

Equal Justice Works

Law Student Pro Bono: The Basics

This guide is designed to give you all of the resources you need to learn about law school pro bono! Student pro bono provides hands-on legal skills for law students, much needed legal services to the community, and instills a sense of professional responsibility early in your career.

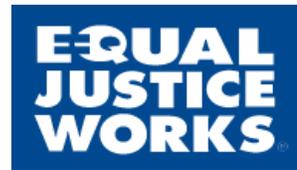


General Student Pro Bono Information

The American Bar Association has a copy of the ABA Model Rule 6.1 governing pro bono legal services [here](#), and also includes a [helpful page](#) on the basics of pro bono work and a section dedicated to [Public Service and Pro Bono Career Resources](#).

The [National Center for Access to Justice](#) at Cardozo Law School also maintains an excellent Law Student Pro Bono page with background and information and resources.

Check with your career counselors to find out if your campus has a law school pro bono program already in place!



For three decades Equal Justice Works has created opportunities for public interest lawyers committed to building a more just society. We believe that the poorest and most vulnerable among us deserve the same access to justice and quality legal representation as the privileged. To achieve this, we offer a continuum of opportunities for law students and lawyers that provide the training and skills that enable them to provide effective representation to underserved communities and causes.

Finding Pro Bono Opportunities

On PSJD.org, you can use the [Advanced Search](#) feature to search for “Student Pro Bono” opportunities under the Job Type section. PSJD also maintains a list of websites that feature law student pro bono opportunities on their [Student Pro Bono Resources](#) page.

ProBono.net has a [National Pro Bono Opportunities Guide](#) that maps out volunteer opportunities by state.

Your law school may also be able to point you in the direction of local student pro bono opportunities. Remember, law students can not receive compensation (neither income nor academic credit) for completing their pro bono work.

Some law schools may require a certain number of hours of pro bono work to graduate. View your law school’s pro bono page or talk to a career counselor to learn if your pro bono hours are necessary for graduation. You can view the [ABA’s Student Pro Bono Definitions](#) page to learn more about law student pro bono requirements.

If you are still unclear about law school pro bono, [see the ABA’s handout, *Everything You Wanted to Know About Law School Pro Bono But Were Afraid to Ask*](#).

Starting a Student Pro Bono Project

Before creating your own pro bono opportunity, first examine what pro bono opportunities your law school offers. Law schools create their programs based on a few different factors, including the size of the city where your school is located, the socioeconomic conditions in the area, the financial resources available for programs, and the interests of students and faculty.

Each law school has its own unique set of pro bono opportunities. Some student pro bono programs are student run organizations, which can require a longer time commitment, while others involve a weekly fall or spring alternative break. For descriptions of law school pro bono programs, see the [ABA’s Directory of Law School Public Interest and Pro Bono Programs](#).

If your law school offers limited opportunities for pro bono work, there are a few steps you can take to create your own.

- Connect with your law school professionals to address the need for student pro bono opportunities.
- Reach out to attorneys and organizations who have available pro bono work and are willing to supervise law students.
- Get other law students involved and make sure everyone is provided with the necessary guidelines and training to participate.

For more information on what you can do to start your own law school pro bono organization, see the ABA’s [Building and Sustaining An Effective Law School Pro Bono Program With a Baker’s Dozen Tips](#) and Susan J. Feathers of Albany Law’s [5 Steps to Launching a Law School Pro Bono Program](#).