



College of Law

PRO BONO PROGRAM GUIDE

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1. INTRODUCTION TO PRO BONO

The origin of the term "pro bono" comes from the Latin phrase *pro bono publico*, which means "for the public good." In the legal profession, pro bono services are performed by an attorney for free or for a substantially reduced fee to assist people with limited means. As leaders, attorneys have an ethical responsibility to their communities, and often, a professional obligation, to perform pro bono work. Syracuse University College of Law's pro bono program is designed to provide professional engagement opportunities to students and to serve the community. To that end, the College of Law uses Rule 6.1 of the American Bar Association's Model Rules of Professional Conduct as a framework for the Program.

2. ABA MODEL RULE 6.1

Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay. A lawyer should aspire to render at least (50) hours of *pro bono publico* legal services per year. In fulfilling this responsibility, the lawyer should:

- a. provide a substantial majority of the (50) hours of legal services without fee or expectation of fee to:
 - i. persons of limited means or
 - ii. charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means; and
- b. provide any additional services through:
 - i. delivery of legal services at no fee or substantially reduced fee to individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights, or charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters in furtherance of their organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources or would be otherwise inappropriate.
 - ii. delivery of legal services at a substantially reduced fee to persons of limited means; or
 - iii. participation in activities for improving the law, the legal system, or the

legal profession.

In addition, a lawyer should voluntarily contribute financial support to organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means.

3. A NEED AND AN OPPORTUNITY

Engaging in pro bono service assists by meeting the legal needs of millions of people who need assistance and cannot afford it. Although there are many legal services that provide representation, the need is far greater than the current services that are available.

As a law student, pro bono work will provide you with an opportunity to enrich your education and develop your legal skills. Students participating in pro bono work garner experience in problem solving, researching, writing, and client interviewing. Pro bono work also exposes you to different areas of law and gives you an opportunity to network with practicing attorneys who could offer you mentorship and references in the future. Additionally, pro bono work helps establish an important habit to carry throughout your career.

4. NEW YORK STATE BAR REQUIREMENT

New York State requires completion of pro bono work as part of the bar application process. Under Rule 520.16 of the Rules of the Court of Appeals, applicants who successfully pass the bar examination in New York must demonstrate that they have performed 50 hours of qualifying pro bono service before applying for admission to practice. This is achieved through the execution of an affidavit by you and your supervisor to be submitted with your character and fitness application.

Requirements, including recording your hours, are different than the College of Law's optional program.

To satisfy Rule 520.16, pro bono tasks must be law-related, performed under the supervision of an attorney, and certified by the attorney as part of your application. The full text of Rule 520.16 is available at:

<https://www.nycourts.gov/ctapps/520rules10.htm#B16> Work for credit is included in this rule.

The New York State Requirement is **mandatory** for bar admission. You and your supervisor will need to complete the Form Affidavit of Compliance to be admitted. For additional guidance on this requirement and for a current version of the Form Affidavit of Compliance, please visit:

<https://www.nycourts.gov/attorneys/probono/baradmissionreqs.shtml>

New York State is currently the only state with a mandatory pre-admission pro bono requirement. For more information visit:

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/pro_bono/

Please note that your supervising attorney must sign the [affidavit](#), you must hold onto this document until you are ready to apply for admission to the New York State Bar. Syracuse University College of Law will not verify your hours for purposes of admission to the New York State Bar. The attorney supervisor at the placement must verify your hours.

5. SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW'S PRO BONO PROGRAM

The College of Law does not require any pro bono hours for graduation. However, the College of Law encourages students to participate in pro bono activities and recognizes students who perform at least 50 hours of qualifying pro bono work before graduation in its Recognition Program, as set forth below.

- Students with a minimum of 50 hours will be listed by name in the Commencement Program.
- Students with >75 hours will receive a Blue Pro Bono Honor Cord and will be listed by name in the Commencement Program.
- Students with >100 hours will receive an Orange Pro Bono Honor Cord and will be listed by name in the Commencement Program.

The top three JD graduating students and the top LLM graduating student with the most pro bono hours will be individually recognized.

While Syracuse University College of Law DOES NOT require any pro bono hours for graduation, students are highly encouraged to participate.

