

Marquette University Law School  
Pro Bono Program  
Student Handbook 2011-2012

Be The Difference

*It is the daily; it is the small; it is the cumulative injuries of little people that we are here to protect...If we are able to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment:*

*Thou shalt not ration justice.*

*Learned Hand*

*Address at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Legal Aid Society of New York, Feb. 16, 1951*



MARQUETTE  
UNIVERSITY

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LAW SCHOOL

OFFICE OF PUBLIC SERVICE



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## WHY PRO BONO?

“The best part of law school for me personally.” Those are the words written by one student when asked to participate in an anonymous survey about pro bono experience at Marquette University Law School.

That student is not alone. Typically a third or more of the members of each class graduate as a member of the *Pro Bono Society*, meaning they have spent at least 50 hours using their legal skills in unpaid public service during law school. These students are inducted into the *Pro Bono Society* and wear a purple honor cord for service at graduation.

Some student work at the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic or the Legal and Medical Partnership for Families, where students are paired with a volunteer attorney to provide brief legal advice and referral to those in need. Other students get involved with Marquette’s Legal Initiative for Nonprofit Corporations to provide Wisconsin nonprofits with access to free legal advice. Many students work at the Milwaukee Justice Center’s self-help desks where they provide procedural advice to self-represented litigants in the areas of family law and small claims. Others have found opportunity for involvement at the American Civil Liberties Union of

Wisconsin, Disability Rights Wisconsin, the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, the Guardianship Clinic with Children's Hospital, and on trips to the Kenosha Detention Center to interview detained immigrants for the National Immigrant Justice Center.

Why do so many students volunteer? Certainly, their reasons are as complex and unique as the students themselves, but there are common motivations:

- **Commitment to Marquette University's Mission.** Marquette strives to develop men and women who will dedicate their lives to the service of others, actively entering into the struggle for a more just society. We expect all members of the Marquette community, whatever their faith tradition, to give concrete expression to their beliefs by giving of themselves in service to those in need. —*Marquette University's Mission Statement*. This culture of service runs through all parts of the University and is part of what defines the Marquette Lawyer.
- **Recognition of the Need.** All *Pro Bono* participants recognize that the need for lawyers and law students to provide uncompensated legal services for those who can't afford to retain a lawyer is dire. The term "*Pro Bono*" is shorthand for

*“Pro Bono Publico”* which means, “for the good of the public.” And, yes, as the American Bar Association has made clear by enacting Model Rule 6.1 which calls upon every licensed attorney to aspire to perform 50 or more hours of *pro bono* legal service every year, it is indeed for the good of the public that lawyers should pitch in to provide free representation to those for whom the courthouse doors would otherwise be closed.

- **It’s Fulfilling.** Ask any Marquette University Law School *Pro Bono* student participant and they will tell you that they felt their *pro bono* service made a difference to the person they served. And in surveys provided to clients accessing the legal services at the Marquette University Legal Clinic, the overwhelming majority report being very satisfied with the service they received from the volunteer attorney and volunteer law student.
- **It’s Fun.** Believe it or not, sometimes you might need a break from law school courses. You’re furthering your career path just as much (or perhaps even more) by participating in a *pro bono* project as you are by learning your course materials.
- **Students Learn a Lot.** Marquette University Law School *Pro Bono* Program volunteers learn

about family law and small claims processes. They learn about the process required for a young adult with a severe disability to get a legal guardian. They research legal issues and find resources for unrepresented clients at the MVLC and LAMP. They work directly with clients, gaining valuable interview skills. They help write bi-laws for Wisconsin nonprofits. And most projects give students a chance to meet and work with attorneys. What better way to network than by showing your commitment to service?

- **Graduate With Honors.** Students who complete 50 or more hours of *pro bono* work are inducted into the Pro Bono Society each spring. They are recognized at graduation with a purple honor cord for service. Student who complete 120 or more hours receive special recognition.

## **Who Can Participate in Marquette University Law School's *Pro Bono* Program?**

Everyone. Every student at Marquette University Law School regardless of her or his career objectives can—and is strongly encouraged—to participate in the *Pro Bono* program.

## **How Do I Earn *Pro Bono* Distinction?**

To qualify for the Pro Bono Society, to which students are inducted each spring, students must perform 50 or more hours of eligible *pro bono* service during their enrollment at the law school.

The requirements for eligible *pro bono* service are that it be:

- **Work that is primarily legal in nature,**
- **Voluntary and not for credit or compensation,**
- **Supervised by a licensed attorney or law faculty, and**
- **For the benefit of persons who are indigent or otherwise lack access to justice, or a nonprofit organization whose mission is to serve the same.**

Currently, the Office of Public Service operates numerous *pro bono* projects which are described in the *Marquette University Law School Pro Bono Projects* brochure. Students who wish to find an individualized placement that fits within the above guidelines should speak with Angela Schultz, Marquette University Law School's Pro Bono Coordinator.

## **What Hours Count toward the Pro Bono Society?**

Students will be given *pro bono* hours for participating in any of the pro bono projects outlined in the *Pro Bono Projects* brochure. Additionally:

- Any pro bono project that meets the criteria for *pro bono*. Students should have their project approved by the Pro Bono Coordinator before they begin.
- Substantive training directly relating to the *pro bono* project. All “Brown Bag CLEs” sponsored by MVLC count.
- Hours in excess of for-credit supervised field placement where the placement satisfies the *pro bono* criteria listed above.
- Hours in excess of those for which a student is receiving summer funding at a public interest placement where the placement satisfies the *pro bono* criteria listed above.
- Note: Travel time does *not* count towards *pro bono* hours.

## **How do I Report My Hours?**

If you are volunteering at a Marquette University Law School Pro Bono site, there will be a computer for you to electronically record your hours.

If you are doing *pro bono* work at an external placement, you should fill out a paper timesheet and have it signed by your supervising attorney. Paper timesheets are available online (under the “Public Service” link, click on “Pro Bono Opportunities.”)

### **What Training is Required?**

MVLC, M-LINC, and LAMP require the same training. The two-hour training gives a general overview of the opportunities, discusses ethical issues, and describes the student’s role at each site. Other *pro bono* projects have their own training sessions. **Look in the Law News (emailed weekly) for training dates and registration information.**

## How Do I Sign Up for the *Pro Bono* Program?

- **Make the Pro Bono Pledge!** Make the commitment to yourself and your community to do 50 or more hours of *pro bono* work throughout your law school career. Pro Bono Pledge Cards are available in the Eisenberg Suite, Room 138. Return the pledge card to Angela Schultz in 138J.
  
- **Attend the *Pro Bono Opportunities Panel and Pizza Lunch* on September 1, 2011.**

### Questions?

Contact Pro Bono Coordinator Angela Schultz at [angela.schultz@marquette.edu](mailto:angela.schultz@marquette.edu) or drop by 138J.