

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 Chase Pro Bono Service Program offers students substantial opportunities to participate in pro bono legal activities at a variety of placement sites, doing a variety of law-related work.

The Pro Bono Service Program at Chase will constitute a significant part of the law school's educational program. The program will provide students with a vehicle to gain legal skills, expose them to substantive areas of the law, and enhance their contact with the legal community.

Further, the Pro Bono Service Program reflects NKU Chase College of Law's commitment to a core value of Northern Kentucky University- public engagement. By performing pro bono legal work within our community, Chase students will engage in effective regional stewardship which is a strategic priority and hallmark of this university.

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 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:

The 50-hour requirement will generally be completed after the end of 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.

Students in the day division are encouraged to complete the requirement in either a single semester or summer, or within two consecutive semesters or a consecutive semester and summer. Students in the evening division may find that they need to complete the 50 hours over several (consecutive or non-consecutive) semesters or summers.

The weekly hourly requirements will vary depending on the placement and the type of the project. Students are under no obligation to accept an assignment requiring more than 50 hours of service. However, students must complete the project and the number of hours they agreed to perform as reflected on the Placement Confirmation Agreement form in order to receive credit towards the pro bono requirement.

Every graduating student must complete the pro bono requirement no later than 30 days in advance of his/her anticipated graduation date. Students cannot graduate until the pro bono requirement is completed.

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.

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 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.

Types of Qualifying Organizations for Pro Bono Placements:

- Legal Aid
- Public Defender
- Public Interest
- Bar Associations
- Non-profit organizations
- Firm or private attorney (pro bono case)
- Government or quasi-governmental entity
- Legislators
- Faculty based pro bono project
- Law-related education
- Chase pro bono projects

Students perform their pro bono work with an organization that has been designated as an “Approved Placement” site, or alternatively, students may request approval of a “Student-Initiated Placement” at an organization that is not an Approved Placement site. Approved pro bono work can be performed locally, nationwide, or even internationally.

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, or fundraising activities. Travel time to and from a placement is generally not counted toward the 50-hour requirement, unless the circumstances warrant approval by the Associate Dean for Student Services.

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 during an academic semester, 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. For pro bono work related to summer employment, work performed by a student may qualify for pro bono credit if it is performed during a week for which the student receives no compensation from the employer and is in addition to work that the student was hired to complete for compensation.

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.
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 during any semester in which the student also receives academic credit or compensation for research or other assistance to that faculty member.
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 performed during a week for which the student receives no compensation and is not work that the student is expected or required to complete during the fellowship. A student who accepts a summer public interest fellowship that is only minimally funded may request partial or full credit towards the pro bono requirement. Such requests should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Student Services for consideration.

Placement Process:

1. A student selects an organization from the list of available Approved Pro Bono Placements. A current list of approved placement sites is available on the Pro Bono Service Program website. The student then calls or emails the contact person at the organization to inquire about setting up an appointment to discuss possible projects, requirements and schedules.
2. Alternatively, the student may initiate a pro bono project at an organization not listed as an approved placement site. The student must submit the Student-Initiated Pro Bono Placement form for approval by the Associate Dean for Student Services before the work begins. Credit for the pro bono requirement will not be given to any student-initiated project without advance approval.
3. A student needing assistance in finding or choosing a pro bono placement should set up an advising appointment with the Associate Dean for Student Services.
4. After the student verifies that the choice of an approved placement is available and of interest (or obtains approval of a self-initiated placement), the student and the supervisor (identified in the placement listing) should meet. If it is determined during that meeting that the placement is agreeable to both parties, the Placement Confirmation Agreement form should be completed and signed by both the student and the supervisor, and must then be returned to the Pro Bono Service Program office within ten (10) days.
5. The student keeps a Log of Hours as he/she works on the project, using the form provided on the Pro Bono Service Program website.

6. Upon completion of the pro bono project, the student completes the Student Report and Evaluation form and asks the placement supervisor to complete the Supervisor Evaluation form.
7. The student submits the Log of Hours and Student Report and Evaluation form to the Pro Bono Service Program office within ten days of completion of the project. The student should ask that the supervisor return the Supervisor Evaluation form to the Pro Bono Service Program office within ten (10) days.
8. When the student has returned all forms and has completed all 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.
9. The Pro Bono Service Program assistant will record summary data in student accounts in Digital Measures *Student Activity Insight*. Information that will be recorded will include placement site; supervisor's name; project description and dates; total hours worked. Students may view their accounts in Digital Measures at any time.

SUMMARY OF FORMS AND DEADLINES

Form	Who Completes and When?
<i>Placement Opportunity form</i>	Qualifying organization submits to Pro Bono Service Program office as placements become available
<i>Student-Initiated Pro Bono Placement form</i>	Student submits only for pro bono work not on the list of Approved Placements; must be submitted and approved by the Associate Dean for Student Services before the student begins work
<i>Placement Confirmation Agreement</i>	Student and placement supervisor complete and return to the Pro Bono Service Program office within 10 days after signing
<i>Student Log of Pro Bono Hours Student Report and Evaluation form</i>	Student submits to the Pro Bono Service Program office within 10 days of completion of the project
<i>Supervisor Evaluation form</i>	Supervisor submits to the Pro Bono Service Program office within 10 days of completion of the project
<i>Digital Measures (DM)- Activity Insight reporting</i>	Pro Bono Services Program assistant records summary data in student accounts in DM (placement site; supervisor's name; project description and dates; total hours worked)

All forms are available on the Pro Bono Service Program website. Completed forms may be submitted in person, by mail, by fax, or by email. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all forms have been received by the Pro Bono Service Program office by the applicable deadlines. Students should keep a copy of all forms for their own records.

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 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 should sign and have the supervisor sign the Placement Confirmation Agreement. The student should then return the form to the Pro Bono Service Program office within 10 days of the meeting.
- ***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 Service Program Director.
- ***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 Associate Dean for Student Services 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.
- ***Submission of Forms.*** The student is responsible for completing all required forms, including the Log of Hours and Student Report and Evaluation form. The student is responsible for ensuring that all required paperwork is received by the Pro Bono Service Program office by the applicable deadlines.

Pro Bono Service Program Supervisor's Role and Responsibilities

- ***Initial Meeting with Student.*** The supervisor should meet with the student to discuss the assignment, expectations for the student, hours required and work schedule. If the supervisor and student determine at this initial meeting that the placement is mutually agreeable, the supervisor should sign the Placement Confirmation Agreement 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 and give it to the student or submit it directly to the Chase Pro Bono Service Program office within 10 days of completion of the student's work.
- ***Problems or Concerns.*** The supervisor should contact the Associate Dean for Student Services with any issues or concerns relating to the student's performance or the pro bono program generally.