

Lewis & Clark
Law School
Career Services

PRO BONO & COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

*A Guide to Involvement in Lewis & Clark Law School's
Pro Bono and Community Service Program*



2008-2009

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Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. WHAT IS PRO BONO?	1
B. WHAT IS COMMUNITY SERVICE?.....	2
C. HOW ARE PRO BONO AND THE COMMUNITY SERVICE DIFFERENT?.....	2
D. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?.....	3
E. WHY DO PRO BONO WORK?*	3
II. PROCEDURES	4
A. HOW TO GET STARTED.....	4
B. HOW TO FIND PRO BONO & COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES.....	4
C. GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERING*	6
D. TRACKING YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS	6
E. AWARDS.....	7
1. <i>Pro Bono Honors Award</i>	7
2. <i>Community Service Honors Award</i>	7
F. EVALUATION.....	8
III. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	8
A. VOLUNTEER TIME COMMITMENT.....	8
B. TRAINING.....	8
C. UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW (UPL)	9
D. PROBLEMS / CONCERNS / QUESTIONS	9
APPENDIX	10
PRO BONO PROGRAM REGISTRATION	10
PRO BONO & COMMUNITY SERVICE LOG SHEET	11
PRO BONO & COMMUNITY SERVICE HONORS WORK COMPLETION FORM.....	12
STUDENT EVALUATION OF PRO BONO OR COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCE	13
TIPS FOR PUBLIC INTEREST & PRO BONO INTERVIEWS.....	15
SAMPLE LETTER OF INTEREST	17

I. Introduction

Lewis & Clark Law School's Pro Bono & Community Service Program encourages, supports, and recognizes law student volunteer work. The Program offers students an opportunity to be involved in the community while enhancing their law school experience with practical legal skills.

A. What is Pro Bono?

Pro bono, short for *pro bono publico*, translates literally as “for the public good.” Different people and organizations define pro bono differently, but generally, pro bono service is legal work donated by lawyers and law students to help poor people with legal problems or organizations involved in social causes.

For the purpose of Lewis & Clark Law School's Pro Bono Honors Award, pro bono is work that meets all of the following:

- Law-related volunteer work that substantially utilizes or contributes to your legal education;
- Work performed without remuneration of any kind, neither monetary nor school credit. Work performed by a student under a stipend, partial stipend, or work study is NOT eligible; however, hours volunteered after the requirements of a stipend have been met or beyond clinic or externship requirements ARE eligible; and
- Work that has a significant impact off campus. Volunteer work for on campus organizations like PILP do not qualify unless those activities have a significant off-campus impact as work with NLG, NEDC, and NCVLI often do.

Pro bono work can fall into one of two broad categories: representational and non-representational. Representational pro bono consists of assisting with the provision of legal representation to governmental entities or under represented individuals, groups, or causes, and must only be performed under the direct supervision of a practicing attorney. Non-representational pro bono consists of civic, educational, and community activities that improve the law, the legal system, or the legal profession.

Students are cautioned to review Oregon's Unauthorized Practice of Law rules (discussed later in this handbook) and confirm that their work does not violate these rules prior to starting. As a law student, you may not provide legal representation nor contribute to the legal representation of an individual or entity unless you are under the direct supervision of a practicing attorney. If you are in doubt as to whether or not the work you are asked to do represents the unauthorized practice of law, consult with the Career Services Office immediately.

Examples of representational pro bono:

- Assisting an attorney with direct representation for low-income clients through a legal aid office, clinic, or pro bono program,
- Assisting an attorney with direct representation for or assisting an attorney who works for a civic, charitable, governmental, educational, or other public-service organization with limited income,
- Assisting an attorney with direct representation for or assisting an attorney who works for a group or organization seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights, or

- Assisting an attorney with direct representation for an indigent client where the attorney intentionally opts not to charge before providing legal services.

Examples of non-representational pro bono:

- Volunteering for law-related work for a federal, state, or local government including government agencies, courts, and judges, but *not* including law enforcement work (volunteer law enforcement work qualifies as community service),
- Volunteering to participate in the administrative rule making process or to assist with legislative lobbying activities for governmental organizations or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights,
- Volunteering for “know your rights” hotlines and volunteering for activities designed to preserve civil and legal rights,
- Volunteering as a coach or judge of an off-campus mock trial team,
- Volunteering as a mediator,
- Volunteering to assist with the delivery of legal educational programming including acting as a witness or juror in trial advocacy trainings,
- Volunteering as a public speaker on legal issues including conducting court tours and presenting Law Day programs, or
- Volunteering to assist court staff or organizations to assist court users.

