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.IllinoisProBono.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 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
Practice areas: Housing, Mortgage Foreclosure
Opportunity type: Non-litigation, Mediation/Arbitration
Skills acquired: Mediation, Negotiation
Skills required: None
Time commitment: 15-20 hours over 1-3 months
Training and supervision: Volunteers participate in either an in-person or online training program. CVLS also provides volunteers with manuals and other support.

Contact: Daniel Santrella, 312.332.7521, cvls@cvls.org

CARPLS WORKS DAILY ADVICE AND NIGHTLINE EVENING ADVICE AND REFERRAL HOTLINES

Volunteer attorneys answer calls on our legal hotline weekdays from 9 am - 1 pm or 1 pm - 5 pm or on Wednesday evenings from 6 pm - 8 pm. Volunteers counsel clients, assist with document preparation and make referrals to other legal aid organizations in the areas of landlord/tenant, domestic relations, and consumer debt law.

Organization: CARPLS
Practice areas: Domestic Relations, Landlord/Tenant, Consumer Law
Opportunity type: Non-litigation, Client Intake/Interviewing/Advice
Skills acquired: Client Interviewing, Client Counseling
Skills required: None
Time commitment: CARPLS Works (Daytime): 36 hours over 10-week volunteer session; CARPLS Nightline (Evening): 36 hours over 1-year volunteer session (approximately two 2-hour evening shifts per month)
Training and supervision: CARPLS provides extensive training and support to volunteers. Before participating in the hotline programs, volunteers participate in 6 hours of in-person training, broken into two sessions over two weeks that cover substantive law, systems, and CARPLS policies. A supervisor is present during the volunteer's first shift to provide one-on-one support for first calls. CARPLS supervisors are assigned to each shift to support volunteers and to answer questions. Volunteer training programs typically take place every other month.

Contact: Leslie Wallin, 312.421.4427, volunteers@carpls.org

EVICITION DEFENSE PROJECT

More than 30,000 eviction cases are filed every year in Cook County. Without counsel, over 90% of tenants will be evicted from their homes after only a few minutes before the judge. With the help of pro bono attorneys, our Eviction Defense Project provides high-volume, no-cost legal services to families in eviction court, many times providing the last defense against homelessness. Our Pro Bono Coordinator will work with you to make sure your case assignment matches your experience level and availability. Cases may range from simple negotiation to more complex matters involving motion practice and possible trial.

Organization: Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing
Practice areas: Housing
Opportunity type: Litigation
Skills acquired: Client Counseling, Client/Witness Interviewing, Motion Practice, Writing/Drafting, Negotiations, Trial Skills
Skills required: None
Time commitment: Flexible
Training and supervision: Volunteers must attend a one-hour training on the basics of landlord-tenant law and eviction court practice. LCBH has a full-time pro bono coordinator who trains and supervises pro bono attorneys.

Contact: Samira Nazem, 312.784.3517, snazem@lcbh.org

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CGLA EXPUNGEMENT HELP DESKS AT THE DALEY CENTER & MARKHAM COURTHOUSE

Volunteers provide brief advice and service to individuals seeking to clear their criminal record through expungement, sealing, or executive clemency. Volunteers meet with clients, read their criminal history or rap sheets, determine their eligibility for expungement, sealing, or executive clemency, and help them file the necessary paperwork. The expungement help desk at the Daley Center is open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Markham Expungement Help Desk is open on Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. and is located at the Markham Courthouse.

Organization: Cabrini Green Legal Aid
Practice areas: Criminal Law/Criminal Records
Opportunity type: Non-litigation; Self-help Desk
Skills acquired: Client Counseling, Client/Witness Interviewing
Skills required: None
Time commitment: After completing the two-part training at CGLA's office (each training part is two hours – total of four hours over two evenings), volunteers are asked to commit to completing a minimum of three three-hour sessions working at the Help Desk, which can be scheduled at the volunteer's convenience.

Training and supervision: Volunteers are required to complete a 1.5 hour orientation at CGLA's office. The volunteer coordinator and supervising attorneys provide ongoing support for volunteers.

Contact: Shannon McDonnell, 312.738.2452, ShannonMcDonnell@cglaw.net

HOTLINE ATTORNEY

First Defense Legal Aid seeks volunteer attorneys to provide high quality pro bono legal representation to low-income adults and children arrested at Chicago police stations. Attorneys answer a 24-hour hotline and represent people at the police station until a public defender is appointed, which includes asserting their Fifth Amendment right to remain silent and Sixth Amendment right to counsel, interviewing witnesses, view line-ups, and protecting clients from police misconduct. No criminal defense experience is required.

Practice areas: Criminal Law
Opportunity type: Legal Hotline
Volunteer availability: Evenings, Weekends
Skills acquired: Client Counseling, Client/Witness Interviewing, Client Representation
Skills required: None
Time commitment: Volunteer shifts are six hours in length and volunteers are asked to commit to at least one volunteer shift per month.

Training and supervision: Volunteers are required to attend a two-hour training on the rights of the accused under the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and Article One of the Illinois Constitution, as well as various protections afforded to arrestees by Illinois statutes, case law, and local policy. FDLA provides a licensed attorney to support volunteers.

Contact: Eliza Solowiej, 773.354.8581, Eliza@first-defense.com