, LLC wants to provide a list of LGBTQ scholarships on the resource page of our website. We take a holistic approach in supporting our clients and this will make a huge difference for our LGBTQ youth. We also need legal research on advocacy for youth in IEP and 504 plans.

Organization Contact: Kendra Weston kendra@lavenderlegal.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will review and edit forms and engage in other legal and factual research under the supervision of attorneys.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide the student with an overview of forms and guidance on revisions; descriptions of legal issue or other needed advocacy to be researched; guidance about potential sources; clear deadlines; and available via phone/email/video call for regular check-ins and feedback.

Expectations/Time Commitment/Scheduling: Most projects are low time commitment, averaging about 1-2 hours per week.

Criteria: Two student positions available. Volunteers will work remotely; however, orientation will be done in-person if scheduling allows. Suitable for all students, but preference for those with a public interest background and/or those who have worked or otherwise identify with the LGBTQ community.

University of Iowa Student Legal Services (SLS): Research Assistants

Student Legal Services provides free legal advice and representation to currently enrolled University of Iowa students. For more information visit <https://studentlegal.uiowa.edu/>

Project Information: Student volunteers provide written legal analysis or gather legal research related to questions posed by SLS attorneys. Topics of research may include tenants' rights, identity documents, drivers license regulations, and professional responsibility.

Agency Contact: SLS Director and Attorney Amanda Elkins - Amanda-elkins@uiowa.edu

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. Check-ins can occur via e-mail, Zoom, in-person or phone.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide student with 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. Interested students should commit to taking at least two projects over the course of the semester. Work will be done remotely.

Criteria: One position is available.