



PACE LAW SCHOOL  
P A C E U N I V E R S I T Y

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTER

## PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES for LAW STUDENTS

Acquire hands-on legal skills while assisting underserved people, organizations and communities. Participation in many pro bono programs will count toward the New York State 50-hour pro bono requirement.

Training dates and volunteer opportunities are sent out to all law students in weekly e-blasts from the PILC; most *on-campus* trainings take place once per semester. For more information email the PILC at [publicinterest@law.pace.edu](mailto:publicinterest@law.pace.edu).

### Animal Law

#### ***Humane Education Project***

The Humane Education Project, sponsored by the Pace Student Animal Legal Defense Fund (SALDF), is designed to teach school children to think about animals and how we share common needs and space. In so doing, the children learn to be empathic to animals and to make appropriate decisions on how to behave with respect to animals and to other people. In the training, law students will learn about the program material, what is expected of facilitators, the specific objectives, and how to encourage student participation. The facilitators will then volunteer to help present the program to local school children, often in the Yonkers school system.

### Debtor/Creditor Issues

#### ***Civil Legal Advice and Resource Office (CLARO)***

The Westchester CLARO program provides limited legal advice and assistance to unrepresented individuals in consumer debt collection cases. The Westchester CLARO program is a collaboration of several partner organizations, including the Ninth Judicial District Pro Bono Local Action Committee, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, Pace University School of Law and the Westchester County Bar Association. Volunteer lawyers assist unrepresented defendants by drafting court papers and providing legal advice and information. An attorney experienced in consumer law serves as an advisor each session. Law student volunteers are essential to the program. Students welcome and screen visitors and work with the consumer law advisor to assign attorneys to work with each visitor. Students assist the volunteer lawyers as they work with visitors. Student volunteers gain client interviewing skills and detailed knowledge of New York practice.

## **Elder Law/Health Law**

### ***Senior Law Day***

Help senior citizens complete health care proxy forms at Senior Law Day, an event sponsored by The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services for senior citizens in late October at the Westchester County Center in White Plains. Volunteers are needed to assist seniors who wish to complete health care proxy forms (in New York, competent adults may appoint an agent to make health care decisions on their behalf should they lose the ability to make such decisions themselves). Students will also have the opportunity to attend sessions of interest and shadow elder law attorneys providing one-on-one pro bono consultations. *This training takes place once per year in the fall.*

## **Election Law**

### ***Asian American Election Protection and Poll Monitoring***

In past elections, Asian Americans have faced a series of barriers in exercising their rights to vote. In response, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund has conducted a non-partisan survey of Asian American voters to document Asian American voting patterns. AALDEF monitors elections for compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act, which mandates bilingual ballots and forbids anti-Asian voter discrimination.

***To register for this off-site training session and to sign up to volunteer: visit <http://www.aaldef.net/>***

## **Family Law/Domestic Violence**

### ***CAP (Courtroom Advocates Project)***

Through CAP, law students assist domestic violence victims seeking orders of protection in New York City's family courts. Responsibilities include attending a first court date, where law students interview litigants, draft their petitions, and advocate for them at family court hearings, all under the supervision of a family law attorney from Sanctuary for Families. Advocates then return to court for a second court date. *This training takes place once per year in the spring.*

### ***Family Court Legal Program***

The Pace Woman's Justice Center's Family Court Legal Program is a legal education program tailored to meet the needs of domestic violence victims and survivors while providing professional legal training to law students.

Student volunteers are needed to draft and file family offense petitions, custody petitions and child support petitions; and provide other direct support to Center attorneys in White Plains and Yonkers courthouses during semester breaks.

