

Boston College Law School Pro Bono Program



*Student Handbook
2009 – 2010*

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INTRODUCTION

As a Jesuit institution, Boston College Law School prides itself on its commitment to public service. Many BC Law students participate in pro bono work each year. They do so for leadership development, academic training, skills development, career preparation, and community service.

Recently, a group of students and administrators recognized the need to centralize pro bono activities at BC Law, to encourage more students to explore pro bono opportunities, and to provide much deserved recognition for those students serving the community through pro bono work.

The 2007-2008 academic year marked the beginning of a new and exciting program here at BC Law. In August 2007, we joined many of our peer institutions by unveiling an optional Pro Bono Program.

The mission of the Pro Bono Program is to shape law students into lawyers who are committed to public service.

The objectives of the Program are to:

- 1) Benefit BC Law by supporting the school's mission and Jesuit tradition, and appealing to prospective students interested in public service;
- 2) Benefit BC Law students by providing opportunities to develop hands-on experience, critical lawyering skills, relationships with agencies and firms, exposure to various areas of law, and a greater understanding of the importance of pro bono work and public service;
- 3) Benefit lawyers and public service agencies by providing them with the opportunity to mentor law students, as well as assistance with their pro bono work and public service; and
- 4) Benefit the community by providing legal assistance to disadvantaged individuals unable to access adequate legal representation.

The Program works to achieve these objectives by:

- 1) Providing students with pro bono opportunities and helping facilitate their search for placements through email announcements and Symplicity postings;
- 2) Recognizing students who perform pro bono work; and
- 3) Organizing on-campus events, such as pro bono fairs and speakers, to promote pro bono work.

We hope that you participate in this exciting opportunity!

~ BCLS Pro Bono Program Board of Directors

REQUIREMENTS

1) Pro Bono Pledge:

- Even if you are not yet ready to accept a pro bono placement, but think you will in the future, we encourage you to sign the Pro Bono Pledge. By doing so, you commit to contribute at least 50 hours of law-related community service through pro bono work while at Boston College Law School. We will keep the form on file for you in the Career Services Office.
- Participating students must sign a pledge stating their commitment to honestly report their pro bono hours.

2) Placements:

- Placements must involve law-related activities, which may include work with nonprofits, government agencies, pro bono departments of law firms, private attorneys conducting pro bono work, student organizations, Semester in Practice, and most in-house clinics. Non-legal placements do not count toward pro bono recognition.
- You may count hours accumulated from independent studies and Semester in Practice, assuming they meet all other requirements.
- The work must be free of charge or at a significantly reduced rate for clients.
- Work must be unpaid (including work-study, stipends, fellowships, etc.) but may in certain circumstances be done for academic credit, as described below.
- Work must be with clients who have limited access to legal representation, organizations who advocate for populations with limited access to legal representation, or agencies that work in the public's interest.
- You must submit a complete Placement Initiation Form and have your placement approved before you can begin to accumulate hours in that placement. Placements listed on pages 5-7 are pre-approved.

3) Accumulating Hours:

- Hours accumulated from pro bono work-related trainings and meetings with supervisors as well as related research and writing and other legal assistance, may be counted toward a participant's hours. Time spent traveling to and from placements will not count.
- Although we encourage students to submit their hours with the Pro Bono Program once a month, students must submit pro bono hours no later than: September 1st for summer hours; January 1st for fall hours; and May 1st for spring hours.
- First-year students are permitted to record a maximum of 10 hours of pro bono work during their semester year at Boston College Law School; there is no limit on the number of hours during second semester.
- When a student receives academic credit for their pro bono work, they may also receive credit towards their pro bono pledge. However, they may only claim hours for pro bono work done for academic credit once. A maximum of 30 pro bono hours may be recorded for a clinical or unpaid public interest law internship for which a student is receiving academic credit. In other words, even if a student does more than one clinic or Semester in Practice in their 2L and 3L years, they are only entitled to a

total of 30 hours of credit towards the pro bono pledge. Students must submit a Placement Initiation Form and a work log.

- Legal work done on school-sponsored service trips may count for up to 20 hours of pro bono service. Students must submit a Placement Initiation Form and a work log.

