

2023

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PRO BONO PROGRAM

*Pro Bono Opportunities for Federal Government
Attorneys*

CHICAGO



Compiled by the Chicago Federal Government Pro Bono
Committee



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INTRODUCTION: Pro Bono Guidelines for Federal Attorneys

Congratulations and thank you for making the first step towards providing pro bono legal services in Chicago!

As a federal attorney, sometimes it may seem like pro bono opportunities are inaccessible--limited to your colleagues in the private and non-profit sectors. Although federal laws and regulations do require federal government attorneys to be a bit more cautious about the kinds of pro bono legal service they provide and how they go about providing it, it is absolutely possible (and encouraged!) for federal attorneys to do pro bono legal work.

For detailed information about the specific rules for government attorneys who would like to provide pro bono legal services, please review the FAQ section following this introduction.

The Chicago Federal Government Pro Bono Committee has published this guidebook to help federal government attorneys understand the rules which apply to pro bono service and to make local volunteer opportunities more accessible to them. The organizations and specific opportunities listed in this guidebook have been vetted by the Federal Government Pro Bono Program and meet basic criteria, such as providing malpractice insurance coverage to volunteers.

However, each federal agency may have different requirements and policies for pro bono legal work, so please be sure to check if your agency has a specific pro bono policy before volunteering.

For more information about the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Government Pro Bono Program, including volunteer opportunities, please contact Charles (Quent) Fox at Charles.Fox@usdoj.gov. For more information about the Federal Government Pro Bono Program, please contact Laura Klein at Laura.F.Klein@usdoj.gov or Lara Eilhardt at Lara.Eilhardt@usdoj.gov.

Thank you,

The Chicago Federal Government Pro Bono Committee

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS DOING PRO BONO

I. Definitions and Limitations

What types of services may I provide?

Pro bono legal work and volunteer services may be broadly defined to include many different types of activities performed without compensation. Examples include, but are not limited to, services to persons of limited means or other disadvantaged persons, assistance to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental, health, and educational organizations, services to individuals or groups seeking to protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights, and activities seeking to improve the law or legal system.

What types of pro bono and volunteer services are prohibited?

Any service that would conflict with your official duties is prohibited. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.802. For example, federal employees, in most cases, are prohibited from representing parties before the federal government. 18 U.S.C. § 205. (See questions below on conflicts of interest.) In addition, each federal agency has its own regulatory standards of conduct which its employees must follow. For example, Department of Justice attorneys may not provide services that involve criminal or habeas corpus matters, whether federal, state, or local. 5 C.F.R. § 3801.106.

May I provide services to political organizations?

Yes, however, you must comply with the restrictions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. § 7234) and your agency's policy concerning political activities by high-level and political appointees. It should be noted that the Office of Personnel Management has stated that it would be inappropriate to grant administrative leave to employees to engage in partisan political activities. Also, because partisan political activity is subject to more restrictive rules than other non-official activity, no partisan political activity may take place on government time or by using government property. See 5 C.F.R. Part 734.

May I represent someone in an action against the United States?

No. 18 U.S.C. § 205 prohibits you from representing another person before any court or agency of the United States, in a matter in which the United States is a party or has a direct and substantial interest. There are limited exceptions for representing your immediate family (spouse, child, and parents), fellow employees in personnel administration proceedings, and certain employee organizations in limited circumstances.

May I assist persons seeking government benefits?

Yes, in limited ways. You may provide non-representational assistance, such as filling

out forms for a person seeking government benefits. However, you should be mindful that you may not contact a federal agency, with the intent to influence, on behalf of another person except those persons permitted by 18 U.S.C. § 205(e). You may not represent a third party before any government agency.

May I prepare income tax returns?

Yes, however, you are prohibited from representing another person before the IRS in connection with a tax return.

May I assist family and friends?

Yes, provided the services you are providing fall within the definition of pro bono and/or volunteer services and you are not receiving compensation.

