

Questions about this project or pro bono generally? Contact angela.schultz@marquette.edu

ABA Free Legal Answers: Brief Legal Advice by Email

A brief guide for law students

[Wisconsin Free Legal Answers](#) is a website operated by the American Bar Association and the State Bar of Wisconsin. The purpose of the website is to increase access to legal advice and information about non-criminal legal matters for those who cannot afford it. Volunteer lawyers create an account to answer questions posted by low-income Wisconsinites from all around the state. When the Covid-19 crisis hit in March 2020, this was one of the only remote pro bono programs available. Marquette Law School quickly devised a way for law students to get involved with the help of Legal Action of Wisconsin Attorney JJ Moore. JJ assigns questions to interested law students. Law students work to draft an answer to the question and collaborate with JJ until the question is ready to submit back to the client.

Read Past Questions & Answers

A spreadsheet of containing past questions asked by Wisconsinites and answered by Marquette Law Students is available for you to review. You might find a question from a past case that is similar to a question you will work on and you are welcome to draw from past work if you find it useful. To request access to the spreadsheet, email JJ (JJM@legalaction.org) or Dean Schultz (angela.schultz@marquette.edu)

Use Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic (MVLC) Research Materials

Learn about the *MVLC Gold Guides* on [this brief training video](#). The video is intended for MVLC volunteers and references a “daily email.” You will not receive the “daily email” and should just focus on the information about how to find and browse the guides.

- [List of Available Gold Guides](#)
- [MVLC Gold Guides](#) (works best in Chrome)

Format of your Response

Drafts should be between 1/2 page to 2 pages in length. Write your drafts like you are addressing the client directly. Think, how would you advise the client? The final answer will be a collaboration between you and the attorney to answer the client's question. Be bold in your analysis and rely on the attorney to advise you.

Your drafts are likely to include most of the following: applicable statutes or laws, analysis of the strength/weaknesses of the client's claim/defense, available local resources, forms for the client to accomplish their goals, and other information you deem relevant.

If you are unsure if you are on the right track, write a comment or note explaining your thinking and asking for feedback. The attorney will provide you feedback on whether you are on the right track or not. This is your opportunity to issue spot and advise a client safely before the final answer is submitted to the client.

Timing of your Work

You will receive your question by email and have a few days to complete your first draft. After your initial draft has been reviewed and suggestions made by the supervising attorney, please revise and submit your revised draft within 24-hours.

Collaborate with Others

Don't hesitate to reach out to JJ Moore (attyjjmoore@gmail.com) or Angela Schultz (angela.schultz@marquette.edu) to toss around ideas or ask questions while you are in the drafting phase. You could also invite a law school classmate to join you in this work and take on a question or two together.