



Pro Bono Projects

Fall 2020

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 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 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 "Fall 2020 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 Fall 2020 projects are due by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, September 10.

ACLU of Iowa: Legal Research

Founded in 1935, the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa is the nation's fifth-oldest state affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU of Iowa is a non-profit organization that promotes and defends the values reflected in the Bill of Rights through litigation, public advocacy, outreach, education, and lobbying. The ACLU of Iowa is dedicated to promoting and protecting the individual rights and freedoms ensured by the United States Constitution and Iowa Constitution.

www.aclu-ia.org

Project Information: Legal research. Under supervision, the law student volunteers will assist the ACLU of Iowa in conducting confidential legal research on various topics and other assignment

Organization Contact(s): Rita Bettis Austen at rita.bettis@aclu-ia.org and Daniel Zeno at daniel.zeno@aclu-ia.org.

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will help complete a survey of local ordinances across Iowa to learn which towns and cities have: (1) crime nuisance ordinances, which penalize survivors of domestic violence for calling for emergency assistance and violate both constitutional Equal Protection and local and state civil rights laws; (2) unconstitutional political sign ordinances, in violation of the First Amendment; (3) anti-panhandling ordinances, which violate the First Amendment and criminalize poverty. This will primarily involve finding ordinances online, but may also involve telephone and/or email communication with smaller towns in the state, review and summary of local ordinances in an Excel worksheet. All documents must adhere to document guidelines that will be provided to the student. Students will be supervised by an attorney and will receive feedback on all assignments.

Organization Responsibilities: Supervise student's written work, provide feedback, and contact law school with any concerns with the volunteers or program.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: The anticipated time commitment depends on the student's availability and how quickly they complete the assigned work. Expected time commitment is 12-16 hours per month at minimum. The student and supervisor will work together to establish deadlines for projects that work with the student's schedule.

Criteria: Ten positions are available. Students must have strong research and writing skills and must be able to work independently. Students are expected to be responsive to the supervising attorney. All work will be done remotely.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services: Staff Attorney Research (2Ls & 3Ls only)

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 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.

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. 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: Up to two positions are available. Familiarity with legal and/or internet research is necessary. **Suitable for upper-class students only.** Preference will be given to students who can commit for the entire year.

Iowa Legal Aid: Eviction Data Project

Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) serves eligible clients with a variety of civil legal problems. Including housing, employment, family law, domestic abuse protection orders, government benefits, health care, and collateral consequences. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, housing was an area of critical concern in Iowa. Now, while the safest place to be is home, many low-income individuals are at risk of losing their home as the economic disaster and loss of jobs continues to prevent many people from being able to afford rent. Since the expiration of the Iowa governor's moratorium on May 28, there have been more than 4,000 eviction hearings in the state. Since the beginning of the pandemic Iowa Legal Aid has been collecting eviction data and analyzing outcomes, to do media outreach, spot issues and trends, train our staff, and to create a tool to identify properties covered under CARES Act protections.

www.iowalegalaid.org

Project information: Some change occurs from the top down – e.g. major litigation, legislation, and rulemaking. However, true and lasting change requires at least as much work from the ground up, e.g. studying and understanding how problems affect individuals, and how those problems implicate the law. Increasingly, Iowa Legal Aid is engaging in projects that apply law to data to advocate for low-income Iowans on the systemic issues that affect their lives and entrench cyclical poverty.

We are looking for student volunteers to continue to track and analyze evictions statewide. This involves viewing court records and inputting information from the records into our database.

Agency Contact: Ericka Petersen epetersen@iowalaw.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Attend a training to understand how to obtain and analyze eviction data. Willingness to spend on average 3 hours per week reviewing eviction court records and inputting data. We are asking for a commitment until Thanksgiving break.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide students with training and other instruction regarding applicable law and procedures. 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: Other than a mandatory training, the work can be done during or outside of the typical work day. We would ideally ask that students are willing to commit 3 hours weekly on average until Thanksgiving break begins.

Criteria: Looking for 2-3 students. Suitable for all students. Iowa Legal Aid offices are currently closed and the work will be done remotely. ***Applicants should indicate on the application what days and hours they have available for the mandatory training.***

Iowa Legal Aid: Expungement Clinic

Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) serves eligible clients with a variety of civil legal problems. Including housing, employment, family law, domestic abuse protection orders, government benefits, health care, and collateral consequences. Recognizing that the persistent aftereffects of the criminal justice system involvement are a root cause of poverty, and that the racial disparities present in Iowa place a much heavier burden on people of color, Iowa Legal Aid has partnered with community organizations including the NAACP, Black Lives Matter, Iowa Workforce Development, the faith community, and many others to provide legal assistance to people struggling with court debt, expungement, background checks, and licensure issues. On October 23, we will be hosting a virtual Expungement & Employment Barrier Clinic to honor the memory of Chief Justice Cady for the Cady Day of Service.

www.iowalegalaid.org

Project information: Most of the work happens before the day of the clinic with the help of student volunteers. Students will use a unique software tool designed especially for the purpose, conduct a comprehensive assessment of each client's Iowa criminal record, court debt obligations, and driver's license. Attorneys will use these individualized assessments the day of the clinic to provide advice to clients to best address their issues. ILA staff attorneys review the files of all clients who attend the clinic to see which cases need additional support, and has taken numerous clinic cases for extended representation. We will be serving ~100 clients on the day of service itself, and will need assessments for each client in advance of the clinic.