NOTE: There are some limited exceptions to this rule which may permit employees to represent family and friends in non-pro bono matters as long as the United States is not a party and the matter is not criminal in nature. You should contact your Deputy Designated Agency Ethics Official (DDAEO) if you would like to represent a family member or friend and the representation does not fall within the definition of pro bono or volunteer services.

II. Use of Position and Agency Resources

May I use my official position in connection with my pro bono and/or volunteer services?

No. You may not indicate or represent in any way that you are acting on behalf of the your agency, or in your official capacity, when providing pro bono or volunteer services.

May I use office letterhead or my business cards?

No. You may not use office letterhead, business cards, fax cover sheets, etc., or otherwise identify yourself as a federal government employee in any communication, correspondence, or pleading.

May I use agency resources such as phone, email, internet, or other government property in connection with my pro bono services?

Each agency has its own policy on the use of its resources and property. Some agencies will allow for the personal use of government equipment and facilities provided there is only a negligible cost to the government (such as electricity, ink, small amounts of paper, and ordinary wear and tear). You should contact your agency pro bono coordinator to find out about your agency's policy.

May I ask agency support staff to assist me?

No. Pro bono and volunteer services are not official duties and may not be assigned to or

required of support staff. Attorneys who need assistance should contact the Pro Bono Program Manager or Counsel. The Federal Government Pro Bono Program has a Support Staff Resource Pool. Interested support staff can volunteer to be available to assist on pro bono matters. The Pro Bono Program Manager or Counsel will then match those volunteers with pro bono attorneys seeking assistance.

May I use Westlaw and other electronic computer databases?

Each agency has its own policy on this issue. Contact your agency pro bono coordinator to find out about your agency's policy.

May I participate in pro bono and/or volunteer services on government time?

You are encouraged to seek pro bono and volunteer opportunities that can be accomplished outside of your scheduled working hours. However, activities may sometimes occur during the work day. You may be granted annual leave, leave without pay, or may be permitted to make up any time you are away from the office. Contact your agency pro bono coordinator to find out about your agency's policy.

May I be given administrative leave?

Generally, it is inappropriate to pay an employee for time engaged in pro bono or volunteer services. However, in limited circumstances, it may be appropriate to excuse an employee from duty for brief periods of time without loss of pay or charge of leave. Excused absence should be limited to those situations in which the employee's services meet one or more of the following criteria: is directly related to the agency's mission; is officially sponsored or sanctioned by the agency; or will enhance the professional development or skills of the employee in his or her current position. See OPM Guidance at www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2002/volunteerweek.htm.

Some agencies have issued policies specifically permitting the use of administrative leave for pro bono activities, such as the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Labor Relations Board, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, and many others. Check with your agency pro bono coordinator to find out if your agency has such a policy.

III. Conflicts of Interest

Who should I talk to about any possible conflicts of interest?

Your Deputy Designated Agency Ethics Official (DDAEO).

What constitutes a conflict of interest?

Any activity that would:

1. Violate any federal statute, rule, or regulation, including for example, 18 U.S.C. § 201 et seq. and the Standards of Conduct at 5 C.F.R. § 2635;
2. Interfere with the proper and effective performance of your official duties, including time availability;
3. Cause a reasonable person to question the integrity of your agency's programs or operations;
4. Require your recusal from significant aspects of your official duties;
5. Create an appearance that your official duties are being performed in a biased or less than impartial manner; or
6. Create an appearance of official sanction or endorsement.

Must I get approval to provide pro bono services?

Each agency has its own policy regarding its employees' outside activities. An employee seeking to engage in any pro bono legal work or volunteer services must follow his or her agency's procedures for outside activities. You should consult with your ethics officer regarding approval requirements.

IV. Miscellaneous

What about malpractice coverage?

The federal government does not provide malpractice coverage. Generally, volunteer programs organized by the local bar or more established referral programs provide malpractice coverage. For example, the CVLS provides malpractice coverage for its volunteers. You should ask the organization through which you will be providing pro bono services whether it will provide malpractice coverage for you.