6. COUNTING HOURS AS PRO BONO WORK UNDER THE COLLEGE OF LAW PROGRAM

To count as pro bono work under the College of Law's program:

- Work is not for academic credit or financial compensation.
- Work is law-related and necessitates the use of legal skills.
- Work is performed under the supervision of an attorney.
- Work is done on behalf of a nonprofit organization, a legal services organization, a government agency, or a private firm; and
- Work provides pro bono legal services **directly to persons with limited means**.

7. HOURS THAT DO NOT COUNT AS PRO BONO UNDER THE COLLEGE OF LAW PROGRAM

- Work that does not primarily focus on serving or delivering legal services to those of limited means. Examples of work that does not qualify based on this factor include work as an intern for a local, state or federal judge, work at a District Attorneys' Office, or work at a U.S. Attorney's Office.
- Community Service activities without a legal focus, such as volunteering at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, blood drives, animal shelters, tutoring, or other activities without a legal focus.
- Work on political campaigns
- Work that is paid or for academic credit, which includes College of Law Clinic hours

The College of Law's pro bono program is for the recognition of actual hours performed. Therefore, only hours spent on actual service are to be submitted. No hours for training, traveling, or preparing for a program or an event count.

If you are unsure if an activity will count as pro bono under the rules, please contact the student Pro Bono Fellow or Director Dafni Kiritsis (dkiritsi@syr.edu) for clarification.

8. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COLLEGE OF LAW PROGRAM AND THE NYS BAR REQUIREMENT

Unlike the College of Law's Program, under NYS Rule 520.16, receipt of academic credit or financial compensation does not disqualify the work as pro bono. Therefore, hours spent on clinics, externships, and paid internships may fulfill Rule 520.16. These do NOT count as pro bono work under the College of Law's program.

Also, unlike the NYS Rule, the College of Law's Program requires that the pro bono work focus on serving or delivering legal services to those of limited means. Work that satisfies this component includes but is not limited to work at legal aid organizations, public defender offices, work for pro bono clients of a firm, and work on the College's various programs including the Cold Case Initiative (Professor Johnson), Impunity Watch News (Professor True-Frost), and the Syrian Accountability Project (Professor Matz).

College of Law Recognition Program

Optional pro bono service program for graduation recognition.
Must meet the following criteria:

1. Work cannot be for academic credit or financial compensation;
2. Work is law related and necessitates the use of legal skills;
3. Work is performed under the supervision of an attorney;
4. Work is done on behalf of a nonprofit organization, a legal services organization, a government agency, or a private firm, and
5. Work provides pro bono legal services directly to persons with limited means.

You must log your hours in 12Twenty and provide a description of the work. You can log all your hours at once for a broad timeframe and select the last date of your pro bono work when entering the total hours.

For graduation recognition, all hours must be logged on or before March 15th of the year you graduate. All hours will be reviewed and approved after this date.

NYS Pro Bono Requirement

New York State requires completion of pro bono work as part of the bar application process.

Under Rule 520.16 of the Rules of the Court of Appeals, 50 hours of qualifying pro bono service is required before applying for admission to practice.

An affidavit signed by you and your supervisor must be submitted with your character and fitness application. You must hold onto this document until you are ready to apply for admission.

The College of Law will not verify your hours for purposes of NYS bar admission. The attorney supervisor at the placement must verify your hours. Do not log NYS pro bono hours in 12Twenty.

<http://ww2.nycourts.gov/attorneys/probono/baradmissionreqs.shtml>

9. WHERE TO FIND PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

The College of Law, Career Services, the Pro Bono Fellow, and student organizations work hard to find as many opportunities as possible. Pro Bono opportunities are posted on 12twenty. The Pro Bono Fellow will also communicate these opportunities to the student body through regular emails. There is a General Interest Meeting every fall where students can hear more about different pro bono opportunities at SUCOL and in the greater community.

Student organizations host various community service and pro bono opportunities as well. Be sure to connect with them directly to let them know of your interest. Students are also encouraged to create new opportunities for pro bono service.