4) Supervision:

- All placements must be supervised.
- A student's supervisor must sign a Placement Initiation Form and work logs.

RECOGNITION

We believe that students who demonstrate a commitment to pro bono work should be recognized for their efforts. The following levels of recognition are provided for students who fulfill their pro bono pledges:

- 1) 50 hours of pro bono work accumulated at time of graduation
 - Letter from Dean of BC Law School
 - 2) 75 hours of pro bono work accumulated at time of graduation
 - Letter from Dean of BC Law School
 - Recognition for "Pro Bono Distinction" at awards ceremony during graduation weekend
 - 3) 100 hours of pro bono work accumulated at time of graduation
 - Letter from Dean of BC Law School
 - Recognition for "Pro Bono Excellence" at awards ceremony during graduation weekend
 - Special recognition at graduation
- * There may be additional recognition for outstanding pro bono service

In addition, an annual reception will take place for all students who logged hours toward their pledge the previous academic year.

PLACEMENTS

For a complete list of potential placements visit the Pro Bono Program website www.bc.edu/law/probono. To view requests for pro bono placements visit Symplicity (<https://law-bc-csm.symplicity.com/students/>). First-year students typically do not have access to Symplicity until November of their first year. For those wishing to view placements on Symplicity, please contact Career Services.

The following is a sample list of agencies students may contact to try and arrange pro bono placements. All placements on this list are pre-approved for the Pro Bono Program. For these placements, students must still submit a Placement Initiation Form before starting work for which they will accumulate hours, but need not wait for approval from the Board.

Boston College Law School
Black Law Students Association
Boston College Legal Assistance Bureau

Civil Litigation Clinic
Criminal Justice Clinic
Housing Law Clinic
Immigration Law Clinic
Law School-sponsored Spring Break Trip
Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project
Shelter Legal Services
Women and the Law Clinic

Nonprofits and Legal Services Agencies

Aid to Incarcerated Mothers
AIDS Action Committee
Alternatives for Community and Environment
Anti-Defamation League
Battered Women's Resources, Inc.
Bet Tzedek
Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services
Cambridge Community Services
Casa Myrna Vasquez, Inc.
Center for Law and Education
Center for Public Representation
Centro Presente
Children's Law Center of Massachusetts
Children's Legal Services, Inc.
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Clean Air Taskforce
Community Action, Inc.
Community Legal Services and Counseling Center
Court Appointed Special Advocates Program
Criminal Justice Institute
Disability Law Center
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Family Advocacy Program – Boston Medical Center
Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders
Greater Boston Legal Services
Hale and Dorr Legal Services Center
Harvard Legal Aid Bureau
Harvard Prison Legal Assistance Project
Health Law Advocates
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights
Legal Advocacy and Resource Center
Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
Massachusetts Citizens for Children
Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education
Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services
Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation
Massachusetts Social for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Mediation Works, Inc.
Middlesex County Inmate Legal Services

NAACP
National Consumer Law Center
National Environmental Law Center
Neighborhood Legal Services
South Middlesex Legal Services
Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts of Massachusetts
Volunteer Lawyers Project
Youth Advocacy Project

Government Agencies

Boston Fair Housing Commission
Boston Office of Civil Rights
Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Committee for Public Counsel Services
County District Attorney Offices
Federal Public Defender Office
Massachusetts Council for Public Justice
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Massachusetts Department of Social Services
Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants
Massachusetts Office of Business Development
Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

* Pro Bono placements are also available at public interest law firms, private law firm pro bono departments, bar associations, and with private attorneys.

SPECIAL MESSAGES

Message to First-Year Students

Should you participate in the Pro Bono Program? The answer is maybe.

Many first-year students have had very meaningful *pro bono* experiences, and some say it provided their best "grounding" as they went through their first year of law school. Though the first year of law school is difficult, participating in *pro bono* work has tremendous benefits.

On the other hand, during your first semester you are busy getting settled and do not yet know how much time you need to study in your new environment. As you progress through your legal education, you will gain a better sense of the time you need to devote to studies.