How can I participate in pro bono in Illinois if I am not a member of the Illinois state bar?

Under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 756(k) retired and inactive attorneys, as well as attorneys admitted in another state but not in Illinois, may perform pro bono services as long as they do the following:

- file a registration form with the ARDC;
- work with an approved sponsoring entity (such as a legal aid organization or law clinic);
- complete any training required by the sponsoring entity; and
- annually register with the ARDC ongoing participation in a pro bono program.

See: [https://www.iardc.org/files/RegForms/Pro_Bono_Out_of_State_Authorization\(Web\).pdf](https://www.iardc.org/files/RegForms/Pro_Bono_Out_of_State_Authorization(Web).pdf)

Are there activities I can do that do not involve client representation?

Absolutely! Government attorneys regularly staff the clinics. At these clinics, attorneys provide brief advice and referral for clients on a walk-in basis and do not take on the cases. For example, Legal Aid Chicago has a brief advice clinic for people seeking advice about housing

matters. Also, Equip for Equality offers a hotline opportunity which provides only brief advice with no ongoing commitment.

What if I have never done any pro bono work before?

It is never too late to start doing pro bono work. There are lots of resources and support to help you. First, you can start by going to a training. The legal services organizations offer live or recorded trainings on substantive areas of law that are designed for attorneys who are new to the subject area. Second, the legal services organizations assign mentors to government attorneys to help you with your work. Third, <https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/> and local legal service providers have terrific manuals, sample forms, and a pleadings bank that you can use. Many attorneys start by co-counseling their first pro bono case. And you don't have to start by taking a case – you can attend a clinic, draft wills and powers of attorney, volunteer at an intake site or do a range of other activities.

Is there a committee which helps government agencies to develop pro bono policies and programs?

Yes. The Interagency Pro Bono Working Group has been established to assist federal agencies in developing pro bono policies and programs. The Working Group also organizes events to encourage more government attorneys to participate in pro bono work. The Working Group is chaired by the Department of Justice Pro Bono Program Manager and includes representatives from both large agencies, such as the Department of Transportation, and smaller agencies, such as the Office of Government Ethics.

How can I get my agency involved?

Contact DOJ Pro Bono Program Manager, Laura Klein, at (202) 353-7529 or laura.f.klein@usdoj.gov, or DOJ Pro Bono Program Counsel, Lara Eilhardt, at lara.eilhardt@usdoj.gov.

ADMINISTER JUSTICE

Over the past 20 years, Administer Justice has helped hundreds of attorneys find purpose by providing legal advice to 80,000+ clients. We've created a team-supported model to make doing justice simple for attorneys. With your unique skill, you can make an impact in client's lives by serving just 3-4 hours a month.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Volunteer for Brief Consultations and/or Attorney Bullpen

Administer Justice coordinates brief advice clinics at "Gospel Justice Centers" held at churches in the Chicago area where clients may come for assistance with a broad range of legal issues for attorneys and other team members volunteering. Please note: While AJ is a religious organization, volunteers do not need to be Christian or to do spiritual counseling. You are not expected to go beyond the one-time 45-minute consultation for Administer Justice (AJ)'s brief consultations clinic. In that time, you will coach clients so they are empowered to take the next steps themselves, and know what & how to take those steps. You have the discretion to go further with the client, if desired, and will be covered by our malpractice insurance — up to but not including appearance in court. You will usually serve once a month for 3-4 hours, during which time you will meet with 3-4 individuals. You are NOT expected to be experts in any area of law the client presents or take a prolonged case in court. You may also choose to serve as a "backup attorney" in the AJ "Attorney Bullpen," in which you can volunteer to fill the role of an attorney who cannot make the consultations.

Training: Volunteers must take the [AJ Attorney training](#)

Time Commitment: one 3-4 hour shift

How to Volunteer: Interested volunteers should email judy@administerjustice.org Note: You must be authorized to practice law in your jurisdiction.

