



Pro Bono Projects Fall 2023

Each semester, Drake Law students can volunteer to provide meaningful law-related assistance to non-profit and government agencies. These Pro Bono Projects provide you with an opportunity to gain experience in a legal setting, develop skills, network with practicing lawyers and provide public service. Each Pro Bono Project has a separate description that includes information on the agency, project duties, expected time commitment, scheduling requirements and number of positions available. Unless otherwise noted, positions are open to 1Ls, 2Ls and 3Ls. You should carefully review the project descriptions and then email the listed contact.

Questions regarding Pro Bono Project application process should be directed to Carole Tillotson, Director of Career Development, carole.tillotson@drake.edu



State Public Defender of Iowa– Des Moines

The State Public Defender of Iowa (SPD) coordinates provision of legal representation to indigent persons under arrest or charged with a crime, in juvenile cases, and on appeal in criminal and post-conviction relief cases. This legal representation is provided through SPD offices or through private attorneys who contract with the SPD or who are appointed by the Court. By specializing in criminal defense work and juvenile matters, public defenders, investigators, and support staff provide high-quality, efficient, cost-effective legal representation to indigent clients.

<https://spd.iowa.gov/>

Project Information: Students assist with the operations of the SPD's Des Moines Adult Office as needed, including case management and document/exhibit organization. A specific focus will be assisting in the backlog of cases scheduled for trial. Duties may include reviewing and summarizing juror questionnaires, legal research and writing, reviewing discovery materials, and other trial-related issues as they arise.

This project provides some flexibility in remote vs. in-person work opportunities. There is much to be gained by students personally observing attorneys in action; however, there are tasks that can be completed remotely when necessary. The time commitment will be 2-3 hours per week, and the hours can be adjusted based on the availability of the volunteers and supervising attorney.

Agency Contact: Email Michael Jones mjones@spd.state.ia.us

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will assist public defender staff in the Des Moines office as requested with filing, other case management tasks, and reviewing documents as well as observing and assisting at in-court appearances.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide guidance as needed about protocol, case management and intake procedures. Be available to the student and law school as agreed upon (email/phone/in-person) for periodic progress check-in. Contact the law school coordinator to discuss any concerns with the volunteers or the program.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: Students are expected to commit to 2-3 hours per week during set shifts at the Des Moines Adult Public Defender's Office, to be determined by agreement with the supervisor.

Criteria: Up to two positions are available. Suitable for all students.

Iowa Legal Aid: Eviction Data Project

Iowa Legal Aid (ILA) serves eligible clients with a variety of civil legal problems. Including housing, employment, family law, domestic abuse protection orders, government benefits, health care, and collateral consequences. Over the last several years evictions in Iowa have skyrocketed, with 2023 breaking records for the most evictions ever in the state. Since 2020 Iowa Legal Aid has opened six eviction diversion help desks inside of courthouses in Iowa's most populated counties and has been collecting data about evictions across the state in order to analyze outcomes, spot issues and trends, train our staff and do media outreach. www.iowalegalaid.org

Project information: Some change occurs from the top down – e.g. major litigation, legislation, and rulemaking. However, true and lasting change requires at least as much work from the ground up, e.g. studying and understanding how problems affect individuals, and how those problems implicate the law. Increasingly, Iowa Legal Aid is engaging in projects that apply law to data to advocate for low-income Iowans on the systemic issues that affect their lives and entrench cyclical poverty.

We are looking for student volunteers to continue to track and analyze evictions statewide. Through this volunteer opportunity student volunteers will learn about evictions and eviction law in Iowa, how to use Iowa's judicial filing system, and review and analyze court filings. This work will help further Iowa Legal Aid's ability to track important data related to the current eviction crisis and bring attention to major issues, including the disproportionate impact evictions have on families of color, women, and those with disabilities as well as the difference legal and financial resources can make in preventing eviction.

Students who take part in this project would be well poised to take on other positions, such as extern and intern positions in the future.

Agency Contact: Ericka Petersen epetersen@iowalaw.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Attend two trainings: Friday, September 8, from 2-3 PM at Iowa Legal Aid (Eastdale Plaza, 1700 South First Avenue, Iowa City) and Friday, September 15, from 2-3 PM at Drake Legal Clinic (exact location TBD). Willingness to spend 1-2 hours per week reviewing eviction court records and inputting data. We are asking for a commitment until Thanksgiving break.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide students with training and background information about Iowa Legal Aid, the eviction process, and applicable law and procedures. Be available as agreed upon (email/phone/in-person) for periodic progress check-in. Contact the law school to discuss any concerns with the volunteers or program.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: Other than the mandatory trainings, the work can be done during or outside of the typical workday and can be done remotely. We would ideally ask that students are willing to commit 1-2 hours weekly on average until Thanksgiving break begins.

