



SCHOOL OF LAW

Pro Bono Program

# **SUPERVISING ATTORNEY MANUAL 2024-2025**

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The UNC School of Law Pro Bono Program depends on supervising attorneys to provide students with an opportunity to serve the community and to develop lawyering skills. Thank you for your service to others and for sharing your work with students.

## **I. QUICK FACTS:**

We understand that our partners are busy and may not have time to read the entire supervisor manual. The following information may be most helpful to you. For more detailed information, please refer to the individual sections of the manual.

- 1. Projects may be posted for students using our [online form](#). We recruit student volunteers throughout the school year and recruit heavily in late fall for Winter Break.**
- 2. All projects submitted must have a supervising attorney. The attorney must be licensed in the appropriate jurisdiction for the project. In organizations where volunteers are managed by non-attorneys, projects may be submitted and supervised by someone who is not an attorney, but there should be a licensed attorney involved and available for questions and to review student work product.**
- 3. Projects may involve a variety of tasks (examples in Footnote 1 below), but must be law-related activities and must be on behalf of:**
  - a. person(s) of limited financial means; OR**
  - b. person(s) with limited access to legal representation; OR**
  - c. nonprofit, civic, community, religious, or governmental organizations**
- 4. Supervising attorneys are expected to provide clear directions, be available to answer questions, provide regular contact with volunteers, and give feedback on student work product.**
- 5. The Pro Bono Program cannot take on individual cases for representation and is not able to provide malpractice insurance.**

## II. HOW TO POST A PRO BONO PROJECT

Throughout the year, projects may be posted using our [online form](#). Please be as detailed as possible. The details that you share in the form are helpful for recruiting student volunteers and giving them clear expectations. Submission instructions are available [here](#).

If you are encountering technical issues submitting a project, please fill out [this project submission form](#) and email it to [attorneyprojectscoord@unc.edu](mailto:attorneyprojectscoord@unc.edu). The Attorney Projects Coordinator will reach out to you with further instructions.

For projects to be completed over Winter and Spring Break, a special project submission form will be emailed to our attorney contact list. You may also submit these projects through the above online form.

We send email reminders every other month encouraging project submissions. If you do not receive emails from us but would like to, please contact [attorneyprojects@uncprobono.org](mailto:attorneyprojects@uncprobono.org).

If you would like to brainstorm the details of your project or have a project that may be a better fit for an in-person clinic or larger effort, please contact the Director of Pro Bono Initiatives.

## III. WHAT COUNTS AS PRO BONO AT UNC SCHOOL OF LAW?

1. The following criteria must be met for a student's work to qualify as pro bono for the purposes of recognition by the UNC School of Law Pro Bono Program:
  - a. The law student must engage in law-related activities<sup>1</sup>;
  - b. The law student's work must be supervised and/or approved by an attorney where supervision and/or approval includes, at a minimum, attorney review of student work product;

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<sup>1</sup> Law related activities may include but are not limited to: legal research, drafting pleadings, collecting and analyzing data, reviewing discovery or transcripts, client intake, drafting template letters, creating educational materials that help people understand legal concepts, staffing legal hotlines, etc. Law related activities do not include copying or scanning documents, creating websites, or creating social media posts unless the posts engage the student volunteer in the interpretation of law and provide legal education.

- i. If a student is certified in a special area of law that allows them to perform law-related activities<sup>2</sup>, then they need not be supervised by an attorney, as long as their activity is within the scope of their certification<sup>3</sup>;
    - ii. Students performing any presentation qualifying as Pro Bono (such as Know Your Rights presentations) must have an attorney present to supervise the presentation and answer any questions about the legal information provided
  - c. Receiving, or expecting to receive, class credit for law-related activities precludes these activities from qualifying for pro bono credit. Receiving monetary compensation for law-related activities precludes these activities from qualifying as pro bono credit;
  - d. The law-related services must be provided to the client for free or at a substantially reduced rate (whether reduced rate work will qualify as pro bono may depend on several factors, including the actual rate being charged the client, whether or not the attorney would bill for work performed by students, the economic factors preventing the client from obtaining full-rate services, and the population affected by the legal issues involved); AND
  - e. The law related activities must be on behalf of:
    - i. person(s) of limited financial means; OR
    - ii. person(s) with limited access to legal representation; OR
    - iii. nonprofit, civic, community, religious, or governmental organizations
2. The following activities are expressly excluded from qualifying for Pro Bono credit:
- a. Work done on law journals;
  - b. Work resulting in submission of writing into competition or other journals;
  - c. Work on law related symposiums, conferences, and panel discussions;
  - d. Work completed as a Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant;
    - i. Except that a student who works as a Research Assistant with a professor during the summer and whose work primarily involves providing legal services to qualifying clients may log up to 25 pro bono hours per the Summer Hours policy.

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<sup>2</sup> An example of this would be those accredited to practice immigration law through recognized organizations under the U.S. Department of Justice's Recognition and Accreditation Program.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that Student Practice Certifications generally fall out of the scope of pro bono work through the Pro Bono Program. Student Practice Certifications in North Carolina take significant time to acquire and the requests for them must be specific to the supervising attorney, the scope of the work supervised, and the time period of work to be done. The supervising attorney, law student, and the law school must all submit documentation to the North Carolina State Bar. Student Practice Certifications are **not** transferable and only apply to the specific work supervised by the supervising attorney.