Contact Information:

Administer Justice

1750 Grandstand Place

Elgin, IL 60123

<https://www.administerjustice.org>.

Contact: Judy Miller, Esq. judy@administerjustice.org or <https://calendly.com/aj-judymiller>

ASCEND JUSTICE

At Ascend Justice, our mission is to empower individuals and families impacted by gender-based violence or the child welfare system to achieve safety and stability through holistic legal advocacy and system reform. Our Order of Protection Division offers same-day services for Orders of Protection at our Cook County Domestic Violence Courthouse location. We also provide comprehensive services in the following areas at our 17 N. State Street location: family law, immigration, child welfare, incarcerated survivors, housing and employment issues, crime victim compensation applications, and other economic justice issues.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Emergency Order of Protection Hotline

Our Emergency Order of Protection Hotline is an opportunity for volunteers to work directly with survivors of gender-based violence over the phone to help them file for an Emergency Order of Protection. Volunteers interview clients and prepare and submit the petition for an order of protection, which includes the client's affidavit, and other necessary court forms.

Volunteers can be attorneys, paralegals, or other legal professionals; however, each shift must have at least one attorney volunteer. Volunteers should be able to work remotely and have the equipment necessary (laptop, internet access, access to a phone etc.) to communicate with clients and attorneys. ***Fluency in languages other than English is helpful, but by no means required.***

Training: Training is available on demand via the Ascend Justice website and is eligible for CLE credit for Illinois attorneys.

Time Commitment: Hotline shifts are scheduled 9AM-3PM Tuesday and Thursday, however actual active volunteer time is approximately 2.5 hours.

How to Volunteer: Interested volunteers should fill out our volunteer form on our website <https://www.ascendjustice.org/volunteer-application/>

Contact Information:

Cook County Domestic Violence Courthouse

555 W. Harrison, Suite 1900

Chicago, IL 60607

Phone: 312-325-9155

www.ascendjustice.org.

Contact: Kimberly Washington at kwashington@ascendjustice.org

CENTER FOR DISABILITY AND ELDER LAW (CDEL)

CDEL provides legal services to low-income residents of Cook County who are either elderly or who have permanent disabilities. Their work focuses on matters relating to estate and end of life planning, housing matters including evictions and landlord tenant disputes, adult guardianship, consumer debt matters and simple divorces.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Workshops: CDEL offers a variety of Workshops at which clients are able to learn about legal documents and then work with a legal professional to draft, finalize and execute documents. Workshops are conducted in the communities where the clients live. Malpractice insurance is provided to practitioners. Most Workshops occur during weekday business hours, though there are occasional weekend projects. The typical Workshop has three components:

1. Presentations offered on-site at community locations such as senior care centers;
2. Accredited CLE seminars at which volunteer attorneys and paralegals receive training regarding a specific legal topic such as advanced directives, adult guardianship or transfer on death instruments, and our automated system contract express; and
3. Workshops held at a community location, where residents meet individually with an attorney, prepare and execute documents, and receive final, fully-executed documents.

Training: All potential volunteers must attend one required training session.

Time commitment: Following a training, volunteers will participate in one 2-hour workshop.

Address and Contact Information:

205 W. Randolph, Suite 1610

Chicago, IL 60606

General phone: 312-367-1880

www.cdelaw.org

Email: info@cdelaw.org

Contact: Cheryl Lipton, clipton@cdel.org

CHICAGO VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES (CVLS)

CVLS volunteers and staff attorneys represent low-income Chicagoans (the working poor) in a wide variety of civil matters, including litigation, administrative, and non-litigation matters. CVLS cases include divorce, custody, adult and minor guardianship, adoption, mortgage foreclosure, fraud and predatory lending, tort defense, taxation, consumer law and collections defense, landlord-tenant matters, and simple estates and powers of attorney. CVLS prioritizes support for its volunteers.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Malpractice insurance is provided for all opportunities.

