

REMOTE PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

For attorneys who are looking to give back while social distancing, below find the current listing of pro bono opportunities that are fully remote from training to service delivery. Please keep in mind that information is changing quickly, and we will keep this as up to date as possible.

Many organizations will have additional pro bono opportunities that can be done partially remotely, particularly if you have already been onboarded by that organization and/or if you can make an ongoing commitment to the matter as the courts re-open. For a comprehensive directory of pro bono opportunities in Illinois, see the [Online Pro Bono Opportunity Guide](#). If you have additional questions about pro bono generally, you may contact Samira Nazem at snazem@chicagobarfoundation.org.

FIXED TIME COMMITMENT PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

ADAPT (ADVANCE DIRECTIVES AND PROPERTY TRANSFERS)

Advise people in preparing Advance Directives and Property Transfers (Powers of Attorney for Health Care and Property, Living Wills, and Transfer on Death Instruments). Conduct telephone interviews with clients, prepare documents, and send them to client with instructions on how to execute.

- **Organization:** [Legal Aid Chicago](#)
- **Time Commitment:** 3-4 hours per case, including phone consultation, document preparation and correspondence with client.
- **Training/Support:** eLearning training in 3 segments which can be done remotely and at your own pace. Manuals, online resources, and other materials provided along with support from Legal Aid Chicago attorneys.
- **Contact:** Melissa Picciola, Director of Volunteer Services at mpicciola@legalaidchicago.org or 312-347-8338

CRIMINAL RECORDS RELIEF

Prepare petitions for expungement and sealing for clients who have been pre-screened by Legal Aid Chicago.

- **Organization:** [Legal Aid Chicago](#)
- **Time Commitment:** 3-4 hours per case, including phone consultation and document preparation.
- **Training/Support:** Training materials, online training video, sample forms and other materials provided along with support from Legal Aid Chicago attorneys
- **Contact:** Melissa Picciola, Director of Volunteer Services at mpicciola@legalaidchicago.org or 312-347-8338

CLIENT INTERVIEWS BY PHONE

Volunteers will brush up on their interviewing skills by conducting in-depth interviews to get enough information to evaluate the merits of a potential client's case. Before being sent to the volunteer, clients will be briefly screened for case type and financial eligibility. After the interview, the volunteer will send a Memorandum with the information obtained, copies of any documents the client sent, and the volunteer's thoughts on the case.

- **Organization:** [Chicago Volunteer Legal Services](#)
- **Time Commitment:** Varies
- **Training/Support:** CVLS will provide you with a Client Interviewing Guide, a simple interview checklist, and a staff attorney contact to consult with when necessary.
- **Contact:** Kristen Harrison at kharrison@cvls.org

CLIENT CHECK-INS BY PHONE

Volunteers will reach out to current and former clients to check in on their needs and concerns during the COVID-19 crisis, and to connect them with resources if necessary. Volunteers will also ask if clients are willing to participate in a short survey regarding their experience with CDEL and access to technology to help CDEL adjust its programming in the current months.

- **Organization:** [Center for Disability and Elder List](#)
- **Time Commitment:** 4 hours (approximately)
- **Training/Support:** Volunteers will participate in a short, remote survey training.
- **Contact:** Elisabeth Hieber at ehieber@cdel.org

ILLINOIS FREE LEGAL ANSWERS COVID-19 TASK FORCE

Illinois Free Legal Answers is a secure website where low-income Illinoisans can ask a lawyer for help with a civil legal issue. Volunteer lawyers then log onto the site at their convenience and answer questions waiting in the queue.

- **Organization:** [Public Interest Law Initiative](#)
- **Time Commitment:** Varies by complexity of the question
- **Training:** An online resource page including training videos, sample questions and answers, and Illinois Legal Aid Online's full range of substantive legal content.
- **Contact:** Brent Page at bpage@pili.org or at 312-832-5128

ILLINOIS LEGAL AID ONLINE CONTENT REVIEW

ILAO is a statewide website offering free legal information online. Legal Content Volunteers can share their time and expertise to help ILAO review and update the information on their website so it can continue to serve as a trusted resource for all Illinois residents. All work can be done remotely, and volunteers can set their own schedules for drafting, reviewing, and editing legal content and resources.

- **Organization:** [Illinois Legal Aid Online](#)
- **Time Commitment:** Volunteer can choose the size and complexity of the assignment.
- **Contact:** Andrew Sharp at asharp@illinoislegalaid.org

PROPERTY TAX SALE CALL PROJECT

Volunteer remotely to assist senior homeowners whose property taxes are up for sale at the upcoming tax sale. The Annual Property Tax Sale is scheduled for May 8, 2020; on this date, unpaid property taxes from 2018 will be auctioned off to tax buyers. Volunteers will make calls to seniors to let them know about the tax sale and counsel them on property tax exemptions they may be missing. Taxes auctioned at the sale incur steep interest rates and seniors who do not redeem the taxes from the buyer can lose their home.

