

PRO BONO PROGRAM HANDBOOK

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW

PRO BONO --- PROGRAM



*"The welfare of the people
is the highest law."*

PRO BONO PROGRAM HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

"*Salus Populi Suprema Lex*" is Duquesne University School of Law's motto meaning the welfare of the people is the highest law. This is particularly fitting with respect to the Pro Bono Program. The Law School's faculty, staff, and students have a long tradition of serving the community and helping those in need. The Pro Bono Program at the Law School goes one step further by providing a structure through which students can recognize the professional obligation to serve the disadvantaged. Duquesne Law School's Pro Bono Program encourages and facilitates its law students to serve the public interest with the goal that these law students will then serve the public interest in their professional careers.

Contact Information

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PRO BONO PROGRAM GUIDELINES

HOURS REQUIREMENT

Students may complete a minimum of 50 non-mandatory hours (30 non-mandatory hours if you are graduating in 2015 or 2016) of pro bono service prior to graduation. Students can commence non-mandatory pro bono service in the second-full semester of the first year of law school and must complete the minimum 50 hours by the last day of classes of their final semester of law school.

CRITERIA OF PRO BONO SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

In order to satisfy the requirements of the voluntary Pro Bono Program, the pro bono service must be law-related. Students may not receive financial compensation or academic credit for services rendered. However, students may receive funds related to cost of living in connection with their service. Further, a licensed attorney site supervisor must adequately supervise and review any and all work. The service provided must be:

- a) Done on behalf of people who are not able to afford legal services, have limited access to legal services, or are underserved by the private bar, or
- b) Targeted at protecting the rights of an individual or individuals in situations raising important public interest concerns and/or important rights belonging to a significant and underserved segment of the public.

Judicial externships and government work, (except those organizations exclusively providing services to the indigent. Others will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.) including work for the district attorney, do not qualify for credit under our Pro Bono Program because they do not fall within the parameters of pro bono service by our definition.

A student may be required to apply for a Certified Legal Intern status from the Prothonotary of the State Supreme Court in order to perform certain work.

AWARDS

Students who meet the non-mandatory 50-hour (non-mandatory 30-hour) requirement will receive a Pro Bono Service Recognition Certificate. Students completing additional non-mandatory hours will receive a certificate acknowledgment based upon the total number of hours completed - 101-200 (61-120) will receive a Pro Bono Service Honors Certificate and 201+ (120+) will receive a Pro Bono Exemplary Service Certificate.

Students will be honored at a Pro Bono Fair sponsored by Allegheny County Bar Association-Public Service Committee and The Allegheny County Bar Foundation - Pro Bono Center.

PROCEDURES

PROJECT SELECTION

Students may research available pro bono opportunities listed under the Pro Bono Section on Symplicity. Students should select and sign up for a pro bono project and fill out the necessary applications on Symplicity, as required. They will then be contacted by the project coordinator to schedule service hours and project assignments. Hours will be logged in Symplicity and certified by the site supervisor or on school-provided timesheets, signed by the supervisor, and returned to Professor McCants Lewis at the Tribone Clinic.

For pro bono service projects outside of those listed on Symplicity, such as those arranged independently by the student, the student must contact Professor McCants Lewis before beginning the project in order to ensure that the service fulfills the requirements of pro bono service. The student and their supervisor will then be required to certify hours served via school-provided time sheets.

Please also keep in mind that if you plan on taking the Bar Exam in a state other than Pennsylvania, some states have mandatory requirements for pro bono service prior to being admitted to the bar. Requirements for qualifying pro bono service can be found on individual state Bar Association websites. Please contact the Pro Bono department if you have questions.

DUQUESNE / ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION / PITTSBURGH PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

The Law School has established a multiplicity of formal pro bono projects with public interest law organizations, non-profits, bar association pro bono clinics, and private attorneys. These opportunities are listed on the Pro Bono section of Symplicity. Students interested in participating in one of these programs must select and sign up for a pro bono project and fill out the necessary applications on Symplicity, as required.