Community Legal Clinics: Volunteers can provide on-the-spot legal assistance at one of 19 current legal clinics offered by CVLS on a variety of civil legal issues. At the clinics, attorneys will conduct intake interviews and provide advice and referrals. When appropriate, volunteers may choose to represent a client who has visited the clinic in their legal matter. Paralegals are welcome to participate.

Training: CVLS conducts monthly seminars on a variety of legal topics for its volunteers, as well as training materials covering a wide range of substantive practice areas.

Time commitment: 4-hours on weekday evenings (or) Saturday or Sunday mornings.

Contact: Kathy Koester, Clinic Coordinator: 312-332-7521 or kkoester@cvls.org

Chancery Court Appointment Program: Chancery Court judges appoint CVLS to represent low-income individuals with meritorious claims or defenses in Chancery Court cases. Case types include mortgage foreclosure, administrative appeals, declaratory judgment actions, and evictions.

Training: CVLS provides a written training manual, sample pleadings and briefs, and support and guidance from a staff attorney.

Time commitment: Total time depends on the complexity of the matter (20-100 hours).

Contact: Daniel Quarfoot, 773-389-6310 or dquarfoot@cvls.org

Guardian Ad Litem for Adults with Disabilities: The Probate Court appoints CVLS to serve as Guardians ad litem (GALs) for alleged disabled adults. A volunteer GAL meets with the client at his or her residence (or over Zoom), reviews medical and other records, and writes a report for the court detailing the investigation. Typically, only one court appearance is required.

Training: 2 hour program specific training. CVLS also provides detailed, written training materials, sample pleadings and briefs, and support and guidance from a staff attorney.

Time commitment: One home/zoom visit, time required to complete written court report, and one court appearance.

Contact: Lisa Murphy, 312-332-7546 or lmurphy@cvls.org

Guardian Ad Litem for Minors: The Probate Court appoints CVLS to serve as Guardians ad litem (GALs) for children in contested or problematic minor guardianship cases. A volunteer GAL investigates the parties, prepares a written report for the Court, and represents the child's best interests in court proceedings.

Training: 2 hour program specific training. CVLS also provides detailed, written training materials, sample pleadings and briefs, and support and guidance from a staff attorney.

Time commitment: Varies depending on case.

Contact: Rebekah Rashidfarokhi, 312-332-7399 or arr@cvls.org

Panel Referral Program: Volunteer attorneys handle pro bono civil cases in many areas of law. A CVLS staff person will call or email an interested volunteer, describe the case, and the volunteer can accept or decline it. CVLS makes an effort to match volunteers with cases that meet their interests, skill sets, and available time, and provides extensive support throughout the case.

Training: CVLS conducts monthly seminars on a variety of legal topics for its volunteers and has training manuals covering a wide range of substantive areas of practice. CVLS attorneys are also available to provide sample pleadings and briefs, support and guidance.

Time commitment: Varies depending on case.

Contact: Kristen Harrison, 312-332-6436 or kharrison@cvls.org

Child Representative Program: The Domestic Relations and Parentage Courts appoint CVLS to serve as a Child Representative for children in contested custody cases. Volunteer attorneys investigate the issues and parties, negotiate with the parties, enlist and recommend outside services when appropriate and advocate for the child in and out of court.

Training: 3 hour program specific training. CVLS also provides detailed, written training materials, sample pleadings and briefs, and support and guidance from a staff attorney.

Time commitment: Varies depending on case.

Contact: Robert Zielinski, 312-332-6434 or rzielinski@cvls.org

Early Resolution Program (ERP): Volunteer attorneys provide advice-only consultations to small landlords, including providing information about alternatives to litigation such as rental assistance, mediation, and repayment plans.

Training: 1 hour program specific training. CVLS also provides detailed, written training materials and support and guidance from a staff attorney.

