

THE PRO BONO SERVICE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Why the Pro Bono Requirement:

Public service is a fundamental aspect of the role of lawyers as members of a public profession. Lawyers have an obligation to work *pro bono publico* – for the public good – by rendering some legal services without fee. NKU Chase College of Law is committed to pro bono service as a fundamental aspect of preparing future lawyers. The Pro Bono Service Program at Chase provides students with a vehicle to gain legal skills, exposes them to substantive areas of the law, and enhances their contact with the legal community.

The Requirement:

As a prerequisite for graduation, all students must complete 50 hours of pro bono service during their law school tenure. Students may satisfy the hourly requirement at one placement site, or may satisfy the requirement with several different projects involving fewer than 50 hours, so long as they ultimately complete at least 50 hours of pro bono service. Fifty (50) hours is a minimum requirement; students are encouraged to perform additional hours if they so choose.

Timing for Completion:

Students will begin to work on the 50-hour requirement after the student's first year of law school, although first year students may engage in pro bono service during the spring semester. Many placements will only be open to and appropriate for students who have completed their first year of law school.

The number of hours each week of pro bono service will vary depending on the placement and the type of project. Students are under no obligation to accept an assignment requiring more than 50 hours of service. However, students must satisfactorily complete the project and the number of hours they agreed to perform in order to receive credit towards the pro bono requirement.

Every student must complete the pro bono requirement prior to his/her anticipated graduation date. Students will not be certified for graduation until the pro bono requirement is completed, and so will not be able to sit for a bar examination or receive the juris doctor degree from Chase.

Definition of Pro Bono Work:

Pro bono work is broadly defined as **law-related work** performed:

1. In public interest or pro bono organizations, or other non-profit organizations.

2. In the public sector (governments, legislatures and courts).
3. With private practitioners or law firms when the work is performed at no cost or at a reduced fee on behalf of underrepresented clients (e.g., volunteer lawyer cases).

In addition, the work performed by the student must be uncompensated and not for academic credit, and must be performed at an approved placement site.

Supervision Required:

Student pro bono work must generally be supervised by an attorney, judge, or faculty member. Students performing work involving direct client representation and litigation must be supervised by a licensed attorney. Students who do advocacy work on behalf of a non-profit organization may be supervised by an advocate with expertise in the relevant subject matter. Student work with legislators and policymakers must be confined to research on policy and legislative matters. Student work for non-profits and legislators/policymakers may not be used as a substitute for consultation with legal counsel. All approved pro bono placement sites will have a designated supervisor for the student assignment.

Approved Organizations for Pro Bono Placements:

Students perform their pro bono work with organizations that have been approved by the Pro Bono Coordinator. For a current list, search under the Pro Bono tab using Chase Symplicity. In addition, the following types of organizations are pre-approved:

- Legal Aid societies
- Public Defender offices
- Public interest law firms
- Government law offices
- Judicial clerkships
- Faculty based pro bono projects
- Law-related education
- Courts/judges
- Volunteer Lawyer Project pro bono cases being handled by private attorneys
- Externship placements sites (with the exception of for-profit organizations)

If students wish to complete pro bono work with an organization that is (i) not on the approved list or (ii) not one of the pre-approved types of organizations, students may request approval of an opportunity at another organization by emailing Jane Underwood at underwoodj2@nku.edu (see instructions in the Pro Bono How-To list at the end of this document for information to include in your email).

Types of Work and Assignments:

Students can perform a broad range of law-related work including:

- community legal education
- client intake
- client interviews
- preparing a case for trial

- assisting attorneys in a trial or appeal
- factual investigation
- legal research and writing
- legislative and policy analysis
- preparing law related documents

Students cannot receive pro bono credit for clerical work, event planning, grant research/writing or fundraising activities. Travel time to and from a placement is generally not counted toward the 50-hour requirement. For approval in exceptional circumstances contact Jane Underwood, Pro Bono Coordinator.

Training:

Up to 5 hours of training necessary to work at a particular placement can be credited toward the 50-hour requirement. Some placements will require much more training than others. The approximate number of training hours required will be indicated in the organization's placement opportunity information.

Uncompensated Requirement:

“Uncompensated” means that the student receives no monetary compensation or academic credit for work done to satisfy the pro bono requirement. To ensure that work credited toward the pro bono requirement is distinguished from work receiving compensation or academic credit, the following rules will apply:

1. *Pro bono work related to employment:* If a student is employed by an approved placement site, work performed by the student may qualify for pro bono credit only if the student is compensated on an hourly basis and receives no compensation for the work for which pro bono credit is sought. Any additional hours counted as pro bono work must be registered and logged as an approved pro bono opportunity.
2. *Pro bono work related to a clinical course or externship:* If a student has worked in a clinical course or in an externship program at an approved pro bono placement site, additional work performed by the student at that placement site may qualify for pro bono credit only if that work is in addition to the work required in satisfaction of the externship/clinic. Any additional hours counted as pro bono work must be registered and logged as an approved pro bono opportunity.
3. *Pro bono work for a faculty member:* Work provided under the auspices of a faculty member relating to a pro bono project may qualify for pro bono credit if that work is not performed by a student for academic credit or compensation.
4. *Pro bono work related to a funded public interest fellowship:* Work provided under the auspices of a funded public interest fellowship may qualify for pro bono credit only if the work is in addition to the work that the student is expected or required to complete in fulfillment of the fellowship. Any additional hours counted as pro bono work must be registered and logged as an approved pro bono opportunity.