Many first-year students wonder how much they can contribute to *pro bono* work, the answer is a lot! Although you are just beginning your legal career, many of the skills you possess will be put to good use and, with mentoring, your legal skills will quickly develop.

The bottom line is, whatever the pros and cons, over the years, first-year students really enjoy *pro bono* work and they participate in large numbers. Don't feel pressured to jump right in, but, if you do, we welcome you. Just make sure that you carefully select

what you commit to, so that you do not shortchange either yourself or those you serve in the community.

Please note that first-year students are only permitted to record a maximum of 10 hours of *pro bono* work during their first semester.

All Students

Do you know of an organization that would be an excellent pro bono placement? Have you worked for an attorney doing public interest or pro bono work who might be a great supervisor? If so, please contact a Board member about making the organization or attorney part of the Pro Bono Program.

Student Pro Bono Entrepreneurs

Would you like to develop a group pro bono project? Boston College Law School has enjoyed many successful student group pro bono efforts. Please feel free to contact Dean Wylie (wylie@bc.edu) if you would like her assistance in designing a new group project.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Placement

Does the pro bono work have to be performed with an organization, agency, or firm?

No. Although pro bono work must be supervised, it may also be performed with independent, individual attorneys.

How am I placed in a pro bono position?

Students are encouraged to arrange their own placements by using the list of organizations, agencies and firms from the Pro Bono Program website (www.bc.edu/law/probono) or by applying for a position posted on Symplicity (<https://law-bc-csm.symplicity.com/students/>).

I'm having trouble arranging a placement. Who can help me?

Visit Career Services.

Do I have to get my placement approved before starting the pro bono work?

Yes. You must complete a Placement Initiation Form before starting your pro bono work.

Recognition

I did pro bono work last year. May I count it towards my recognition?

No, because counting hours retroactively bypasses the approval process and poses a challenge verifying hours.

Will hours worked during a clinical course count toward my recognition for pro bono work?

Yes, a maximum of 30 hours of service performed for credit can be applied to the pro bono requirement.

The firm at which I'm working requires its interns to perform pro bono work. May I count those hours toward my recognition?

No, because typically the hours students in paid internships or jobs spend doing pro bono work is included in their pay.

I volunteer for a nonprofit (or government agency), but I do not do legal work. Can those hours count toward my recognition?

No. Only legal-related pro bono work may count toward recognition.

I interned (or worked) at a nonprofit or legal services organization, but I received a stipend. Can I count those hours toward recognition?

No. Only unpaid pro bono work will count toward recognition.

I participated in a Law School- sponsored Spring Break trip. How many of those hours can count toward recognition?

Up to 20 hours.

I assisted with pro bono work at a firm (or for a firm attorney). Can those hours count toward recognition?

Yes, assuming it fulfills the other requirements.

Can time spent in judicial internship courses (observation) count toward my recognition?

No.

Miscellaneous

Is the Pro Bono Program mandatory for Boston College Law School students?

No.

What happens if I pledge to participate in the Pro Bono Program but then decide not to do it?

While we strongly encourage students to carefully consider their decision to participate and to remain committed, there are no repercussions for not being able to fulfill the full amount of the pledge. However, if a student commits to a pro bono placement and then do not fulfill the obligations of his or her commitment, (s)he will be prevented from further participation in the Pro Bono Program. It is critical that Boston College Law School maintains its reputation in the community.

Where do I turn in my Pro Bono Program paperwork?

Boston College Law School Career Services Office (East Wing 210)

How do I get more involved in the Pro Bono Program?

The Pro Bono Program invites all students to attend its events throughout the year, including speaker panels, the fall Pro Bono Fair, and the annual reception. Students are encouraged to submit information regarding past placement experience for future volunteers. We are also always looking for students who have a great deal of experience doing pro bono work and are committed to promoting pro bono work at BCLS to be on the Board of Directors.

Are there other students with whom I can speak who have done pro bono work before?

Yes. Email Kate Devlin Joyce at Devlink@bc.edu for the names and contact information of students who share similar interests.

Can 1L's participate in the Pro Bono Program?

Yes. However, 1L's are limited to 10 hours of pro bono work, in the first semester.