Time commitment: Typically only 3-6 hours per case.

Contact: Lauren Cherney, 312-407-6991 or lcherney@cvls.org

Probate Court Assistance Project (PCAP): Volunteers provide pro bono representation to low-income individuals referred to CVLS by Probate judges for assistance with their decedent's estate case. Volunteer attorneys litigate estate cases or find extra-judicial solutions in order to marshal family assets.

Training: Various online seminars on this topic are available. CVLS also provides detailed, written training materials, sample pleadings, and support and guidance from a staff attorney.

Time commitment: Varies depending on case.

Contact: Lisa Murphy, 312-332-7546 or lmurphy@cvls.org

Address and General Contact Information:

33 N. Dearborn Street, Suite 400

Chicago, IL 60602

General phone: 312-332-1624

<http://www.cvls.org>

Contact: Meg Benson, Executive Director: mbenson@cvls.org

CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION'S MEDIA & CIVIC EDUCATION INC.

The CBA Media and Civic Education, Inc. is the charitable entity of The Chicago Bar Association, and its mission is to offer educational programming to help Chicago area students better understand our Constitution and the nation's legal system, instill knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as U.S. Citizens and bring awareness to racial justice and restorative justice principles. CBA Media and Civic Education Inc. does this through the **Edward J. Lewis II Lawyers in the Classroom program (LIC)**, also known as the **CBA Lawyers in the Classroom program**, which partners with nearly 600 attorney volunteers, 5000 students in 60 schools across Chicago.

The CBA Lawyers in the Classroom program originated with Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago (CRFC) and has been in existence for more than 30 years. CRFC was a non-profit organization that worked at the national level in the design and quality of law-related education programs for elementary and secondary school students and their teachers. In November of 2019, the Lawyers in the Classroom program transitioned to the CBA's charitable entity, and today CBA Lawyers in the Classroom program continues to partner volunteer attorneys with teachers and students in 2nd-8th grade classrooms across the Chicagoland area. The CBA Lawyers in the Classroom program and its curriculum allows students to critically think about, collaborate, and discuss real-life cases, while it also permits students the opportunity to think about how they can put their civic knowledge into action.

Volunteer Opportunity:

Lawyers in the Classroom: Teams of attorneys from the Chicago area are partnered with elementary and middle school teachers and their students in second- through eighth-grade social studies and literature classes, where they lead class lesson aimed to help students understand the U.S. Constitution and our legal system. Tiffani Watson, LIC Managing Director trains attorneys to lead interactive lessons, provides teaching materials, and matches them with school partners.

- *Training:* Attorneys attend a one-hour training.
- *Time commitment:* Attorney volunteers are asked to make **three visits** to the classroom over the course of a school year. Each visit takes 2-3 hours, with the inclusion of travel time.

Address and Contact Information:

321 S. Plymouth Ct.

Chicago, IL 60604

General phone: 312-554-2060

<https://lnkd.in/gEhjwx72>

Contact: To participate with the Federal Government Pro Bono Program group, please contact – Andrea Button, Andrea.Button@sba.gov. For general questions about the CBA Lawyers in the Classroom program, please contact Tiffani M. Watson, M.Ed. twatson@chicagobar.org 312-554-2060

EQUIP FOR EQUALITY

Equip for Equality's primary goal is to protect the civil and human rights of people with disabilities through self-advocacy and assistance, legal services, public policy, monitoring, and training. Legal services are provided primarily in the areas of Civil Rights, Abuse and Neglect, and Special Education representation and advocacy.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Malpractice insurance is provided for all opportunities.