To verify that the organization you wish to volunteer with is a qualifying office, please confer with the Public Interest Law Coordinator.

B. *What is Community Service?*

As with Pro Bono, Community Service is defined differently by different people and organizations, but generally, community service is non-legal volunteer work done to help low-income people or organizations involved in social causes.

For the purpose of Lewis & Clark Law School's Community Service Honors Program, community service is work that meets all of the following:

- Non law-related volunteer work for a civic, charitable, governmental, educational, public-service, or campaign organization;
- Work performed without remuneration of any kind, neither monetary nor school credit; and
- Work that has a significant impact off campus. Volunteer work for on campus organizations like PILP do not generally qualify.

To verify that the organization you wish to volunteer with is a qualifying office, please confer with the Public Interest Law Coordinator.

C. *How are Pro Bono and the Community Service Different?*

The only difference between the Pro Bono and the Community Service is the type of volunteer work the student is doing (in essence are you doing law-related or non law-related work?). Hours for both programs are tracked similarly, and students completing either type of service are eligible for

awards. For more information on awards, see the Pro Bono Honors Award and Community Service Honors Award sections of this handbook.

D. Who Can Participate?

Everyone can participate! The Pro Bono Program is open to all Lewis & Clark Law School students. Pro Bono positions require a range of experience levels, so even if you are a first year, there are opportunities for you. Many employers provide training for specialized knowledge that is required. You do not need to be working toward the Honors Awards to participate in the Pro Bono Program.

E. Why Do Pro Bono Work?*

Need: The need for pro bono work by attorneys and law students is great. In 2000, The Oregon State Bar, the Oregon Judicial Department, and the Office of then Governor John Kitzhaber, MD commissioned a report regarding access to justice issues in Oregon. Michael Dale drafted *The State of Access to Justice in Oregon: An Assessment of Legal Needs* in March 2000. According to the study, fewer than 18% of Oregon's low-income residents are able to acquire a lawyer's help with their legal problem. Demand for legal services for these residents is overwhelming and Legal Aid offices and other legal non-profits cannot meet the entire need on their own. Pro bono attorneys and law students can help fill the gap and provide deserving individuals with access to justice.

Organizations serving low-income people are not the only public interest groups in need of pro bono help. Most legal non-profits are underfunded and understaffed. Organizations working on such critical issues as protecting animals and the environment, fighting for equality, and preserving victim's rights in the criminal justice system also depend on pro bono help to further their missions.

Employment: With a tight economy and fewer public interest jobs available, law students with pro bono experience stand out in the job hunt. A pro bono placement will give you practical experience and exposure to the legal community. The lawyers you work with now will be the references who help you get a job later. Pro bono experience is also an opportunity for you to explore new academic, career, and legal interests.

Control of Your Learning: Pro bono experiences are important opportunities for you to design your own learning curriculum and get away from the campus-based one that may be frustrating you. Decide what you want to learn, how you intend to learn it, and how you will evaluate it.

The chance to put Theory into Practice: Pro bono experience can add more meaning to academic study by giving you the chance to apply theories used in your law classes to "real life" situations. Find out if the world as described in cases you study really exists.

Awareness and Personal Growth: You will develop an awareness of others' needs and greater understanding of your role and potential contributions to society as a future attorney. You will undoubtedly grow from the experience of doing pro bono work. It may not transform you overnight, but having to solve problems in unfamiliar situations can bolster your self-confidence and show you areas in which you need to improve.

*Portions of this section come from "The Experienced Hand: A Student Manual for Making the Most of an Internship", Second Edition, by Timmothy Stanton and Kamil Ali published by Sulzberger & Graham Publishing, Ltd., New Yourk, NY.

II. Procedures

A. *How to Get Started*

The easiest way to begin doing pro bono work is to familiarize yourself with Lewis & Clark's Pro Bono Program. By doing this, you will learn the guidelines of the program and the various ways in which you can find a pro bono opportunity.

Attend the Pro Bono Program Information Session: Every fall the Public Interest Law Coordinator puts on a Pro Bono Information Session. This hour-long session gives students an overview of the Pro Bono Program and highlight ways in which students can find pro bono and community service activities. This year's Information Session is scheduled for **September 10, 2008** from Noon to 1:00 pm. The session will be podcast and available on the Lewis & Clark Law School website.