* Please contact Kate Devlin Joyce at Devlink@bc.edu with any additional questions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact Information

For more information, please visit the Pro Bono Program website (www.bc.edu/law/probono).

Please email probono@bc.edu with any additional questions.

Board of Directors

Kate Devlin Joyce, Associate Director of Public Interest Programs

Maris Abbene, Assistant Dean for Career Services

Dean Norah Wylie, Dean for Students

Erin Cox, 3L

Moire Dobransky, 2L

Anna Tavis, 2L

1L representatives TBD (if interested please contact Kate Devlin Joyce at Devlink@bc.edu)



BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL PRO BONO PROGRAM

Pro Bono Pledge

- 1) I recognize the obligation of lawyers to contribute to the public good. In keeping with this professional obligation, I pledge to volunteer a minimum of 50 supervised hours of law-related pro bono work that is provided free of cost to disadvantaged or underserved populations.***
- 2) I pledge to report my pro bono hours accurately.***
- 3) I pledge to represent Boston College Law School by acting professionally and honoring the commitments I make to my supervisor.***

Signature

Year/Section

Date

Print Name

Preferred email address

Please return all completed forms to the Career Services Office.
885 CENTRE STREET, NEWTON, MA 02459 • 617.552.4345 • probono@bc.edu • www.bc.edu/law/probono



**BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL
PRO BONO PROGRAM**

Placement Initiation Form

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Organization Name: _____

Name and Title of Supervisor: _____

Expected Start Date: ___/___/___ Expected End Date: ___/___/___

Expected Hours Per Week: _____ Expected Total Hours: _____

Employer Type: Nonprofit Government Firm Private Attorney Other

Please indicate work type (you may select more than one):

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admin/Regulatory | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment/Labor | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AIDS/HIV Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder Law | <input type="checkbox"/> LGBT Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Education Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children’s Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Liberties | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoner Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Mental Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comm. Economic Dev. | <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Racial/Ethnic Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Prosecution | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Reproductive Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Defense | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death Penalty | <input type="checkbox"/> International | <input type="checkbox"/> Women’s Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights | _____ |

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return all completed forms to the Career Services Office.
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BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL PRO BONO PROGRAM

Pro Bono Work Log

Student Name: _____

Year (circle one): 1L* 2L 3L

* 10 hr. limit for 1L's in fall

Check one:

Clinic/Externship Name: _____ 30 toward recognition

Spring Break Name: _____ 20 toward recognition

Other (fill in below)

Date	Hours Worked (round to 0.25)	Description of Work
TOTAL:		

Student Signature and Date

Supervisor Signature and Date

Supervisor Name

Supervisor Phone or Email

To receive credit for your work, you must turn in a completed and signed work log to the Career Services Office by January 1st (for fall hours); May 1st (for spring hours); September 1st (for summer hours).

*Save a copy of this form for your records.
Please return all completed forms to the Career Services Office.*



BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL PRO BONO PROGRAM

Pro Bono Placement Evaluation

Date: ___/___/___

Placement: _____

Name and Title of Supervisor: _____

Employer Type: Nonprofit Government Firm Private Attorney Other

Dates of Pro Bono Service: From ___/___/___ to ___/___/___ Total hrs worked: _____ (___ hrs/wk)

Brief Description of Placement: _____

1) Please evaluate your experience:

	Poor	Satisfactory	Adequate	Excellent	Superior
Quality of assignment(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of training	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of supervision	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of working conditions	1	2	3	4	5
Value or impact to the community	1	2	3	4	5
Educational and professional value to you	1	2	3	4	5

2) As a result of this placement (check all that apply):

- I am more likely to do pro bono work when I am a lawyer.
 I am less likely to do pro bono when I am a lawyer.
 I learned substantive law.
 I improved my legal skills (research, writing, interviewing, etc.).
 I was able to explore possible career paths.

3) I would recommend this placement to other students. Yes ___ No ___

Please explain: _____

4) Please fill in the following

Strengths of placement	Weaknesses of placement

4) May we make this information available to other students? Yes ___ No ___

5) Name (optional): _____ Email (optional): _____

Please return all completed forms to the Career Services Office.
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