Agency Contact: Ericka Petersen epetersen@iowalaw.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Complete comprehensive assessments for clinic clients for attorneys to use the day of the clinic. Volunteers must attend a training to use the assessment software. Assessments do not have to be completed during the work day. In order to be prepared in advance of October 23, most work will need to be completed through September and into early October.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide students with training and other instruction regarding applicable law and procedures. 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: Other than a mandatory training, the work can be done during or outside of the typical work day. The vast majority of the work needs to be done throughout September and into early October. The project will be over before the clinic starts on October 23.

Criteria: Looking for 10-15 students. Suitable for all students. Iowa Legal Aid offices are currently closed and the work will be done remotely. ***Applicants should indicate on the application what days and hours they have available for the mandatory training.***

Iowa Legal Aid: General Intake

Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) serves eligible clients with a variety of civil legal problems. Including housing, employment, family law, domestic abuse protection orders, government benefits, and health care. To meet our clients' needs in these difficult times we are also operating a Covid-19 Legal Hotline, and Derecho Legal Hotline in partnership with several bar associations at the national, state, and local levels. www.iowalegalaid.org

Project information: Students will assist attorneys by interviewing clients, spotting issues, performing research, and drafting letters and other documents. Students may also be asked to file/copy documents, locate resources for a client, or assist attorneys in other ways. This project will be conducted remotely. It is anticipated that the primary work will take place during ILA office hours (8:30-5:00). Additional time for research and other follow-up on the cases can be scheduled if the student requests.

Agency Contact: Ericka Petersen epetersen@iowalaw.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Assist with prospective clients who call in from around the state. A student will gain experience doing live client intakes, and issue spotting. Students will first observe an attorney interview clients, and then begin to interview clients under the attorney's supervision. Students must be reliable and commit to at least five hours a week during office hours (8:30AM-5:00PM). Because of the training that will be needed, the agency requires volunteers to commit through the fall semester.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide students with training and other instruction regarding applicable law and procedures. Provide supervision and guidance as needed about intake procedures and other duties. 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 one attorney and work in teams of two to complete the intakes assigned to that attorney for the week. Students will need to coordinate with the attorney and other student to ensure coverage and supervision availability. Additional volunteer time is available upon request. Shifts must be arranged. **Because of the training that will be needed, the agency requires volunteers to firmly commit through the fall semester (ending with time to prepare for exams).**

Criteria: Looking for 5-6 students. Suitable for all students. Students must be able to commit to at least 5 hours and participate in a required training session. Iowa Legal Aid offices are currently closed and the work will be done remotely. **Applicants should indicate on the application what days and hours they have available to volunteer.**

Iowa Society of Healthcare Attorneys: Health Law Update (2Ls & 3Ls only)

The Iowa Society of Healthcare Attorneys (ISHA), a division of the Iowa Hospital Association, is comprised of attorneys who represent hospitals and other health care providers in Iowa.

www.ihaonline.org/Members-Groups/Personal-Membership-Groups/ISHA

Project Information: Assist in drafting Iowa health law case law update for annual statewide meeting of health care attorneys.

Agency Contact: Joseph B. Clamon, Assoc. VP for Legal Affairs, UIHC, at joseph-clamon@uiowa.edu & Alissa Smith, Dorsey & Whitney at smith.alissa@dorsey.com

Volunteer Responsibilities: ISHA's annual meeting provides the only annual case law update session focused solely on Iowa cases relevant to health lawyers. Student volunteers will work under the supervision of an ISHA member to review all Iowa Supreme Court cases and select ones within pre-determined categories for a more in-depth review. The in-depth review would include briefing the cases and preparing summaries of the cases. The in-depth review would also include research of additional information about the case, such as news media and a summary of the lower court proceedings. On a quarterly basis, volunteers will deliver a written product including categorizing, briefing, summaries, and additional research. ISHA members will deliver the presentation at the annual meeting; volunteers will be invited to attend. This project will provide exposure to health law and Iowa law, and a great opportunity to network with ISHA members.

Agency Responsibilities: An ISHA member(s) will oversee the project, provide direction on research, select cases for in-depth review, and give feedback on each quarterly report.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: The anticipated time commitment is 10-20 hours per month. Most work can be performed remotely.

Criteria: Up to four positions available. **Suitable for 2Ls or 3Ls**, particularly those with an interest in health law. Students willing to commit for the full academic year are preferred.