- **Organization:** [Center for Disability and Elder Law](#)
- **Training/Support:** Training video will be provided and volunteers will use CDEL's script to alert seniors about their status. Each volunteer will receive a list of seniors to contact by phone. Volunteers are asked to draft and send any necessary follow up letters. If the volunteer does not have access to a printer, CDEL will assist with mailing letters.
- **Contact:** Amanda Insalaco at ainsalaco@cdelaw.org

REMOTE EMERGENCY ORDER OF PROTECTION HOTLINE

Provide brief legal services over the phone and prepare affidavits and pleadings for individuals seeking an order of protection. There is no ongoing case commitment required. Volunteers can also set up a regular volunteer shift on a weekly or monthly basis.

- **Organization:** [Ascend Justice](#)
- **Time Commitment:** Volunteers sign-up to be on-call for four hour shifts. Each case takes 2-4 hours including phone interview and document preparation.
- **Training/Support:** Training videos online, training manual, and sample order of protection forms provided. Ascend Justice attorneys available for questions and support.
- **Contact:** Kimberly Washington, Manager of Volunteer Services, at kwashington@ascendjustice.org

SNAP PRO BONO PROJECT

Attorneys and other legal professionals can provide telephone advocacy on behalf of food stamp recipients whose benefits have been denied or reduced.

- **Organization:** [Legal Aid Chicago](#)
- **Time Commitment:** Most cases are resolved with 3-4 hours over the course of 4-5 weeks, although some cases may take longer. Most cases can be resolved with phone calls and emails, although staff are available to take cases to hearing, as needed.

- **Training/Support:** Video CLE training and training manual provided
- **Contact:** Melissa Picciola, Director of Volunteer Services at mpicciola@legalaidchicago.org or 312-347-8338

LITIGATION PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

HELP CREATE A PATH TO CITIZENSHIP FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Help eligible immigrant children gain US citizenship by obtaining custody or guardianship orders in uncontested cases through this new “Virtual SIJS Clinic.” Although these uncontested cases will require one or two simple court hearings once the courts reopen, the prep work can be done remotely.

- **Organization:** [Chicago Volunteer Legal Services](#) & National Immigrant Justice Center
- **Training/Support:** CVLS and NIJC are working on a possible webinar training for the group. For those who would like to get started immediately, there is an online training available and volunteers can contact CVLS and NIJC staff for questions outside of clinic sessions.
- **Contact:** Rebekah Rashidfarokhi at rebekah@cvls.org

SUPREME COURT VOLUNTEER PRO BONO PROGRAM IN CRIMINAL APPEALS

Help the Office of the State Appellate Defender (OSAD) reduce the backlog in criminal appeals through a new Illinois Supreme Court pilot program in the First and Second Appellate Districts. Pro bono attorneys will substitute for OSAD in direct appeals of both jury and non-jury cases.

- **Organization:** Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and the Office of the State Appellate Defender
- **Time Commitment:** This is a start-to-finish appellate pro bono project that requires a substantial time commitment.
- **Supervision/Training:** OSAD currently has available the following materials to assist volunteer attorneys in their preparation of briefs on appeal: Criminal Law Handbook and Monthly Digests, Handbook on Briefs and Oral Argument, and Illinois Supreme Court Pending Issues. These items are available on the [OSAD website](#). OSAD will also provide online video training on appellate advocacy to volunteer attorneys who are interested.
- **Contact:** Interested attorneys are asked to fill out the “Volunteer PRO BONO Program Attorney Application” [available online](#). The applicant will be asked to provide information necessary for participation, including appellate experience, willingness to work under the supervision of counsel approved as a volunteer attorney in the program, prior experience clerking for a Supreme Court or Appellate Court Justice, or working in the appellate division of a state or federal agency. Other criteria for approval as a volunteer pro bono attorney include up-to-date malpractice insurance, no ARDC disciplinary filings and five years’ experience as a licensed attorney with no ARDC disciplines. Applicants who do not meet the criteria may still participate if the applicant agrees to work under the supervision of an attorney who has the requisite experience.

FEDERAL COURT PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

BANKRUPTCY HELP DESK

Answer clients' questions about bankruptcy in general or their cases in particular, prepare forms and draft motions. For the time being, all appointments will be conducted by phone.

- **Organization:** [Legal Aid Chicago](#)
- **Time Commitment:** Recurring 3-4 hour shifts
- **Training/Support:** At least one year of experience practicing bankruptcy law required. A 900-minute online training video can be watched at home.
- **Contact:** Melissa Picciola, Director of Volunteer Services at mpicciola@legalaidchicago.org or 312-347-8338

THE WILLIAM J. HIBBLER MEMORIAL PRO SE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Assist pro se litigants in federal court by reviewing documents, providing guidance on the discovery process, and assisting them through all phases of litigation. Currently, all appointments will be conducted by phone.

- **Organization:** [Legal Aid Chicago](#)
- **Time Commitment:** One 3-hour shift per month.
- **Training/Support:** 3-5 years of federal court experience required; experience in employment discrimination law is helpful, but not required. Work with an experienced volunteer, receive helpful materials, as well as logistical support from Legal Aid Chicago staff.
- **Contact:** Melissa Picciola, Director of Volunteer Services at mpicciola@legalaidchicago.org or 312-347-8338