

# PRO BONO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECENT LAW SCHOOL GRADUATES IN THE CHICAGO AREA

Recent law school graduates 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 recent graduates to develop legal skills, create a network within the legal community and gain the emotional satisfaction that comes with helping people in need. Recent law school graduates of all experience levels can get involved.

Additional pro bono opportunities can be found in the [CBF Guide to Pro Bono Opportunities](#) and at [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org). Recent law school graduates should feel free to contact any of the organizations directly. If you have questions or would like assistance getting involved, contact Angela Inzano at [ainzano@chicagobar.org](mailto:ainzano@chicagobar.org) or 312-554-4952.

## COOK COUNTY MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE MEDIATION PROGRAM

Volunteer attorneys represent homeowners in the Cook County Foreclosure Mediation program. Volunteers advocate for the clients' desired outcome in the negotiation and mediation processes only and do not file any pleadings or attend any court hearings. Volunteers first contact clients for an in-person or telephone interview, then contact the lender's attorney to attempt to negotiate a settlement before the actual mediation. The negotiation may take numerous telephone calls and coordinating updated documents. If no solution is reached, volunteers attend and negotiate on behalf of the borrower at the mediation. If an agreement is not reached at the first mediation, and further steps toward resolution are agreed upon, subsequent sessions may be required.

**Organization:** Chicago Volunteer Legal Services ([www.cvls.org](http://www.cvls.org))

**Practice areas:** Housing, mortgage foreclosure

**Opportunity type:** Non-litigation, mediation/arbitration

**Skills acquired:** Mediation, negotiation

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

**Time commitment:** Completion of the orientation (1 hr.) and 3-hour training, then 15–20 hours over 1–3 months.

**Contact:** Daniel Santrella at [cvls@cvls.org](mailto:cvls@cvls.org) or 312.332.7521.

**Training and support:** An in-person or recorded 3-hour training is required. CVLS also provides manuals and other ongoing support as needed.

## EVICITION DEFENSE

Volunteer attorneys will defend Chicago's low-income renters families in eviction court. Under the supervision of LCBH staff attorneys, volunteers will have the opportunity to handle all aspects of representation from start to finish, including client interviews, discovery, motion practice, settlement negotiations, court appearances, and both bench and jury trials. Because evictions are heard on an expedited schedule, cases may settle quickly or proceed to trial within a few months. Volunteers may also represent renters in non-litigation matters, such as landlord-tenant disputes, in order to help them avoid eviction filings.

**Organization:** Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing ([www.lcbh.org](http://www.lcbh.org))

**Practice areas:** Housing

**Opportunity type:** Litigation

**Skills acquired:** Client counseling, client/witness interviewing, motion practice, writing/drafting, negotiations, trial skills

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

**Time commitment:** Completion of the initial 1-hour training and then flexible.

**Contact:** Julie Pautsch at [jpautsch@lcbh.org](mailto:jpautsch@lcbh.org) or 312.784.3515.

**Training and support:** LCBH provides an initial 1-hour, in-person training on the basics of landlord-tenant law and eviction court practice. This training is offered based on need and demand. LCBH also provides volunteers with a resource manual, samples, and ongoing support.

## ADVICE AND REFERRAL HOTLINE

Volunteer attorneys answer calls on our legal hotline located in the CARPLS offices. Volunteers counsel clients, prepare documents, and make referrals to network organizations in the areas of landlord/tenant, consumer debt, and domestic relations law. Daily shifts: Monday – Friday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm or 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Evening shifts: Monday or Wednesday from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

**Organization:** CARPLS ([www.carpls.org](http://www.carpls.org))

**Practice areas:** Divorce/separation/annulment, landlord/tenant, consumer law

**Opportunity type:** Non-litigation, client intake/interview, advice, brief services

**Skills acquired:** Client counseling, client/witness interviewing, subject matter experience

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

**Time commitment:** 36-hour volunteer commitment requested after training.

**Contact:** Leslie Wallin at [volunteers@carpls.org](mailto:volunteers@carpls.org) or 312.421.4427

**Training and support:** CARPLS provides extensive training and support to volunteers in the form of online course work and hands-on training. CARPLS supervisors support volunteers during volunteer shifts and are always available to answer questions. Trainings are offered 10 times each year.

## PRO BONO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECENT LAW SCHOOL GRADUATES IN THE CHICAGO AREA, CONTINUED

### 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](http://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:** Eve Kleinerman at [volunteer@cgla.net](mailto:volunteer@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 2 hrs. – Total of 4 hours over 2 evenings) prior to volunteering. The volunteer coordinator and staff attorneys support volunteers.

### HOTLINE ATTORNEY

First Defense Legal Aid (FDLA) seeks volunteers to provide high quality pro bono legal representation to low-income adults and children arrested at Chicago police stations and suburban Cook County stations for some juvenile suspects. Operators answer a 24-hour hotline and call the volunteers when needed to represent people at the police station during their shift. Representation is limited to the station visit. Later, a public defender is appointed. Volunteers may help clients assert their Fourth Amendment right not to consent to a search, Fifth Amendment right to remain silent and Sixth Amendment right to counsel, interview witnesses, view line-ups, and protect clients from police misconduct.

**Organization:** First Defense Legal Aid ([www.first-defense.org](http://www.first-defense.org))

**Practice areas:** Criminal law

**Opportunity type:** Legal on call station house representation

**Skills acquired:** Client counseling, client/witness interviewing, client representation

**Skills required:** No criminal defense experience is required; all attorneys are competent to handle this matter after the training provided. Law students and graduates that are eligible for a 711 license may also volunteer.

**Time commitment:** Completion of the required training (2 hrs.). Volunteers are then asked to commit to two, 4-hour on-call shifts per month.

**Contact:** Email [volunteer@first-defense.org](mailto:volunteer@first-defense.org) with the subject line VOLUNTEER INQUIRY

**Training and support:** Volunteers are required to attend a 2-hour training about the rights of detained individuals. In-person trainings are offered twice per month and are available via recorded webcast. Licensed attorneys are available to answer questions during all volunteer shifts.