



Pro Bono Projects

Spring 2017

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. We regret that we cannot guarantee placement for all applicants. 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 2017 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.

Applications for Spring 2017 projects are due by midnight on Wednesday, January 25.

ICCompassion Immigrant Resource Center

ICCompassion is a faith-based, non-profit organization that engages culturally diverse communities to equip people to help them move out of poverty. The Immigrant Resource Center is ICCompassion's response to low-income immigrants in assisting them with their legal immigration needs. For the past four years, we have been approved by the Board of Immigration Appeals office in the Department of Justice to provide this legal service in Iowa City. With one attorney and two BIA recognized representatives, we have assisted immigrants from over 48 different countries with getting citizenship, family petitions, visas, and other immigration issues. www.iccompassion.org

Project Information: Students assist the Immigrant Resource Center with research needed for asylum and hardship cases. These cases are helped with additional evidence collected that supports the filing of the application. Students will also assist with citizenship classes.

Agency Contact(s): Teresa Stecker at iccompassion@gmail.com

Volunteer Responsibilities: The main responsibility is to conduct Internet Research regarding supporting evidence of clients' claims of persecution and of hardships related to family separations. This work may involve evaluating the information for value to the client's case. Duties may include legal research but most of this research is related to issues of history, current country conditions and psychological issues related to trauma etc. Students will also assist with citizenship classes.

Agency Responsibilities: Assign and direct projects, be available as agreed upon for periodic progress checks. For case work, provide students with overview of the case and the evidence needed; give guidance about possible sources/strategies for research; be clear about deadlines.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: The anticipated time commitment is 3-5 hours per week. Volunteers are expected to schedule regular weekly shifts. Specific arrangements will be made based on schedules and other factors.

Criteria: Up to three positions are available.

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 tentatively scheduled from 11:00 to 4:00 on Friday, January 27. The training will cover volunteer expectations, case management, communications, and the unauthorized practice of law. Students will also participate in mid-semester and end of semester meetings.

Agency contact: Charissa Flege (charissaf@icadv.org) and Salome Nengean (salomen@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 is tentatively scheduled for 11:00-4:00 on Friday, January 27.

Criteria: Up to 5 positions are available. **Suitable for second or third year students**, particularly those interested in immigration law or issues of domestic violence. Spanish language skills are desirable, but not required.

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

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

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. 2Ls and 3Ls are preferable; 1Ls may apply but will be expected to complete a basic research tutorial.

Johnson County Attorney's Office: County Attorney Payment Plans (CAPP)

The Johnson County Attorney (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.

http://www.johnson-county.com/dept_attorney.aspx?id=8194

Project Information: Students assist the office with its CAPP program. Persons convicted of motor vehicle and other offenses lose their drivers licenses when they become delinquent in payment of fines and other fees. The CAPP program enables these persons to get their drivers licenses back by developing and adhering to payment plans. This project requires students to travel to the Johnson County Courthouse in Iowa City.

Agency Contact: Andrea Jensen at ajensen@co.johnson.ia.us

Volunteer Responsibilities: Respond to phone and other inquiries from the interested persons about the program; research court records to determine eligibility of outstanding cases; become familiar with state licensing regulations and status actions; negotiate with applicants regarding payment amounts; contact employers as necessary regarding acceptance of wage assignments; prepare wage assignments; prepare payment agreements. Students will work together as a team.

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

Expectations/Time commitment: Space and time constraints of the County Attorney's Office are acute, so students must be available for specific shifts to be determined. All volunteers must attend a training session to be scheduled at the Johnson County Attorney's office.

Number of volunteers needed: One position is available. Suitable for all students. Interest, experience, or coursework in debt collection or bankruptcy is desirable. Experience with Iowa Courts Online is desirable.