Also, visit the pro bono website for a list of local legal aid organizations:

<https://law.syracuse.edu/academics/experiential-courses-clinics-externships/pro-bono-program/>

10. ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Students who participate in pro bono service projects (either sponsored by the College of Law or individually sought) should treat the placement and/ or assignment with the same level of professionalism that is expected at an internship or any other job placement. A clear understanding of all expectations and duties should be discussed before accepting any pro bono assignment. Law students are subject to the same ethical standards and professional duties as attorneys. These rules should be discussed with your supervisor. Students should not hesitate to seek guidance and clarification.

Unauthorized Practice of Law

Law students shall NOT engage in the unauthorized practice of law. Law students should not provide legal advice, assistance, or representation to anyone unless it is under the supervision of a licensed attorney. Any law student providing any such service or advice directly to a non-lawyer will likely violate New York State's statutory prohibition on the unauthorized practice of law. All states have prohibitions against unlicensed practice, and this is an area routinely considered by state character committees when evaluating applicants for admission to the bar.

Conflicts of Interest

Law students should be aware if there are any conflicts of interest in the pro bono case or project that they are assigned. Students should be screened in advance by the supervisor or host of the project. However, if a conflict should arise or if a student is uncertain, the student should immediately raise this concern with their supervisor. Conflicts can occur as a result of the student participating in legal clinics, externships, internships, or other pro bono projects with private firms, government employers, and clerkships.

Client Confidentiality

Law students must refrain from discussing or disclosing any information about clients. There are confidentiality rules that protect the interest of clients, and this protection expands to all aspects of their representation including any documents, interviews, research, communications (oral or written), and other relevant parties. While there are exceptions to client confidentiality rules, the law student should not discuss or disclose any information without express permission from the supervising attorney. When in doubt, law students should always seek clarification or guidance from the supervising attorney.

11. HOW TO SUBMIT PRO BONO HOURS

The following instructions are only for the College of Law Recognition program. See page 4 for the New York State Bar process.

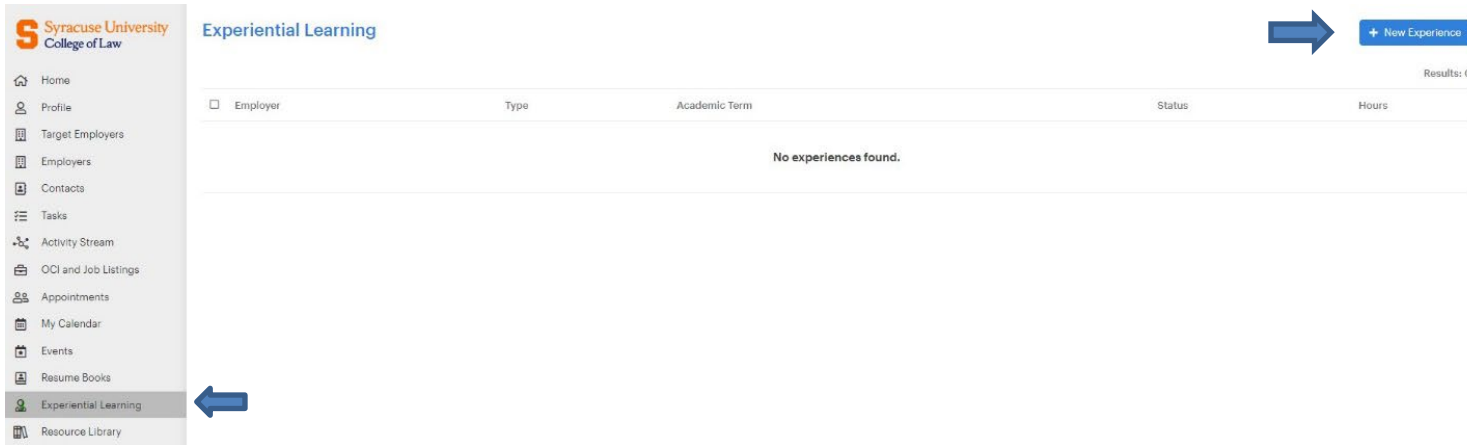
To log your pro bono hours for honors at graduation, go to the College of Law's 12Twenty (<https://law-syr.12twenty.com/Account/Login>). Log in with your SU email address and password.