Training sessions will be organized by the sponsoring organization or private attorney. Students are responsible for attending the scheduled training prior to taking work with the project.

COMMUNITY-BASED LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

Students interested in working individually with a community-based legal services organization must let the Student Pro Bono Coordinator and Faculty Pro Bono Coordinator know with which legal services organization that would like to work. Any student contacting the supervising attorney directly, must inform the Student Pro Bono Coordinator and Faculty Pro Bono Coordinator of their work with the organization to ensure accurate accounting of student service hours.

PROJECT REGISTRATION

Prior to starting their pro bono work, students must complete the necessary application and sign-up forms in Symplicity, as required. Please review the requirements listed in each posting. A copy of this form will be sent to their Supervising Attorney at the pro bono project. During the initial meeting with the supervising attorney, the student volunteer should be sure to discuss the project in detail and clarify deadlines, responsibilities, and the student's work schedule.

SUBMISSION OF FORMS FOR PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

Upon the completion of the 50 non-mandatory hours (30 non-mandatory hour) of pro bono service, as well as completion of time sheets or time logs in Symplicity and evaluation forms on Symplicity, all materials must be completed, at the latest, on the last day of classes of the student's final semester of law school.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All work completed on active cases with real clients is protected under the attorney-client privilege and must be kept confidential as required by law and PA Rules of Ethics. Confidential information relating to these cases may not be revealed without express permission of the client. Students are reminded to be vigilant in protecting client information and to preserve confidentiality.

All work provided in conjunction with the pro bono project must be completed in a timely and professional manner. If a student is unable to complete an assigned task, he or she should contact the supervising attorney immediately. Student must comply with all rules regarding academic integrity, including policies related to plagiarism. Further, any potential conflicts of interest or other ethical concerns must be brought to the attention of the supervising attorney immediately.

Students must record their own hours on Symplicity or by submitting school-provided time sheets to satisfy the Pro Bono Service Requirement. **Any misrepresentation of the number of hours completed will be subject to discipline under the Honor Code.** It is the student's responsibility to submit time sheets and evaluations in a timely manner to ensure that proper credit is received.

PRO BONO PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

All students may complete a minimum of 50 non-mandatory hours (30 non-mandatory hours if you are graduating in 2015 or 2016) of pro bono service prior to graduation for recognition.

What kind of project qualifies for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

In order to satisfy the requirements of the voluntary Pro Bono Program, the pro bono service must be law-related. Students may not receive financial compensation or academic credit for services rendered. However, students may receive funds related to cost of living in connection with their service. Please see page 3 for more detailed information on project requirements.

When can a student begin work towards the requirement?

Students can commence voluntary pro bono service in the second-full semester of the first year of law school.

When must a student complete their hours?

Students must complete the minimum 50 non-mandatory hours by the last day of classes of their final semester of law school to receive recognition.

How do students select a Pro Bono Project?

Students may research available pro bono opportunities listed under the Pro Bono Section on Symplicity. They may also arrange for an outside pro bono service project with approval from Professor McCants Lewis.

Can I get credit for training hours for a project that I complete?

Yes.

What if I performed pro bono service in the past that I would like to receive credit for?

Students should contact the Pro Bono department to arrange for certification of previous pro bono service projects. Certification is not guaranteed and will be subject to the project requirements listed on page 3.

Can I get credit for training hours for a project if I don't end up working on that project?

No. Training is connected to service and you may only get credit for training hours if you participate in the project.

Does work performed for a clinic or certain year-long externship programs qualify for credit toward the Pro Bono Service?

Yes, additional hours beyond the 280 hours required for clinics and certain year-long externship programs will qualify for credit for pro bono.

The applicable year-long externship programs are:

- Pennsylvania Innocence Project
- Public Defender Program
- Landlord Tenant Program

If I receive a stipend from the Public Interest Law Association, does work performed at my summer fellowship qualify for credit towards Pro Bono?

Yes. Any hours above those worked for pay will be recognized for voluntary pro bono service.