Placement Process:

1. A student selects an approved organization (see "Approved Organizations for Pro Bono Placements" section on page 2 of this handbook for pre-approved types of opportunities). The student then calls or emails the contact person at the organization to express interest in a pro bono opportunity.
2. Alternatively, the student may request approval for a pro bono project at an organization not listed as an approved placement site. Email Jane Underwood at underwoodj2@nku.edu for approval (see instructions in the Pro Bono How-To list at the end of this document for information to include in your email). Students must receive written approval before the work begins.
3. A student in need of assistance in finding or choosing a pro bono placement should set up an advising appointment with the Pro Bono Coordinator, Jane Underwood at 859-572-6485 or underwoodj2@nku.edu.
4. After the student verifies that an approved placement is available and of interest (or obtains approval of a student-initiated placement), the student must complete the Initial Pro Bono Registration Form in Chase Symplicity and have the form signed by the placement supervisor (see instructions in the Pro Bono How-To list at the end of this document. Note: Students must complete a separate Initial Pro Bono Registration Form for each placement). Symplicity log on URL: <https://law-nku-csm.symplicity.com/students/>. If you have forgotten your password to log onto Symplicity and need your password reset, please contact Bonnie Osborne at 859-572-5383 or osborneyl@nku.edu . Your Symplicity password is not the same as your NKU Chase network password.
5. The student keeps a Log of Hours as he/she works on the project using Chase Symplicity (see instructions in the Pro Bono How-To list at the end of this document). Hours may not be logged until the Initial Pro Bono Registration form is received and approved by Jane Underwood, Pro Bono Coordinator.
6. Upon completion of the pro bono project, the student (i) asks the placement supervisor to complete a Supervisor Evaluation form (access via the Chase website under Current Students/Pro Bono Service Program/Forms and Handbook) and ensures the signed evaluation has been received by Jane Underwood; and (ii) completes the Student Evaluation form in Chase Symplicity (see instructions in the Pro Bono How-To list at the end of this document).
7. When the student has completed all registration and reporting requirements (and all are approved) and has completed at least a total of 50 hours of pro bono service, a notation indicating that the pro bono requirement has been met will be made on the student's transcript.

Pro Bono Service Program Student's Role and Responsibilities

- ***Securing an Appropriate Placement.*** Students should select an approved placement or initiate a new placement based on their interests and schedule availability. By ensuring that the pro bono placement is a good fit, a student will receive the most benefit from the opportunity.

- ***Initial Meeting with Supervisor.*** Students are responsible for arranging an initial meeting or phone call with the supervisor to discuss the assignment and working arrangements in detail. If the placement is determined to be agreeable to both student and supervisor, the student must complete the Initial Pro Bono Registration Form in Chase Symplicity, sign and print the form, have it signed by the supervisor and return it to Jane Underwood (underwoodj2@nku.edu) via email, fax, postal mail or to NH Room 205.
- ***Confidentiality.*** All work performed for client cases is protected under attorney/client privilege and shall be kept confidential. Students may discuss client case work only with the supervisor or other members of the legal team working on the case.
- ***Professionalism.*** Students should perform all work in a timely and professional manner. If any circumstances prevent the satisfactory completion of a project, the student should immediately consult with the supervisor and the Pro Bono Coordinator.
- ***Conflicts of Interest.*** The student should identify and address any potential or actual conflicts of interest with the assignment and the placement prior to beginning work. The student should contact the supervisor and the Pro Bono Coordinator if questions arise regarding conflicts of interest while working on the project.
- ***Academic Conduct.*** Students shall comply with all requirements, policies and responsibilities prescribed by the NKU Chase College of Law Honor Code and the NKU Student Code of Conduct.
- ***Completion of forms/information.*** It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all information (including initial registration form, hours worked, evaluation forms, etc.) is properly entered into Chase Symplicity and all required forms have been received by the Pro Bono Service Coordinator. Students should keep a copy of all forms for their own records. Opportunities must be registered and information completed at the time the hours are completed. **All pro bono information must be completed by graduation; students who have not completed the pro bono graduation requirement are unable to sit for a bar examination.**

Pro Bono Service Program Supervisor's Role and Responsibilities

- ***Initial Meeting with Student.*** The supervisor should meet or speak with the student to discuss the assignment, expectations for the student, hours required and work schedule. If the supervisor and student determine that the placement is mutually agreeable, the supervisor should sign the Initial Pro Bono Registration Form (prepared by the student) which the student will return to the Pro Bono Service Program office.
- ***Training and Supervision.*** The supervisor is responsible for training and continued oversight of the student during his/her work on the pro bono assignment.
- ***Compensation and Expenses.*** Students may not receive any compensation for doing pro bono work. However, students should not incur any expenses related to a pro bono assignment such as copying costs or materials.

