

PRO BONO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAW STUDENTS IN THE CHICAGO AREA

Law students can help meet the needs of low-income and other vulnerable people in our community through pro bono service. Pro bono not only helps people in need, but also allows students to develop legal skills, create a network within the legal community and gain the emotional satisfaction that comes with helping people in need. Law students at all levels can get involved, and additional opportunities are available for students with 711 licenses.

Law students can get involved in any of the ongoing pro bono opportunities listed below. Law students interested in internships, externships or clinical experience should start with their schools for more information about their programs. Law students may also contact any of the organizations listed in the [CBF Guide to Pro Bono Opportunities](#). Law students with questions should contact Angela Inzano at ainzano@chicagobar.org or 312-554-4952.

LIVEHELP OPERATOR

The LiveHelp Program is a chat service that allows people looking for legal information and self-help resources on IllinoisLegalAid.org to ask a remotely located LiveHelp volunteer for assistance in navigating the website. LiveHelp Operators empower more than 600 low-income IllinoisLegalAid.org visitors a month to resolve their own legal issues when they can't find or afford an attorney. LiveHelp volunteers provide direct person-to-person online help so that people in need of legal assistance can obtain the information they need to achieve more positive outcomes to their legal problems. Volunteers can participate from any computer with internet access.

Organization: Illinois Legal Aid Online (www.illinoislegalaid.org)

Practice areas: All areas

Opportunity type: Non-representation, educating the public about the law, technology

Skills acquired: subject matter experience

Skills required: All volunteers are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Completion of the required training (2 hrs.), then 2 hours per week.

Contact: Kyra Smalls at ksmalls@illinoislegalaid.org or 312-977-9047, ext. 26 to request training materials or to sign-up for an in-person training.

Training and support: Volunteers must attend a 2-hour orientation and conduct a 30-minute "practice chat" with the LiveHelp Program Coordinator prior to volunteering. The Coordinator provides volunteers with ongoing support.

LAW STUDENT INTAKE PROGRAM

Volunteers interview potential clients at CGLA offices and partner organization in Chicago. Following intake interviews, volunteers attend the weekly intake meeting at CGLA's office to present the potential client's information to staff, volunteers, and interns.

At the intake meeting, all staff and volunteers vote on which cases to accept, refer to other sources, or provide advice.

Organization: Cabrini Green Legal Aid (www.cgla.net)

Practice areas: General civil practice

Opportunity type: Non-representation, client intake/interview

Skills acquired: Client/witness interviewing

Skills required: All volunteers are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Each intake requires 4 hours, including the interview and intake meeting.

After training, volunteers are asked to commit to completing 3 intakes on their own.

Contact: Eric Zopf at ericzopf@cgla.net or 312.374.6191

Training and support: Volunteers attend a 2-hour orientation session at CGLA's office and then observe three intake sessions and the corresponding intake meeting before conducting intake interviews independently. CGLA's volunteer coordinator and staff attorneys provide support to volunteers.

EXPUNGEMENT AND SEALING HELP DESKS

Volunteers conduct criminal history research and provide consultations to individuals seeking to clear their criminal records through expungement and sealing. Volunteers meet with clients, read their criminal history or RAP sheets, determine their eligibility for relief, and help them file the necessary paperwork. The desk at the Daley Center is open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and Thursday from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The desk at the Markham Courthouse is open on Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Organization: Cabrini Green Legal Aid (www.cgla.net)

Practice areas: Expungement, sealing and other forms of criminal records relief

Opportunity type: Non-litigation, self-help desks

Skills acquired: Client counseling, client/witness interviewing

Skills required: All volunteers are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Completion of required training (4 hrs). Volunteers are then asked to commit to completing a minimum of six 3.5-hour sessions working at a Help Desk over 6 months, which can be scheduled at the volunteer's convenience.

Contact: Eric Zopf at ericzopf@cgla.net or 312.374.6191

Training and support: Volunteers are required to complete a two-part training orientation at CGLA's office (each training part is two hours for a total of four hours over two evenings) prior to volunteering. The volunteer coordinator and staff attorneys support volunteers.