- e. Work performed as a result of work required for enrollment in a clinic or externship for credit;
  - i. Except that a student who has successfully completed an externship and then elects to continue working with the externship employer may count the additional hours of work performed as pro bono credit.
- f. Any and all fundraising activities;
- g. Electioneering work performed for a partisan organization during a political campaign where the main objective of the work is to elect a specific candidate or candidates into office; AND
- h. Education of children in grades K-12 about the law or the legal system through an organized program, the purpose of which is to introduce children to the law.

#### **IV. WHO CAN POST OR SUPERVISE A PROJECT?**

All projects submitted must have a supervising attorney. The attorney must be licensed in the appropriate jurisdiction for the project.

Where projects are more policy-related or in organizations where volunteers are managed by non-attorneys, projects may be submitted and supervised by someone who is not an attorney, but there should be a licensed attorney involved and available for questions and to review student work product.

We are not able to provide attorneys or take individual cases for representation. All client files will stay with the supervising attorney of the project. At this time, we are also not able to provide malpractice insurance.

#### **V. WHAT IS REQUIRED OF A SUPERVISING ATTORNEY?**

Supervising attorneys are expected to guide student volunteers through the process of completing the project. Supervising attorneys should:

1. Provide clear directions and guidelines, including any samples;
2. Be available for student questions as needed;
3. Provide regular contact and supervision throughout the project; and
4. Give feedback on student work product.

Supervising attorneys may also involve students in meetings and provide follow-up information regarding project results.

If you have additional research questions or tasks beyond the initial project posting, you may invite the student to take on the additional work, post a new project online, or contact us to recruit more volunteers.

## **VI. HOW DO STUDENTS SIGN UP FOR PROJECTS?**

Projects are posted for students throughout the academic year (and sometimes even during the summer). Before Winter Break, we recruit projects heavily, and students sign up in early to mid-November for projects that they will complete during late December and early January. Similarly, we recruit more in early March for projects to be completed during Spring Break in mid-March.

Students sign up for projects on an online platform, and sign-ups are first-come, first-served. After students sign up for a project, the Pro Bono Board's Attorney Projects Coordinator (or Winter and Spring Break Projects Coordinator) connects them with the supervising attorney.

If you would like to select students through a resume collect or interview process, we suggest that you contact the UNC School of Law [Career Development Office](#).

## **VII. PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS**

In addition to helping attorneys reach unmet legal needs, pro bono projects are an educational opportunity for students. Thus, your feedback is important to help students learn and develop legal skills.

As students begin working on assignments, they often need additional and periodic help, assignment clarification, reassurance, or relief. As the assignment progresses, and again at the completion of it, you should solicit student impressions about performance and convey your impressions about the performance on the assignment. Without periodic feedback, neither you nor the student can effectively evaluate performance and make any necessary changes to result in a final product which closely resembles your goals for the assignment and provides your student with a sense of accomplishment.

If you have concerns about a student's work product, professionalism, or any other aspect of the project, you are welcome to address these concerns with the student volunteer. You may also contact the Director of Pro Bono Initiatives.

## VIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. I am not an attorney. Can I post a project?**

Where projects are more policy-related or in organizations where volunteers are managed by non-attorneys, projects may be submitted and supervised by someone who is not an attorney, but there should be a licensed attorney involved and available for questions and to review student work product.

Unfortunately, if you are an individual seeking representation, we are not able to help.

### **2. I'd prefer to collect resumes and select a student.**

Pro bono projects are available to students on a first-come, first-served basis. If you would like to recruit a law student intern through a resume review or interview process, we encourage you to contact the [UNC School of Law Career Development Office](#).

### **3. I need a student with specific skills or experience.**

We understand that you may be seeking a student who has taken certain courses, has specific language skills, or has some other experience necessary for your project. There is an opportunity for you to note these requirements or preferences on the project form.

### **4. What is the deadline for posting projects?**

There is no deadline. We will take projects at any time, though students do have less availability during the exam periods in early December and late April.

### **5. What types of projects do you accept?**

Student tasks involved in pro bono projects can include research, writing, client intake, litigation preparation, investigation, community education, advocacy, and more. We receive projects that take only an hour or two to complete and projects that require an ongoing commitment throughout the semester or school year.

### **6. My project seems like it could be something much bigger. What can I do to explore options?**

We would love to talk with you more. Please contact the Director of Pro Bono Initiatives.

## IX. CONTACT US



Attorney Projects Coordinator:  
Dylan Silver (he/him)  
attorneyprojectscoord@unc.edu



Winter and Spring Break  
Projects:  
Casey Buttke (she/her)  
winterSBprojcoord@unc.edu



Student Pro Bono Board  
Director:  
Jessica di Lustro (she/her)  
probonostudentdir@unc.edu



Director of Pro Bono Initiatives:  
Meghan Moran (she/her)  
mkmoran@unc.edu

We send regular email reminders every other month encouraging project submissions. If you do not receive emails from us but would like to, please contact attorneyprojectscoord@unc.edu.