## **General Legal Assistance**

### ***LAS Access to Benefits Hotline***

The Legal Aid Society's Civil Practice is seeking volunteers to assist with their Access to Benefits Helpline. The Access to Benefits (A2B) Helpline is a "one-stop" resource for New Yorkers in need of legal assistance with health, employment, government benefits, and immigration law matters. Volunteers work alongside Legal Aid Society staff to provide direct assistance and/or referrals in these matters. Legal Aid staff supervises all volunteers and training materials are provided prior to volunteering. The Helpline is run from the Society's 199 Water Street location Tuesday – Friday 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. **50 hour pro bono credit for NY bar admission is ONLY available for the benefits portion of the Helpline (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday).**

Training materials are provided and brief instructions given before each shift.

**To sign up to volunteer: To volunteer, please contact Andrew Childers at [AChilders@legal-aid.org](mailto:AChilders@legal-aid.org) with a specific date or dates. Please include 'Pro Bono A2B' in the subject line.**

### ***LiveHelp Legal Assistance Program***

LawHelp/NY (<http://www.lawhelpny.org>), a website designed to help low-income New Yorkers solve their legal problems, is looking for law student volunteers for the LiveHelp project. Volunteers will staff LiveHelp, an online, real-time chat service that will direct users towards relevant self-help materials, legal assistance organizations and court information. LiveHelp will provide a simple, straightforward opportunity to help people in crisis; volunteers will also learn about a wide range of common legal problems.

Student volunteers are asked to commit to **at least one weekly three-hour shift for 10 weeks**, though the program will find coverage as needed during finals and breaks. To volunteer with LiveHelp you must participate in a 2 hour training and do a 1 hour individual training and practice.

### ***NYLAG One-Day Clinics***

NYLAG routinely offers one-day legal clinics in the community to address urgent and other large-scale needs. Participants undergo training in the legal issues addressed in the clinic and are supervised by NYLAG staff attorneys. NYLAG has several different one-day legal clinic volunteer opportunities available. Pro bono attorneys, law grads and law students and interpreters are welcome to participate. All NYLAG One-Day Legal Clinics will count toward the 50-hour pro bono requirement for admission to the New York State Bar. For a list of opportunities and to register, visit:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1wnoYf4uSb1GXQ2uVllZek7S8\\_7jwVAmahRG3n5QB-\\_A/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1wnoYf4uSb1GXQ2uVllZek7S8_7jwVAmahRG3n5QB-_A/viewform) . \*\*\*Please wait for confirmation before making plans to go to a site.\*\*\*

**For questions, please contact: Judith Munoz, Pro Bono Manager, [jmunoz@nylag.org](mailto:jmunoz@nylag.org)**

## **Immigration Law**

### ***Westchester Citizenship Workshops with Empire Justice Center***

Under the New York State Office of New Americans, the Empire Justice Center is helping local agencies in Westchester host Citizenship Workshops where immigration attorneys will screen lawful permanent residents for naturalization eligibility and assist with the application process. Pace Law students are needed to assist the attorneys at the workshops, which will run throughout the year at different locations in Westchester. The workshops are generally scheduled on Saturdays, from 9:30am to 4:00pm, with trained volunteers working a minimum of a 3-hour shift.

## **Labor Law**

### ***Wage Theft and Immigration Law at Pace Community Law Project (PCLP)***

The PCLP is seeking law students to work with our Legal Fellows to assist immigrants who are fraudulently denied wages they have earned and those seeking assistance with immigration cases. The PCLP will conduct weekly clinics on wage theft and immigration law at community-based organizations in Mamaroneck and New Rochelle, where students will assist Fellows in interviewing clients, identifying fair wage law violations, drafting demand letters, and preparing cases for hearings.

## **Tax Law**

### ***Pace Law Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program***

VITA offers free tax help to people who generally make \$54,000 or less, persons with disabilities, the elderly and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. You will become an IRS-certified volunteer and help provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. If you are in Prof. Crawford's tax class, you will certainly want to participate!

Once you pass the certification tests, and attend an off-site training (not mandatory but highly recommended) you will be set to start volunteering at Mercy College which is the location that Pace Law is partnering with for VITA. Mercy College is a fifteen minute drive from Pace Law. **For certification materials and a list of volunteer times and locations, contact [Pacelawvita@gmail.com](mailto:Pacelawvita@gmail.com).**