



Citizen Lawyer Program

Pro Bono Projects

Spring 2022

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 "Job Postings" and then look for "Spring 2022 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 2022 projects are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26.

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): Shefali Aurora at shefali.aurora@aclu-ia.org.

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will help complete a survey of local ordinances across Iowa to learn which towns and cities have ordinances that violate equal protection and free speech as assigned. 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.

Students may also be assigned research to support ongoing state policy initiatives, to be determined.

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.

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: Allison Heffern at allison@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.

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 with start-up details such as creating and fine-tuning intake forms and reviewing other 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 needs assistance in combining and organizing board made policies and procedures into an electronic handbook, and drafting a nonengagement letter template for minor clients. LLC understands that our clients succeed when they are supported on all fronts, so we want to continue to add resources to the resources page on our website. Student volunteers will assist in research for this resource gathering.

Organization Contact: Kendra Weston kendra@lavenderlegal.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will assist Attorney Kendra Weston by preparing or editing administrative forms for LLC and complete research projects which will then be turned into formal guides, lists, or brief memos.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide the student with an overview of the forms needed and any supporting documents to aid in the creation of those forms; 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: One student position available. Volunteers will work remotely. 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.

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, to be determined by agreement with the supervisor.

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

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

The VITA program is a part of the Johnson County Earned Income Tax Outreach Campaign, a project developed to support the financial security of working families in Johnson County by offering free tax preparation services.

Project Information: The VITA program is a program run by the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business to aid low to moderate income taxpayers in Johnson County in preparing and filing their taxes. The program runs from January until April and will be beginning virtually and moving in person later in the semester. It is an excellent opportunity for volunteers to develop one-on-one client interaction skills. All hours spent on the project, including training, will count toward community Boyd Services Hours.

Agency Contact: vita@uiowa.edu. The faculty advisor is Dr. Joyce Berg (joyce-berg@uiowa.edu)

Volunteer Responsibilities: There are two ways to participate. The first is as a preparer which requires IRS certification in tax topics. The second way is as an intake-specialist (greeter) which just requires passing a short IRS ethics certification.

Agency Responsibilities: VITA centers provide the necessary training, supervision and equipment to prepare tax returns. The centers are responsible for scheduling appointments with clients.

Expectations/Time Commitment/Scheduling: Law students self-train and are then provided additional training by Dr. Berg on specific site procedures.

Criteria: Past experience with taxes or accounting is not required, but a course in tax or experience preparing returns are preferred experience.