



Pro Bono at the University of Arkansas School of Law Student Manual

Updated February 23, 2021

Thank you for your interest in pro bono! Service to the community is a core obligation of practicing attorneys and a value we seek to instill in our students. Our Pro Bono and Community Engagement Program offers law students volunteer opportunities and recognizes students who engage in substantial service.

What is pro bono?

Pro bono work is defined as any legal work performed by students for which they receive no academic credit and no compensation and is approved in advance by the faculty director of Pro Bono Programs. The work must be overseen by an attorney or member of the law faculty and included in the list of legal services and activities in Rule 6.1 of the American Bar Association's Model Rules of Professional Conduct.

What are the benefits of doing pro bono?

- Get legal experience
- Build your resume
- Use the law to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others
- Gain insights into the law and legal practice
- Build relationships with lawyers, community organizations and fellow law students
- Explore different areas of practice
- Receive a notation on your law school transcript and medallion to be worn at graduation
- Get an early start on meeting your ethical obligation to do pro bono

Are there any limits on how much pro bono students can do?

There is no limit to the number of hours law students may perform after their first year. First-year law students are not permitted to perform any pro bono during the first semester of law school so that they can focus solely on their studies; first-year law students may perform up to 20 hours of pro bono work during the second semester of their first year.

How are students recognized for their pro bono work?

The University of Arkansas School of Law recognizes student service in a variety of ways.

Academic Distinction: Students who perform at least 50 hours of pro bono work and those with 100 hours or more receive notations of such service on their law school

transcripts and on the graduation program; they also receive a medallion to wear at graduation. Students who perform over 100 hours receive a golden medallion. Students who perform over 50 hours receive a silver medallion.

Robert F. Fussell Pro Bono Award: The award is given annually to the graduating student who gives the most hours to pro bono service during their law school career. In 2019, the recipient was awarded about \$1,000.

The Pro Bono Fellowship: The fellowship recognizes and supports exemplary law students committed to pro bono. Each year, the Dean will appoint one or more promising law students to serve as a University of Arkansas School of Law Pro Bono Fellow during their third year. For the 2019–2020 academic year, the Pro Bono Fellow was awarded a \$1,000 stipend.

Dessert with the Dean: Each fall, the students with the top ten highest number of pro bono hours are invited to share an evening event with the dean.

How can students find pro bono opportunities?

The University uses GivePulse to promote volunteer opportunities and record students' service. Create an account using your uark credentials. Then join the "School of Law – Pro Bono" group to check out approved pro bono opportunities. Each posting will include details on who is eligible to participate and how to get involved. New opportunities are usually also posted on MyLaw, Law Jobs, and the program's social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

If you cannot find what you are looking for, contact Pro Bono & Community Engagement Program Director Professor Annie Smith (abs006@uark.edu) to discuss opportunities that might be best for you.

Do students have to be Rule XV-eligible or have relevant experience to participate?

No. The majority of our pro bono opportunities do not require Rule XV eligibility or prior experience. The listings in GivePulse will specify if there are any required qualifications.

Recording Pro Bono Opportunities

To receive credit for your pro bono work, you must enter your accurate hours in GivePulse. You can do this by clicking on "Add Impact" and then entering the number of hours you worked (rounded to the nearest 15 minutes).

Policies

- **Rounding:** Students entering their hours must round the time spent actually engaged in pro bono work to the nearest 1/4 of an hour (i.e., 15-minute increments).
- **Travel Time:** Unless approved in advance in unusual circumstances, travel time should not be counted as part of the pro bono work.

- **Training Time:** If students receive training as part of their pro bono work, they are permitted to get pro bono credit for up to one-hour of training so long as they perform at least one hour of related pro bono work.
- **Judicial Pro Bono:** Students doing pro bono work for a judge must do the following in order to receive pro bono credit: (1) receive advance authorization for the placement by the Director of the Public Service and Pro Bono Program or their designee; and (2) provide the Director of the Public Service and Pro Bono Program a letter or email from the judge confirming that they have selected the student to engage in pro bono work for them and that the judge will supervise the student's work. Students performing pro bono credit may only claim credit for the following activities: (1) meetings with the judge or their staff necessary to your work; (2) conducting research or preparing documents for the judge; or (3) assisting the judge with other court-related activities as needed. Students may not receive credit for time merely spent observing meetings or courtroom proceedings.
- **Approval for Pro Bono Opportunities:** In order to get pro bono credit for opportunities not listed in GivePulse, students must first get approval from the director of the Pro Bono and Community Engagement Program.
- **Student Code of Conduct:** All time entered into GivePulse must be accurate and comply with the above policies. A misrepresentation regarding the amount of time spent engaged in pro bono activity may be considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Thank you for your involvement in pro bono! We hope you find it to be a rewarding, interesting, and meaningful experience. If we can do anything to support you, please reach out to Professor Annie Smith, Director of Pro Bono and Community Engagement.

Learn the law
Get inspired
Build relationships
Make a difference