- Special Education Clinic: In 2007, EFE launched a Special Education Clinic to consolidate the various special education services the organization provides. Opportunities for volunteers include: 1) staffing the Clinic's Help Line to answer questions parents have about their child's rights; 2) developing written self-help special education materials; 3) presenting special education legal rights information at training seminars; 4) representing students with disabilities at annual Individualized Educational Program meetings, which establish the services and accommodations a student will be given along with scholastic and transition goals; and 5) representing students at mediations and administrative due process hearings. The time for volunteering for the Special Education Clinic would vary depending on the type of volunteer project the person chooses.
- Employment Rights Helpline: In 2017, EFE launched a new Employment Rights Helpline to provide legal advice and self-advocacy assistance to people with disabilities who have employment issues related to their disability. Pro bono attorneys will play a vital role in the success of the Helpline. Pro bono attorneys will conduct intake for new callers and can provide callers with information about their legal rights, as well as advice and strategies that will help callers succeed in the workplace and challenge discriminatory employment actions. This is an at-your-desk pro bono opportunity that allows attorneys great flexibility. Attorneys can choose the number of calls assigned to them each month, and the time commitment for each assignment is approximately 1-3 hours. The Helpline also serves as a portal to longer term employment discrimination representation. Paralegals and other non-attorneys are free to volunteer for the Helpline.
- Probate Representation: In Illinois, adults with disabilities can have a guardianship placed over them if they are deemed unable to make decisions for themselves or are unable to care for themselves. At EFE, we serve as independent counsel for people with disabilities who are seeking to oppose a guardianship petition or who wish to have an existing guardianship modified or terminated. Unlike a guardian *ad litem* who is asked to represent the person's "best interest," our role is to represent the person's "expressed interest." In some of these cases, the client's goals are not opposed and the volunteer would get experience entering evidence into the record, but it would essentially be an uncontested matter. This type of case would be good for someone who has no litigation experience but is seeking to get comfortable in court. Other cases are more contentious and would require putting on the evidence of a medical expert and cross-examining the expert of the opposition.

Address and Contact Information:

20 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 300

Chicago, IL 60602

Website: www.equipforequality.org

General phone: 312-341-0022

Contact: Olga Pribyl, Olga@equipforequality.org or 312-895-7321.

[VOLUNTEER CONTACT FORM](#)

ILLINOIS FREE LEGAL ANSWERS

Illinois Free Legal Answers is a secure, confidential website (IL.freelegalanswers.org) where qualified clients post civil legal questions that are answered by volunteer attorneys. It is convenient, low-risk, and short-term.

Volunteer Opportunity:

Volunteer attorneys can log in anywhere at any convenient time. Volunteers can preview questions, then select only questions in an area of law they are knowledgeable about. Volunteers remain anonymous to the client. There is no face-to-face or court hearings. All client interactions are limited scope and online. Legal Answers volunteers serve lower-income residents across Illinois by giving them legal advice and the confidence to represent themselves.

Importantly, there is no expert review of answers to legal questions prior to publication, so the volunteer must be competent in the area of the law addressed in the answer. The Free Legal Answers program offers training and resources to help volunteers answer frequently asked questions. Volunteers report that they have successfully used the resources available to do research and respond to selected questions.

Free Legal Answers is a project of the American Bar Association which provides malpractice insurance for all volunteers. The Illinois state administrator is the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) which provides training for volunteers, as well as ongoing support and mentorship.

Address and Contact Information:

<https://pili.org/pro-bono/legal-answers/>

Contact: Jessica Schneider, Senior Managing Attorney, PILI, jschneider@pili.org, 312-832-5125

LEGAL AID CHICAGO (LAC, formerly LAF)

For over 50 years, Legal Aid Chicago has provided free civil legal assistance to people living in poverty in metropolitan Chicago. Cases include situations such as wrongful eviction, a veteran seeking their benefits earned from service, or securing an order of protection for a domestic violence survivor. Legal Aid Chicago attorneys and staff advocate for and collaborate with disadvantaged communities. Inactive, retired and attorneys licensed in other states may be eligible to volunteer pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 756(k).