Criteria: Looking for 10 students. Suitable for all students.

Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice

Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice ("IowaMMJ") is a state-wide non-profit organization that offers free legal counsel and representation to low-income immigrants and refugees and their families in Iowa.

Project Information: The work would include screening new clients, assistance with background checks, reviewing immigrant and refugee government records (obtained through FOIA requests), conducting research, and assisting clients in evidence collection and application preparation.

Agency Contact: Email Ann Naffier, Legal Director anaffier@iowammj.org

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will assist staff on various topics. Students are expected to be responsive to the supervising attorney.

Agency Responsibilities: Provide guidance as needed about protocol, case management and intake procedures. Be available to the student and law school as agreed upon (email/phone/in-person) for periodic progress check-in. Contact the law school coordinator to discuss any concerns with the volunteers or the program.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: IowaMMJ has four positions available for law students who could commit to 3-5 hours a week.

Criteria: Capped at 3-4 students. Suitable for all students. An interview with IowaMMJ is required for these positions, and once accepted, we will provide training.

Iowa Center for Children's Justice- Divorce Workshops for Kids

ICCJ offers educational workshops to school-age children of divorcing parents to help them understand and cope with their parents' separation and divorce. The workshops give children a confidential place to talk about their feelings. Workshops consist of fifteen children grouped together by age: 6-9, 10-12, and 13-16. The two-hour workshops are interactive using artwork, games, videos, and discussions to get children comfortable and engaged in conversation.

Project Information: Student volunteers will lead the workshops by reviewing the age-appropriate curriculum, familiarize the materials, initiate conversations with the children before class, co-facilitate the session, help supervise and manage children with special needs/discipline/behavioral problems, report any follow-up suggestions to staff member, help encourage participation for every child, use gender inclusive language and provide feedback to ICCJ staff on how to improve the workshop classes.

Agency Contact: Email Sarah Witt sarah@iaccj.org

Workshop goals: Provide youth with a safe and confidential place to discuss their feelings about divorce; let children know they are not alone, and the divorce is not their fault; give kids practical skills to handle common divorce scenarios and adjust to family changes; clarify misconceptions and set age-appropriate expectations for the legal process; our co-facilitator volunteers help us to carry out these goals and, together, we have the opportunity to positively impact children in a very direct way.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: We could use eight volunteers and ask for two hours/month. (One two-hour workshop commitment per month) You are welcome to do more if you'd like. Open to all class levels. **Fall workshop dates: September 21st & 26th, October 5th & 24th, and November 9th and 28th.**

12th Annual Richard Calkins Mock Trial Invitational – October 20-22

Judges needed. This will be an in-person event.

Contact: Hannah Andersen, Assistant Tournament Director, at calkins.invitational@gmail.com.

Volunteer Info: They are looking for volunteers with legal or mock trial experience to help judge. Light meals and snacks will be provided.

Expectations/Time commitment/Scheduling: One round is roughly 3 hours. There are four (4) rounds total, but you don't have to judge all the rounds.

Use this [Google Form](#) to sign up for one or more rounds.

Tentative Schedule:

Friday 10/20

- Trial 1 - 6:00pm

Saturday 10/21

- Trial 2 - 9:00am
- Trial 3 - 2:00pm

Sunday 10/22

- Trial 4 - 9:00am

Criteria: Suitable for all students.

CADY DAY OF SERVICE

Friday, October 20, 2023, The Cady Day of Public Service will bring the state legal community together to honor and to celebrate the life and legacy of Justice Cady and his commitment to public service, access to justice, and civil rights.

Project Information: Rough estimates indicate that events held as part of the inaugural Cady Day impacted well over 10,000 individuals through community service, legal clinics and educational programming. Click [here](#) for more information

Contact: To sign up for a volunteer event, click [here](#).
Questions can be addressed to Terri Howard, theresa.howard@drake.edu

Volunteer Responsibilities: Students will select a volunteer activity to participate in October 20.

Volunteers for Vets

Volunteer opportunities with veterans through an internal program of the Drake Legal Clinic. Includes one-day volunteer options for Stand Down for Vets day in the fall.

Agency Contact: Email Professor Robert Rigg robert.rigg@drake.edu if you'd like to participate in Stand Down. See below.

Criteria: Suitable for all students.



Great *pro bono* Opportunity:

Help Veterans with their legal issues

Saturday, September 17

8:00-12:00

Open to all classes—1Ls Welcome

Email Professor Bob Rigg to RSVP

Robert.rigg@drake.edu

Meet at 8:00 at Drake Legal Clinic to carpool