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT: All pro bono hours must be reported by March 15th of your graduation year to receive recognition at Commencement. The Pro Bono Advisory Committee will review all reported hours for eligibility. All hours will be approved or denied by early April of your graduation year and in advance of Commencement.

How to enter Pro Bono Hours on 12Twenty

Log into [12Twenty](#)

Choose **Experiential Learning** from the left Toolbar



Syracuse University
College of Law

Experiential Learning

+ New Experience

Employer	Type	Academic Term	Status	Hours
No experiences found.				

Click **+New Experience** on the top right corner of the screen

Enter **Employer and Supervisor's details**


Create New Experience

Cancel Save

Basics

Employer*	<input type="text" value="Syracuse University College of Law"/>
Experiential Learning Type*	<input type="text" value="Pro-Bono"/>
Pro Bono Type*	<input type="text" value="Government"/>
Address	<input type="text" value="950 Irving Ave"/>
Country*	<input type="text" value="United States (USA)"/>
City*	<input type="text" value="Syracuse - NY"/>

Supervisor

Contact	<div> Suervisor's Name × Syracuse University College of Law</div>
Supervisor Phone*	<input type="text" value="3154431941"/>
Supervisor Email*	<input type="text" value="supervisor@syr.edu"/>

When

Start Date*	<input type="text" value="08/01/2022"/>
End Date*	<input type="text" value="09/01/2022"/>
Academic Term*	<input type="text" value="Summer 2022"/>

Cancel Save



Click **Save**

Click **Submit** on the top right corner of the Screen



[Details](#) [Hour Log](#) [Documents and Forms](#)

Basics

Employer Syracuse University College of Law
Experiential Learning Type Pro-Bono
Pro Bono Type Government
Street Address 950 Irving Ave
City Syracuse - NY
Country United States (USA)

Supervisor

Supervisor Supervisor's Name
Supervisor Phone 3154431941
Supervisor Email supervisor@syr.edu

When

Start Date 08/01/2022
End Date 09/01/2022
Academic Term Summer 2022

Click on [Hour Log](#), then the **+Add Hours button to enter your hours.**

← → ↻ [law-syr.12twenty.com/experiences#/experiences/create](#)

[Details](#) [Hour Log](#) [Documents and Forms](#)

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW PRO BONO RECOGNITION PROGRAM

This is an optional pro bono service program for graduation recognition. In order for your pro bono work to qualify it must meet the following criteria:

1. Work cannot be for academic credit or financial compensation;
2. Work is law related and necessitates the use of legal skills;
3. Work is performed under the supervision of an attorney;
4. Work is done on behalf of a nonprofit organization, a legal services organization, a government agency, or a private firm, and
5. Work provides pro bono legal services directly to persons with limited means.

You must log your hours in 12Twenty and provide a description of the work.

For graduation recognition, all hours must be logged before March 15th of the year you graduate!

Total Hours: 0



[+ Add Hours](#)

[Export Hour Log](#)

Date	Hours	Description
------	-------	-------------

There are no hours logged.

ATTENTION!!!

****If you do not see the +Add Hours button, you will need to refresh the screen, then go back into your experience****

← → ↻ [law-syr.12twenty.com/experiences#/experiences/create](#)

Add the date, number of hours, and description in the entry, then click **Save**.

Create New Hour Log Entry

Date*

Hours*

Description

Continue to add more hours to this experience until you have finished the assignment. When completed, click the **Submit for Approval** button.

Syracuse University College of Law In Progress [Back to List](#)

| Summer 2022

Details Hour Log Documents and Forms

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW PRO BONO RECOGNITION PROGRAM
This is an optional pro bono service program for graduation recognition. In order for your pro bono work to qualify it must meet the following criteria:

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5. Work provides pro bono legal services directly to persons with limited means.

You must log your hours in 12Twenty and provide a description of the work.
For graduation recognition, all hours must be logged before March 15th of the year you graduate!

Total Hours: 4

Date	Hours	Description
08/12/2022	4	

You can track your experience after you have submitted for approval

Syracuse University College of Law Pending Final Approval

| Summer 2022

Submitted for Final Approval: 08/12/2022, 11:40am EDT