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Remote Opportunities:
 - ***Advanced Directives and Property Transfers (ADAPT)***: Advise clients in preparing Powers of Attorney for Health Care and Property, Living Wills, and Transfer on Death Instruments, to allow for the transfer of ownership of a home upon death. Volunteers conduct telephone interviews with clients, then prepare these important documents for clients according to their wishes. Time commitment is roughly 3 hours per client. Online training available, along with support from Legal Aid Chicago attorneys.
 - ***Criminal Records Relief***: Prepare petitions for expungement and sealing for clients seeking criminal records relief who have been screened by Legal Aid Chicago. 3-4 hours per case, including phone consultation with client and document preparation. Online training available, along with support from Legal Aid Chicago attorneys. **Note: These cases have potential criminal matters associated with them and therefore are not appropriate for DOJ employees pursuant to 5 CFR 3801.106(b)(ii).**
 - ***Eviction Prevention in Chicagoland (EPIC)***: Provide advice and assist with settlement to help clients avoid eviction. Online training available, along with back-up support and co-counseling throughout each case from Legal Aid Chicago attorneys.
 - Brief Advice: 1 hour per shift, volunteer signs up per their availability.
 - Extended Representation: 5-10 hours over the course of 2-3 weeks to assist with settlement.
 - ***Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline Project***: Prepare juvenile expungement petitions to help clear juvenile records, which can hold youth back from employment, education, and housing. 1-3 hours per client, schedule non-urgent and timing flexible. Online training available, along with support from Legal Aid Chicago attorneys. **Note: These cases have potential criminal matters associated with them and therefore are not appropriate for DOJ employees pursuant to 5 CFR 3801.106(b)(ii).**
 - ***Pro Bono Panel***: Receive an occasional email containing cases where Legal Aid Chicago seeks collaboration with or help from a volunteer attorney. Includes both transactional and litigation matters. Time commitment varies, no formal training provided but Legal Aid Chicago attorneys will provide mentorship and ongoing support as necessary.
- In-Person Opportunities:

- ***Order of Protection Litigation Project:*** Direct representation to victims of domestic violence in the Maybrook Courthouse. 3-9 week representation with 1-2 court appearances. Must join Pro Bono Network, which will provide online training. Note: DOJ attorneys must have a criminal background check done to be sure no criminal charges are pending against either party before seeking approval to handle these cases in order to avoid violating 5 CFR 3801.106(b)(ii).
- ***Woodlawn Legal Clinic:*** This community-based legal clinic has been open for more than a decade and operates in the Woodlawn neighborhood, in partnership with the AKArama Foundation. Legal Aid Chicago's clinics were founded to make legal services more accessible throughout Chicago's communities, allowing people to have their stories heard, in person, within their own neighborhoods. Every month, volunteer attorneys, along with University of Chicago law students, interview clients to gather an understanding of clients' legal issues and goals. With guidance from Legal Aid Chicago attorneys, clients are advised on their legal options and guided on next steps. Time commitment is one, 2-hour clinic per month, with no expertise or specific legal knowledge required.

Address and Contact Information:

120 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 900

Chicago, IL 60603

General phone: 312-341-1070

www.legalaidchicago.org

Contact: Melissa Picciola (volunteer@legalaidchicago.org)

[VOLUNTEER APPLICATION](#)

WILLS FOR HEROES (program of the Chicago Bar Association)

The Chicago Bar Association “Wills for Heroes” programs provides assistance with essential estate planning documents free of charge to U.S. veterans and first responders.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- At “Wills for Heroes” events, volunteer attorneys (who need no experience) prepare basic Wills and Powers of Attorney for veterans, first responders, and their spouses or partners. For more information, including a list of upcoming program dates, visit the webpage below. Malpractice insurance is provided.

Address and Contact Information:

Events at the Chicago Police Headquarters

3510 S. Michigan Ave.

Chicago, IL 60653

[WEBPAGE](#)

General information: 312-554-2031 or willsforheroes@chicagobar.org.

Contacts: John Festa: John@JPFLawOffice.com and Sharmon Paris paris20law@gmail.com