- ***Evaluation.*** The supervisor should meet with the student at the end of the assignment to discuss the student's work on the project. The supervisor should complete and sign the one-page Supervisor Evaluation form which is available on the Chase College of Law website at the following link: [Pro Bono Supervisor Evaluation of Student Jan 2016.pdf](#) and give it to the student or submit it directly to Jane Underwood (fax: 859-572-6529 or underwoodj2@nku.edu).
- ***Problems or Concerns.*** Contact Jane Underwood, 859-572-6485 or underwoodj2@nku.edu with any issues or concerns relating to the student's performance or the pro bono program generally.

PRO BONO HOW-TO LIST

How to complete the Initial Pro Bono Registration Form in Chase Symplicity for Approved Pro Bono Opportunities (Required for each placement):

- Log on to Chase Symplicity (The Symplicity URL is as follows: <https://law-nku-csm.symplicity.com/students/> - if you do not have your Chase Symplicity password information, email Bonnie Osborne at osborne1@nku.edu and if you have not already done so, complete your Symplicity student profile **(if you do not complete your profile, you will not be able to proceed)**)
- Under Pro Bono Quick Links, choose Manage Your Pro Bono Projects
- Click "Add New"
- Complete the entire form (except for Supervisor Agreement information). **Note on entering "Organization Name"**: Type a keyword in the [enter name] box and you will get a drop down menu on the left. Open the drop down box to see the organizations. If your organization is not listed, email Jane Underwood at underwoodj2@nku.edu
- Once the form is completed (except for Supervisor Agreement information), click "Submit" to save the information. **Note**: If you have completed the form, be sure to click "Submit" and not "Save draft";
- Click "Print" and the completed form will appear in "print preview" mode. **Note: it may take a few minutes after you hit "submit" for the completed form to appear in print format)**
- Print the completed form and have it signed by your supervisor
- Email, fax or deliver the signed, completed form to Jane Underwood (fax no. 859-572-6529, underwoodj2@nku.edu) or Room 205
- Jane will notify you by email when your form has been received and you are able to enter hours in Chase Symplicity

How to request approval of placements that are (i) not an approved opportunity listed on Chase Symplicity (<https://law-nku-csm.symplicity.com/students/>) or (ii) not one of the pre-approved types of organizations (see "Approved Organizations for Pro Bono Placements" section on page 2 of this handbook):

- Send an email to Jane Underwood at underwoodj2@nku.edu with the following information:
 - Student name, division and graduation year
 - Organization name, address and type of organization
 - Supervisor's name and title (note whether he/she is an attorney)
 - Contact person's name, phone, and email (if different from Supervisor)
 - Description of organization (include website if available)
 - Description of proposed assignment (including substantive area – e.g., criminal law, family law, etc. and tasks to be performed. Be specific)
 - Note whether training will be provided by the organization and if so, the number of hours (a maximum of 5 hours count toward the 50 hour requirement)
 - Number of hours (excluding training) committed for the assignment
 - Start date and anticipated end date of the assignment
- Jane will notify you by email if your request has been approved
- Once you receive written approval from Jane, submit your completed Initial Pro Bono Registration Form (see above instructions)

How to enter pro bono hours in Chase Symplicity:

- Submit a completed Initial Pro Bono Registration Form to Jane Underwood (see above instructions)
- Log on to Chase Symplicity
- Under Pro Bono Quick Links, choose Manage Your Pro Bono Projects
- You will see a list of your pro bono projects
- Click on the "Edit" button next to the project for which you want to enter hours
- Click "Add Hours"
- Enter the number of hours worked and a detailed description of all hours worked (include a summary for each entry)
- Hit "Submit" to save the information
- When you have completed at least 50 hours, email Jane so your hours can be reviewed

How to Complete Supervisor Evaluations

- Forward the Supervisor Evaluation form to your supervisor for completion/signature: Form is available at: [Pro Bono Supervisor Evaluation of Student Jan 2016.pdf](#)
- Confirm that the completed Supervisor Evaluation has been delivered to Jane Underwood by email, underwoodj2@nku.edu, fax at 859-572-6529, or hand deliver to Room 205 (it is the student's responsibility to make sure this is done)

How to Complete Student Evaluations

- Log on to Chase Symplicity
- Under Pro Bono Quick Links, choose Manage Your Pro Bono Projects
- Click on the "Edit" button for the pro bono opportunity you want to evaluate
- Click on the "Evaluations" tab (next to the "Basic Info" tab)
- Complete the Student Evaluation and hit "Submit" to save the information (Note: students have the option of uploading signed supervisor evaluations to Symplicity while completing student evaluations)
- Email Jane Underwood at underwoodj2@nku.edu when you have completed your student evaluation
- Your transcript will be noted once all hours and completed evaluations (student and supervisor) are received and verified