

**Columbia Law School – Pro Bono Program, Office of Public
Interest/Public Service Law and Careers
STUDENT-INITIATED PETITION**

Compliance with Pro Bono Guidelines. A pro bono project complies Columbia’s Pro Bono Guidelines if it is:

1. **Law-related.** The project requires knowledge of the law and skills learned in law school for completion.
2. **Supervised by an attorney** (either directly or indirectly). The attorney should be available to answer questions related to the project, provide guidance as needed, and must sign off on the final work product.
3. **In the public interest.** Examples include work that helps those who are under-represented, educates the public about the law, or deals with an issue of public importance from any side of the political spectrum.
4. **Uncompensated.** Students may not receive any form of financial remuneration (salary, stipend, grant, etc.) or academic credit (writing or other) for work associated with this project. If the work is being supervised through a clinic, the Professor must indicate that s/he is not currently enrolled in the clinic, or provide confirmation that the pro bono project is separate from the work required to receive academic credit. If the work is being done in a law firm, s/he may not receive pro bono credit for work done during a week in which s/he is being paid. Work done on behalf of paying clients at a law firm will not qualify for pro bono credit. Students working for public interest employers during their 2L summer are an exception to the above rule and may receive compensation.

*Students must be careful not to engage in legal work without adequate legal supervision and should be familiar with ethical guidelines and the rules of professional responsibility concerning the unauthorized practice of law. In no situation should students represent themselves as attorneys.

Filing Instructions:

What: A Student-Initiated Petition must be completed for pro bono placements that are not “established,” (either listed as an in-house project or in the LawNet database). [Please read our FAQs](#) for additional situations where a Student-Initiated Petition is required, and please email probono@law.columbia.edu if you are not sure whether you need a Petition.

When: A Student-Initiated Petition must be filed *before you begin* pro bono service at this placement.

How: Submit forms or questions via e-mail to probono@law.columbia.edu.

Group Petitions: If the proposed project is to be performed by more than one student, the entire group should submit a single petition with a list of all participants attached. The group should designate a representative for the purposes of contact with the pro bono team.

Student Name: _____ **Class/Grad Year:** _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____

If this is a Group Petition, please provide a list of all participating students’ names.

Name of Organization/Department/Firm for whom you are seeking approval:

Address: _____

Supervisor or Supervising Attorney: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Task Supervisor (if different): _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Description of Organization/Department/Firm (please list the website and include brochures or other written material that might be useful to our review): _____

Project Description (Please be specific about the work you'll be doing. If you are performing research, please explain how this research will be used. Provide extra pages if needed): _____

Expected Start Date: _____ **Number of Hours Committed:** _____

Please describe in detail how your project satisfies the pro bono requirements outlined on the previous page.

Please have the Supervisor review and sign the following statement. Petitions will not be approved without the signature of the Supervising Attorney.

I acknowledge that _____ (name of student) is not an attorney who has been admitted to the bar and, as such, cannot represent or provide legal advice to _____ (name of organization/department/firm) or to its clients. The aforementioned organization/department/firm and its clients will not rely on the student's work product in taking any action or forbearing from any actions that may subject the organization/department/firm, or its clients, to legal process.

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers at Columbia Law School:

Date Petition Filed with PI/PS Office: _____

Signature of Pro Bono Program Representative: _____ Date: _____