Register for the Pro Bono Program: You can register for the Pro Bono Program by completing the registration form in the back of this handbook and returning it to the Public Interest Law Coordinator in the Career Services Office. When registering, please make sure to check the boxes to be added to the pro bono listserv and to participate in the Ad Hoc Program. More information on these programs is included in this handbook. You can also register for the Pro Bono Program on-line via the pro bono pages of the Career Services Office's web site.

Sign up for the Pro Bono Listserv: The Pro Bono Listserv is a listserv coordinated by the Public Interest Law Coordinator. The Public Interest Law Coordinator uses the list to inform interested students about programs, trainings, and pro bono and community service opportunities. The listserv is used sparingly, and you may ask to be removed from the list at any time. You can sign up for the listserv by completing a paper registration form, signing up on-line via the pro bono page of the Career Services Office's web site, or by emailing to lscs@lclark.edu.

B. *How to Find Pro Bono & Community Service Opportunities*

There are several ways to find out about Pro Bono and Community service opportunities. Start by thinking of the substantive area of the law, the type of organization, or the kind of people you would like to work with (i.e. domestic violence, environmental, animal rights, etc). Also, think about the type of skills that you would like to improve upon (i.e. client contact, research, writing, etc). Once you have an idea of the type of work you are interested in, finding an opportunity will be easier. A number of ways you can find an opportunity follow:

Attend the Pro Bono Panels: Every fall the Public Interest Law Coordinator puts on a series of Pro Bono Panels. These panels feature attorneys from local public interest and environmental organizations. The panelists speak about their organizations and give information on how students can get involved. This year's panels are scheduled on **September 11th, September 17th, and September 23rd**. Each panel will take place from Noon - 1:00. Each day features a different set of panelists. Look for flyers around campus to see who is attending each day, or inquire with the Public Interest Law Coordinator.

Look at the Pro Bono Window of Opportunities: The Pro Bono Window of Opportunities is located on the window across from the Career Services Office in the Gantenbein Building. Pro Bono and Community Service Job Postings and opportunities are posted here, along with information on

trainings, programming, reporting, and other information relevant to the Pro Bono and Community Service Programs.

Review Job Postings: Organizations looking for both long and short-term help often post their opportunities with the law school. These job postings will be posted on the Pro Bono Window of Opportunities, broadcast on the Pro Bono Listserv, and posted with other job postings on the Career Services Office's website. Students can review the postings to look for opportunities that interest them. Please make sure to note application requirements and deadlines. Check back often as postings can be updated frequently.

Look in the *Pacific Northwest Directory of Public Service and Environmental Organizations 2008-2009*: The *Pacific Northwest Directory of Public Service and Environmental Organizations* (the "Green Book") is a directory of public service, environmental, and government organizations in Oregon and Washington. The Career Services Office updates the directory yearly. Look through the Green Book and make a list of organizations that seem interesting to you. You can then check to see if any of the organizations will be at the Pro Bono Panels or do further research on the organization by looking at their website. Investigate the organization for what their application process is, what projects they are working on, and what types of pro bono work they have available. Students can also make an appointment with the Public Interest Law Coordinator for more information on the organization, or tips on contacting the organization.

Take on an *Ad Hoc Pro Bono Project*: Students who are not interested in a long-term pro bono placement with one organization can still do pro bono work through the Ad Hoc Pro Bono Program. This program connects organizations with short-term pro bono projects (such as legal research, document drafting, document review, etc.) with students interested in working on insular projects.

Attorneys or judges with short-term pro bono projects contact the Public Interest Law Coordinator. The Coordinator then emails a description of the project to students on the Pro Bono Listserv. Students interested in the project respond to the Coordinator and are put in direct contact with the supervising attorney or judge to go over details of the project and work out a schedule. If you are interested in the Ad Hoc Pro bono Program, please make sure to mark the appropriate box on your registration form to get signed up for the Pro Bono Listserv.

Sign up at PSLawNet.org: PSLawNet.org is a public interest law site run by the National Association for Legal Placement (NALP). Lewis & Clark Law School subscribes to PSLawNet.org, and as a member school, our students have unlimited access to the site. PSLawNet.org is a national database of public service employers that allows students connect to opportunities (both pro bono and paid) with public interest organizations, government agencies, judges, and private firms with public interest or significant pro bono practices. Sign up and find out more at www.pslawnet.org.