Iowa State Bar Association: Innovation & Outreach

The Iowa State Bar Association is a vibrant, progressive organization that provides Iowa attorneys with the benefits of professional association with their colleagues. Its benefits include continuing legal education, practice aids, interaction with the judiciary and legislature, participation in reform of the law and news regarding developments impacting the profession. In all, the ISBA includes approximately 8,000 lawyers and judges in Iowa's 99 counties and beyond.

www.iowabar.org

Project Information: Students assist the ISBA and its partners with innovation and community outreach efforts.

Agency Contact(s): Virginia Sipes, J.D., Innovation & Community Outreach Director, at vsipes@iowabar.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Volunteers may choose to work together as a team or independently. Student volunteers conduct research to further the development and implementation of innovation and community outreach projects. Duties include weekly research assignments. Opportunities will depend on project needs as they develop throughout the semester.

Agency Responsibilities: Assign and direct projects, be available as agreed upon for periodic progress checks. Provide students with an overview of projects and goals for the semester; give guidance about possible sources/strategies for research and project work; be clear about deadlines.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: The anticipated time commitment is 2-3 hours per week, but specific arrangements may be made based on schedules and other factors. Students will complete online training to assist them with their weekly, research assignments. An initial in-person meeting will be scheduled with students after project assignments are made. Regular web meetings will be scheduled as needed.

Criteria: Up to five positions will be available; L2 and L3 students preferred, especially those students who can work independently and are motivated to serve people experiencing barriers to accessing the civil legal services needed to navigate their daily lives. Facility with research (both legal and internet), writing, technology and community outreach is helpful.

Iowa Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission

The Access to Justice Commission was established by order of the Iowa Supreme Court in June 2016. The Commission's mandate is to identify and make recommendations to remove barriers to civil justice for low-income and disadvantaged Iowans. The Commission's reports were submitted to the Court in July 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 and contained numerous short- and long-term recommendations. The Commission meets quarterly in person or via videoconference.

Project Information: Volunteers will conduct background and legal research on legal services delivery in Iowa and other states, and may be assigned to perform research for Commission working groups.

Agency Contact(s): Brian Farrell, Commission Member & Co-Chair of the Rural Access Work Group, at brian-r-farrell@uiowa.edu

Volunteer Responsibilities: Volunteers will conduct research for the Commission or its working groups under the supervision of the contact. Work can be performed remotely. Work schedules will be determined by agreement of the volunteer and supervisor. A required initial meeting will be scheduled in early September and regular check-ins will be scheduled throughout the semester. Students may have the opportunity to participate in a regular Commission meeting during the year.

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

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: The anticipated time commitment is 2-4 hours per week, but specific arrangements can be made based on schedules and other factors.

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

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

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 appear in court to respond to the charges by entering a plea (guilty or not guilty) or by negotiating a plea agreement. Dates for the fall semester are September 3, September 17, October 15, November 19, and December 17. Fall 2020 hearings will be conducted remotely.

Agency Contact: Haley Huddleston, Assistant Johnson County Attorney, hhuddleston@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. Student must be a self-starter as they 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 September 3, September 17, October 15, November 19, and December 17.

Number of volunteers needed: One position is available. Suitable for a student with gumption who is interested in criminal law.

Kids First: Attorney Research Assistance

Kids First Law Center gives children a voice in custody, divorce, and other conflicts. Most of the legal research needed by Kids First is in the area of family law.

www.kidsfirstiowa.org

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

Agency Contact: Elizabeth Weyer Davis at elizabeth@kidsfirstiowa.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. Ideally, interested students would commit to taking two or more projects over the course of a semester. A confidentiality agreement must be signed by the law student. An initial meeting will be held at the start of the semester.

Criteria: Two positions are available. Volunteers will work remotely. 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.

State Public Defender – Cedar Rapids

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 Cedar Rapids office as needed, including case management and document/exhibit organization. A specific focus during the Fall 2020 semester will be assisting in the backlog of cases scheduled for trial. Duties may include reviewing and summarizing juror questionnaires, reviewing discovery materials, and other trial-related issues as they arise. The cases that are expected to receive priority for trials this fall are felony cases where the defendant is currently incarcerated. Volunteers may also work on misdemeanor cases as the need arises.

This project will primarily involve remote work, with meetings and communication via videoconference and/or email. The time commitment will be 2-3 hours per week, and the hours can be adjusted based on the availability of the volunteers and supervising attorney. There may be some work, however, that will require students to travel to the Cedar Rapids office located at 425 Second St. SE, Cedar Rapids.

Agency Contact: Katie Frank, kfrank@spd.state.ia.us.

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will assist public defender staff in the Cedar Rapids office as requested with filing, other case management tasks, and reviewing documents.

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 2-3 hours per week during set shifts at the SPD office in Cedar Rapids, to be determined by agreement with the supervisor.

Criteria: Up to two positions are available. Suitable for all students. ***Requires primarily remote work, but may include on-site work in Cedar Rapids (approximately 25 miles from Iowa City) on a weekly basis. Please note availability for on-site work in your application form.***