



Pro Bono Projects

Spring 2019

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 "Spring 2019 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 2019 projects are due by midnight on Wednesday, January 23.

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

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:

- Tuesday, January 29, from 2:30-4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 26, from 2:30-4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 26, from 2:30-4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 30, from 2:30-4:00 p.m.

This project requires travel to the Johnson County Courthouse.

Agency contact: Courtney Thomas-Dusing at cthomasdusing@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 required training at a time to be determined 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.

Criteria: Up to three positions are available. Suitable for all students, particularly those interested in family law. Preference to students who can commit to both semesters.

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 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 January 17, February 21, March 21, April 18, and May 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

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 January 17, February 21, March 21, April 18, and May 16.

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

Voting Rights Restoration Clinic (1Ls & 3Ls not in clinic)

Last semester, for the first time, students in the University of Iowa College of Law Legal Clinic participated in a Voting Rights Restoration Clinic (VRRRC) in Cedar Rapids. Inspired by that experience, the Clinic's FCD and CELP practice groups will be hosting a Johnson County VRRRC in Spring 2019 to assist people who have been convicted of a felony and are interested in the restoration of their voting rights.

Project Information: The Clinic is committed to serving indigent clients and allowing students the opportunity to gain practical experience in the legal field. Student volunteers will help organize and publicize the VRRRC; compile clients' criminal histories on Iowa Courts Online and work in conjunction with law students and faculty in the Legal Clinic to determine whether an individual is eligible for the restoration of her voting rights; meet with clients on the day of the VRRRC; and complete follow-up work, such as filing a voting rights restoration application with the Iowa Governor's Office. The VRRRC will be held on **Saturday, March 2, 2019** in the Boyd Law Building.

Agency Contact: Alison Guernsey at alison-guernsey@uiowa.edu; Daria Fisher Page at daria-fisherpage@uiowa.edu; Arianna Chronis at arianna-chronis@uiowa.edu

Volunteer Responsibilities: Student volunteers will be required to attend four training sessions/meetings during which they will learn about the components of the voting rights restoration application, relevant substantive law and history, and how to navigate various criminal record databases. The first two sessions will be scheduled according to the availability of the CLP volunteer groups. The second two sessions will be held from **2:20 – 4:20 p.m.** on **Thursday, February 14** and **Thursday, February 21**. On the day of the VRRRC, students will work in teams to meet with clients and discuss their criminal history, when they completed their sentence, and whether they have any outstanding court debt. The follow-up work will depend on each client.

Agency Responsibilities: The Clinic will provide training on the application components for restoration of voting rights, how to use Iowa Courts Online and the Iowa Department of Corrections' Offender Search, relevant substantive law and history, and how to establish an attorney-client relationship in a short amount of time. The Clinic will also provide all of the necessary materials for the day of the VRRRC and divide student volunteers into teams. After the VRRRC, the Clinic will divvy up and assign cases that require follow-up work.

Expectations/Time Commitment/Scheduling: Student volunteers are required to attend the training sessions, as outlined above, and the VRRRC on **Saturday, March 2**. Students are expected to work on multiple client files this semester, which may include any part of the process (the preliminary analysis, the client meeting, and follow-up work preparing the application). The time commitment for each will depend on the complexity of a client's particular criminal record and whether the client has any outstanding court payments.

Criteria: Up to ten positions are available. Only 1Ls and 3Ls not enrolled in the Legal Clinic may apply.