Visit Volunteer Opportunity Web Sites: Many organizations have their own web sites with information about volunteering; if you know a place you would like to volunteer, visit their web site. There are also a number of sites dedicated to connecting volunteers with service opportunities. A few sites with information about opportunities in and around Portland are idealist.org, handsonportland.org, and cnrg-portland.org.

Meet with the Public Interest Law Coordinator: The Public Interest Law Coordinator is available for individual student counseling on locating and applying for pro bono opportunities. You can sign up for an appointment in person with the Career Services Office's Receptionist or by emailing the Coordinator at wcpen@lclark.edu.

C. *Guidelines for Volunteering**

Your reputation in the legal community starts while you are in law school. The pro bono work you do is important to the organization, and it is important that you honor your commitments and complete your projects by their deadlines. There is no minimum or maximum amount of time that you must commit to doing pro bono work. Therefore, it is important that you communicate with pro bono employers ahead of time regarding the amount of time you have to do pro bono work with their organization. Be realistic, and do not commit to doing more than you have time for.

- Find a replacement or give notice far in advance if you cannot make your scheduled time.
- Work hard as your efforts could be rewarded with letters of recommendation or a paid position if funding allows. Dedicated work affirms an organization's decision to be involved with our Pro Bono Program and can make a difference in the community as a whole.
- Be clear on the type of responsibilities you will be asked to take on and make sure that it is the kind of work you enjoy and care about doing.
- Communicate with your supervisor. Communicate your expectations clearly and early; this includes the amount of time you are able to devote to the organization and whether that time will decrease around exam period or over the summer.
- Dress appropriately. Generally, public interest organizations are not as formal as private firms are, and Business-casual is the norm. Model your dress after your coworkers.
- Ask questions if there is anything you do not understand or if new issues arise.
- Expect and seek out constructive criticism and learn from it.
- Ask attorneys if you can accompany them to court appearances, depositions, etc., and observe.
- Attend training sessions, conferences, and seminars offered by the organization if allowed.
- Proofread your work and communicate professionally in phone calls, faxes, and emails.
- Ask for feedback once you have completed a project and given your supervisor a reasonable amount of time to review your work.

*Portions of this section come from "Doing Well at Doing Good," PSLawNet Guide to a Successful Internship Experience and the Harvard Law Office of Public Interest Advising web page "Advice to Law Students from Private Public Interest Lawyers".

D. *Tracking Your Volunteer Hours*

There is no requirement that you keep track of your pro bono and community service hours, but there are good reasons to do so. By tracking your hours and reporting them to the Public Interest Law Coordinator, you can become eligible for the Pro Bono Honors Award or the Community Service Honors Award (covered later in this handbook) and your hours may count toward the Oregon State Bar Pro Bono Challenge.

The Oregon State Bar asks Lewis & Clark and the other two Oregon law schools to report their student's pro bono hours as part of the Pro Bono Challenge. The Pro Bono Challenge recognizes representational pro bono service by firms, individual attorneys, and law students. Each year there is an awards ceremony where recognition is given to the Oregon attorney, firm, law student, and law school doing the most pro bono work in a given year.

You can track your own hours or have the Public Interest Law Coordinator track your hours for you. If you would like to keep track of your own hours, a pro bono and community service log sheet can be found in the appendix of this handbook. Hours can also be reported to the Public Interest Law Coordinator through the pro bono pages of the Career Services Office's web site at <http://www.lclark.edu/dept/lscs/reporhours.html>. Some students report after each volunteer shift, while others track on their own for several weeks or months between reporting on-line. At a minimum, you should report your hours to the Public Interest Law Coordinator **twice a year**, once in January to document your time up to the end of December for the Pro Bono Challenge, and another time at the end of March to meet the deadline for the Honors Awards.

E. Awards

Lewis & Clark Law School gives two awards based on volunteer service: the Pro Bono Honors Award and the Community Service Honors Award. Receipt of the Pro Bono and Community Service Honors Awards is noted on your transcript for each year you receive an award and in the program when you graduate. There is also an annual awards lunch in April honoring the year's recipients.

