



Citizen Lawyer Program

Spring 2025 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 2025 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 2025 projects are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, January 29, 2025.

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 and drafting. Under supervision, the law student volunteers will assist the ACLU of Iowa in preparing open records requests and reviewing the documents received in response.

Organization Contact(s): Shefali Aurora at shefali.aurora@aclu-ia.org.

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will help prepare open records requests to school districts related to ongoing advocacy to reduce policing in schools.

Students will then review documents received in response and provide summaries of key data points in the policies to be used in ACLU advocacy. More helpful background information on this effort is available here: <https://www.aclu-ia.org/en/advocating-police-free-schools-iowa-toolkit/>.

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: Two 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: 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.cvl.org

Project Information: Student volunteers will assist with client intakes. 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. Students will work in one of two groups: foreclosure defense and general litigation.

Agency Contact: Dan Quarfoot at dquarfoot@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: CVLS prefers volunteers who will commit for the entire school year. The estimate time commitment is 15-20 hours each semester. Flexible scheduling.

Criteria: Up to three positions are available. Students should have some interest in legal aid work and be diligent and detail oriented.

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. *Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, Lingala, or Ukrainian/Russian 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, French, Haitian Creole, Lingala, or Ukrainian/Russian is especially valued. *Please indicate language proficiency on your application.*

Iowa Legal Aid: General Intake

Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) serves eligible low-income clients with a variety of civil legal problems. Including housing, employment, family law, domestic abuse, government benefits, consumer protection and special projects in disaster relief, criminal record expungement, and other legal needs largely unmet by the private bar. See www.iowalegalaid.org for more information about the organization.

Project information: Students will assist attorneys by interviewing clients, spotting issues, performing research, and gathering facts and documents. Students may also be asked to draft letters and other documents, to file/copy documents, locate resources for a client, or assist attorneys in other ways. Students will be exposed to a variety of legal issues. ***This project requires travel to the ILA offices at 125 S. Dubuque St., Ste. 4A Iowa City, IA 52240. It is anticipated that the primary work will take place during ILA office hours (8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.).*** Additional time for research and other follow-up on the cases can be scheduled if the student requests.

Agency Contact: Patrick Bigsby (pbigsby@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 participate in a training scheduled by the agency. Students will then observe an attorney's intake interviews with clients before beginning to interview clients themselves under the attorney's supervision. Students must be reliable and commit to at 3-4 hours a week during office hours (8:30 a.m. -5:00 p.m.), with specific shift times to be arranged based on student availability and office need. In order to ensure students receive the necessary training and exposure to as many practice areas as possible, 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. **The agency requires volunteers to commit through the fall semester (ending with time to prepare for exams).**

Criteria: Looking for 2 volunteers. Suitable for all students. Students will commit to 3-4 hours per week. Work will be performed at the Iowa Legal Aid office in Iowa City. ***Applicants should indicate on the application what days and hours they have available to volunteer for a 2-3 hour block of time at the ILA office during regular office hours.***

Iowa State Bar Association: 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 community outreach efforts.

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

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students participate in Zoom training about projects including production of short videos on a variety of legal topics and community resources. Students assist with community resource identification and short video production including virtual meetings with community organizers, lawyers and leaders. Willingness to spend on average 3 hours per week researching, drafting, reviewing and revising written public resource materials, short video scripts and slides. Opportunities will depend on project needs as they develop throughout the semester. We are asking for a commitment until November break but students may make alternate arrangements.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide students with training and other instruction regarding applicable law and project processes. Be available as agreed upon (email/phone/in-person via video conference) 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. Work can be completed remotely.

Criteria: Up to two positions available. Suitable for all students. Facility with research (both legal and internet), writing, technology and community outreach is helpful.

Iowa 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 (both representing children in delinquency cases and parents in child in need of assistance cases), and on appeal in criminal, juvenile 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, research, and document/exhibit organization. A specific focus 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.

This project provides some flexibility in remote vs. in-person work opportunities. There is much to be gained by students personally observing attorneys in action; however, there are tasks that can be completed remotely when necessary. 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. Volunteers are most needed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. We recommend students do not plan to schedule in-person work on Fridays.

Agency Contact: Ellen Ramsey-Kacena at eramseykacena@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 as well as observing and assisting at in-court appearances.

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 in Cedar Rapids, to be determined by agreement with the supervisor.

Criteria: Three positions are available. Suitable for all students. ***Likely to 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.***

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.

Justice101: Research+

Justice101's seeks to teach vulnerable populations their Constitutionally protected 4th Amendment rights when interacting with law enforcement while walking, in a vehicle, at home, and at school, while emphasizing the proper time and place to assert those rights. Justice101 accomplishes this through several classes: Street Law Fundamentals, aimed at teaching law students the Justice101 curriculum to enable law students to teach the class to other populations; Street Law Essentials, aimed at adults and college students; and Street Law Basics, aimed at high school and younger students. <https://www.justice-101.org/about-us.html>

Project Information: Students assist with research related to Justice101's curriculum and incorporating that information into external media, including social media and other communications. This project is primarily remote and students will usually be able to work at their own pace, but there may be opportunities to attend Justice101 presentations.

Agency Contact: Crystal Pound, crystal@justice-101.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will conduct research related to 4th Amendment rights when interacting with law enforcement while walking, in a vehicle, at home and at school.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide guidance as needed about 4th Amendment protections and its application as related to interactions with law enforcement, as well as overall goals of marketing to vulnerable populations. 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 at mutually agreed upon times based on the law student's academic schedule.

Criteria: One position is available. 2L/3L with research experience is preferred but not a requirement.

Muscatine Legal Services: Self-Help Family Law Clinics

Muscatine Legal Services (MLS) provides legal services to eligible clients (within certain income and asset parameters) to protect basic rights and assist in resolution of various civil legal problems. MLS assists clients in matters regarding family law, debt collection, government benefits, housing and employment. <https://muscatinelegal.com/>

Project Information: Law students will assist persons who are representing themselves in a divorce or custody proceeding using the forms provided by the Supreme Court of Iowa. Under the supervision of a volunteer attorney or MLS staff member, students will review forms with litigants and assist them in filling them out. Students will refer legal questions to the on-site attorney. **This semester's clinic will be scheduled on March 10 beginning around 5:00 P.M. in Muscatine. This project requires travel to Muscatine Legal Services, in downtown Muscatine, Iowa, but driving there and back will be reimbursed at the IRS mileage rate.**

Agency contact: Nate Legue at nate@leguelaw.com.

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students then meet one-on-one with self-represented litigants at the clinic to review forms and provide assistance in completing the required information. Students will refer questions to the supervising attorney. Students will complete required training early in the semester, and a self-study of provided materials prior to the training.

Agency responsibilities: MLS 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. Agency will provide dinner the night of the clinic.

Time commitment/Scheduling: Students will be expected to commit approximately a total of 6 to 10 hours to the project during the semester, including training time.

Criteria: Up to four positions are available. Suitable for all students, particularly those interested in family law.