1. Pro Bono Honors Award

Who is Eligible to Participate? All Lewis & Clark Law School students are eligible to participate. Pro Bono Honors Awards are given in April for work completed from the beginning of April the prior year to the end of March the current year. *First year students **may not** count as pro bono work completed prior to the start of their first year classes.*

How Do I Qualify?

1. Verify with the Public Interest Law Coordinator that the work you are doing fits the school's definition of pro bono (see definition above).
2. Complete at least 30 hours of volunteer legal-related, not-for-credit and not-for-compensation work. Second, third, and fourth year students have between April 1 of the prior year and March 31 of the current year. First year students have between the start of classes the prior fall and March 31 of the current year to complete their hours. You do not have to complete all 30 hours with a single employer and you may add hours volunteered with different employers. You are encouraged to track your hours beyond the 30-hour award requirement as those additional hours may count for the Bar's Pro Bono Challenge.
3. Report your hours to the Public Interest Law Coordinator. You can do this online by visiting <http://www.lclark.edu/dept/lscs/reporhours.html> and completing the form. In order to ensure accuracy, it is recommended that you report your hours immediately after working. If that is not possible, you should at report your hours every month. At an absolute minimum, you should report your hours twice a year, once in January and once in March.
4. Complete the Pro Bono Honors Project Work Completion Form, certifying the completion of at least 30 hours work during the requisite period with a signature from your supervisor.

2. Community Service Honors Award

Who is Eligible to Participate? All Lewis & Clark Law School students are eligible to participate. Community Service Honors Awards are given in April for work completed from the beginning of April the prior year to the end of March of the current year. *First year students **may** count as community service volunteer work completed during the summer prior to their first year.*

How Do I Qualify? To qualify for the Community Service Honors Award, you must:

1. Verify with the Public Interest Law Coordinator that the organization you wish to volunteer with fits the school's definition of community service (see definition above).
2. Complete at least 30 hours of volunteer, not-for-credit and not-for-compensation work between April 1 of the prior year and March 31 of the current year. You do not have to complete all 30 yours with a single organization and you may add hours volunteered with different offices.
3. Report your hours to the Public Interest Law Coordinator. You can do this online by visiting <http://www.lclark.edu/dept/lscs/reporhours.html> and completing the form. In order to ensure accuracy, it is recommended that you report your hours immediately after working. If that is not possible, you should at report your hours every month. At an absolute minimum, you should report your hours twice a year, once in January and once in March.
4. Complete the Community Service Honors Work Completion Form, certifying the completion of your 30 hours of service with a signature from your supervisor.

F. Evaluation

There is an evaluation form located in the appendix of this handbook. The evaluation forms give you an opportunity to describe your experience working with a particular organization. The forms are kept in a binder in the Career Services Office, where other students can access them as they are investigating organizations with which they are considering volunteering. Your honest assessment is appreciated, and whether or not you include your name or contact information is optional.

III. Additional Information

A. Volunteer Time Commitment

There is no restriction on the time you can spend volunteering, and students are free to set an amount of time that works well with their schedules. Many pro bono and community service employers have a set amount of time that they would like a student to volunteer. Keep in mind that employers are balancing the time it will take them to train you against the amount of time you will spend working for their organization. Consider this balance and discuss your expected volunteer schedule with your supervisor ahead of time. Remember to account for things like final exams and holidays when you will not have time to do volunteer work. Additionally, be realistic about how much time you have; it is better to estimate time conservatively in the beginning than to sign on for too much and have to back out.

B. Training

Many organizations provide training for volunteers. Training sessions vary from extensive and formal session, to a brief introduction on your first day. When looking for pro bono or community service work, inquire about training. Your comfort level with an organization and the type of work you will be doing should inform your decision to take on a project.

If an employer does not have a formal training program and you would like additional training on a given subject, ask the employer if they have Continuing Legal Education (CLE) materials or other types of materials that you can review. Also, ask the employer if it would be appropriate for you to

attend trainings to which they send their other employee. Employers will appreciate that you are taking the initiative to learn more.

Track your training time as this time counts toward the 30 hours for the Honors Awards as well.

C. *Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL)*

Keep in mind that **LAW STUDENTS MAY ONLY PERFORM REPRESENTATIONAL PRO BONO WORK UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A LICENSED ATTORNEY**. Even when a student is not compensated for the work, a licensed attorney (one who is a current “active” member of the bar in the state where you will be doing pro bono work) **must** supervise.

The Oregon Supreme Court defines the “unlawful practice of law,” as the practice of law by persons not members of the Oregon State Bar and not otherwise authorized by statute. It is unlawful for a person who is not an active member of the Oregon State Bar to engage in the practice of law within the State of Oregon, whether or not for compensation or in connection with any other activity, unless specifically authorized by law or rule. The practice of law includes, but is not limited to, any of the following: 1) holding oneself out, in any manner, as an attorney or lawyer authorized to practice law in the State of Oregon; 2) appearing, personally or otherwise, on behalf of another in any judicial or administrative proceeding; 3) providing advice or service to another on any matter involving the application of legal principles to rights, duties, obligations, or liabilities.

If, without attorney supervision, you are asked to take any action that would be the unauthorized practice of law, you **must** refuse. If you have any concerns about the organization or the type of projects you are involved with, please contact the Public Interest Law Coordinator.

D. *Problems / Concerns / Questions*

Pro bono and community service work is a way to enhance your legal education while at Lewis & Clark. It should be educational and it should be fun! If you have any questions or concerns while participating in pro bono or community service work, please do not hesitate to contact the Public Interest Law Coordinator. You can make an appointment to meet with him by contacting the Career Services Office’s Receptionist or by emailing him directly at wcpenn@lclark.edu.

Appendix

Pro Bono Program Registration

You can also register on line at <http://www.lclark.edu/dept/lscs/probonocsreg.html>

Date: _____

Name: _____ Box #: _____ Year: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Please check your area(s) of interest:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Trans Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Migrant / Farm Worker Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elder Law | |

Please list any languages you speak (besides English), and indicate level of proficiency:

Language(s): _____

Proficiency level: _____

List any paid or volunteer experiences related to your interest areas: _____

-
- Please add my email to the Pro Bono listserv. (The listserv is used sparingly to make you aware of programs, trainings and pro bono opportunities including short term ad hoc opportunities. You may ask to be removed at any time.)

Return this form to the Career Services Office. Thank you for your interest!

Pro Bono & Community Service Honors Work Completion Form

This form must be turned in to the Career Services Office no later than Friday, April 3, 2009. Please complete one form for each pro bono or community service employer.

To Be Completed by Pro Bono or Community Service Employer
--

I certify that during the period from _____ to _____, Lewis & Clark Law School Student _____ completed _____ hours of

- representational pro bono (volunteer work associated with the legal representation of clients and supervised by a practicing attorney)
- non-representational pro bono (law-related volunteer work, including court staff assistance, legislative lobbying, "know your rights" work, and mediation)
- community service work (non law-related volunteer work)

generally described as follows:

Organization Name / Address / Phone

Supervisor's Printed Name & Title

Supervisor's Signature & Date

To Be Completed by Student

Student Name

Student Email Address

Name as you want it to appear on the certificate: _____

Are you planning to attend the recognition lunch on April 9, 2008 to receive your award? Y / N

Rate Training/Supervision: Excellent: Good Adequate Poor

Explain: _____

Feedback and Evaluation Provided: _____

Contact with Attorneys: _____

Client Contact: _____

How many hours did you work per week, on the average? _____

What, if anything, did you find yourself wishing you had known about your pro bono employer or job responsibilities before you accepted this position?

Please use the remainder of this space to discuss aspects of your experience, to comment on the above questions, or to provide information you feel may be of value to your colleagues.

Would you recommend that another student do pro bono work with this organization? Yes No

Why? _____

Optional:

Your Name: _____ E-mail: _____

I would be willing to discuss my experience with other students.

I would be willing to speak on a panel for other students about my pro bono experience.

***** THANK YOU VERY MUCH ***
RETURN TO THE CAREER SERVICES OFFICE**

Tips for Public Interest & Pro Bono Interviews

Introduction:

The purpose of an interview is to determine whether you and the employer match each other. The interviewer is looking to hire a law student who has the qualities that suit the public interest organization's goals and styles. You are looking for an opportunity that will let you use your talents, time, and energy to work for something you believe in with people you like. You are looking for experience that will help you to become a good lawyer regardless of whether you go on to work for a public interest organization.

What are employers looking for?

- Demonstrated commitment to the public interest.
- Particular knowledge and skills can be helpful but often are not critical.
- Initiative and responsibility. Employers want those who can work independently and ask for help when needed. Employers want employees to take their job seriously and to honor commitments and deadlines (whether the position is volunteer, for credit, or paid).
- Enthusiasm counts. Be prepared to offer specifics about why you want THIS job.
- Character is important. Many organizations are small and the people work long hours for little financial reward. Be prepared to demonstrate by how you act in the interview that you are someone they want to work, eat lunch, and travel with.

What are you looking for? Know what your goals are. Think about:

- Who do you want to serve and who do you want to work with?
- What organizational strategies and tactics appeal to you?
- What do you specifically want to do?
- What region do you want to work in and what work environment do you want?
- How does your job fit with your goals in the other parts of your life?
- What are your long term goals and how does this job take you there?
- What skills do you want to learn, develop, and improve on with this job?

How do you prepare for an interview?

- Research the particular employer and the job for which you are interviewing. Communicate with the Public Interest Law Coordinator in the Career Services Office, look at web sites, and talk to those who have worked or volunteered for the organization in the past.
- Think about what the particular employer wants and how you meet the criteria.
- Prepare to discuss your vision of justice. List what you have done to work toward you vision.
- Think about what skills, knowledge, and experience this employer wants and how you satisfy those needs.
- Anticipate questions you will be asked during your interview and prepare your answers for them. Be truthful.
- What is your greatest strength? Weakness?
- Are you a team player or do you like to work alone?
- What is the best/worst work experience you had?
- Why did you go to law school?

- What makes you different from other applicants?
- Provide an example of your on-the-job creativity.
- Why is this job important to you?
- Think about what you still do not know about the employer that is important to your decision and prepare three to five questions about the organization and your potential position there.
- Prepare materials the organization requires you to provide: resume, transcript (official or unofficial?), writing sample (what length?), list of references, or letters of recommendation.
- Pick your clothing well. Wear business attire, but keep in mind that many public interest organizations are not as formal as large firms are. “Business casual” is generally appropriate.
- Relax - but be alert, engaging and confident.

Tips for during the interview:

- Treat everyone as though they matter and with common decency. First impressions the staff has of you is important.
- Relax, listen well, and be responsive. Be a real person who can connect with others.
- Control your body language. Be aware of your eye contact and try not to slouch or fidget.
- Take time before answering questions. Have thoughtful answers and articulate them as best as you can.
- Avoid being defensive or offensive.
- Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses. Let employers know your expectations for your work experience.

What do you do to follow up to each interview?

- Know that it is a learning experience. Make a list of the questions you need to think more about. The next interview you will be better prepared.
- Send a thank you note. Send it within a week. Tailor it THIS employer. Reaffirm your interest.
- Alert your references that the organization may call them and what information may be of interest to those employers.
- Wait for the employer to contact you, unless:
- Information relevant to your application becomes available after the interview.
- The employer delayed an unreasonable amount of time beyond the stated period in which she was to get back to you.
- You receive another offer but prefer to work for this employer.
- The employer requested you to contact them.

Remember to relax – it is only a job!

Source: NAPIL Public Interest Job Fair “Public Interest Job Search Strategies” October 1999. Handouts For Presentation of Dean Ellen Chapnick, Columbia Law School. (Revised by Lewis & Clark’s Public Interest Law Coordinator)

Sample Letter of Interest

Ellen Moreland
345 S.E. 67th Ave., #12
Portland, OR 97202
(503) 876-5432
em@lclark.edu

July 8, 2007

Ned Helper, Pro Bono Director
Public Interest Advocates
987 SW 5th Ave., Suite 101
Portland, OR 97205

Dear Mr. Helper:

I am a first year law student at Lewis & Clark Law School, and I am interested in pro bono opportunities at your organization. I learned about Public Interest Advocates (PIA) from Timothy Chandler, the PIA attorney who spoke at a public interest information panel at my school last month.

Working for the public interest is an important goal of mine. I volunteered at a community center doing administrative work my last two years in college. The center was devoted to developing after-school education programs for low-income children, counseling foster children, and advocating on behalf of children from troubled homes. Although my experience was not entirely law-oriented, the issues with which we dealt prompted my interest in juvenile rights and my decision to attend law school. In addition, I am conversational in Spanish, which I found quite helpful in my past volunteer work.

Once I complete your mandatory training sessions for volunteers, I am available to work up to ten hours per week until the end of the school year. When summer commences, I hope to continue my hours. Enclosed are my resume and a letter of recommendation from my supervisor at the community center. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss pro bono opportunities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellen Moreland