

Pro Bono Opportunities

2023–2024



“We educated, privileged lawyers have a professional and moral duty to represent the underrepresented in our society, to ensure that justice exists for all, both legal and economic justice.”

—Associate U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor



Brooklyn Law School
ESTABLISHED 1901



Open Letter from Dean David Meyer

Dear Students,

Pro bono service is a fundamental pillar of Brooklyn Law School's dedication to advancing the law, legal institutions, and society at large and an essential duty as a legal professional. It plays a vital role in ensuring access to justice, regardless of background or status, and creating a more equitable society. It offers opportunities to develop skills as communicators and advocates, build relationships with legal professionals, and learn about challenges faced by our broader community. It can be deeply rewarding as meaningful connections with clients and colleagues are formed through these unique experiences. Perhaps most importantly, pro bono service has a real impact on the lives of others. It helps people achieve their goals, protect their rights, and live their lives with dignity. In short, even as growing legal professionals, pro bono service enables you to make a difference in your community and in the world.

I encourage you to consider the importance of pro bono service and make a commitment to serve. With the many opportunities available, I am confident you will find something that fits your skills, interests, and schedules.

I am grateful to the students, staff, and partner organizations that make this possible. I know that your talents and dedication will lead to many successes this year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David D. Meyer'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David D. Meyer
President, Joseph Crea Dean, and Professor of Law

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Support and Training from the Public Service Law Center

Brooklyn Law School's Public Service Law Center (PSLC) offers guidance, funding, and support to pro bono projects. We promote awareness of available opportunities, help students brainstorm new project ideas, provide essential training, and help iron out issues as they arise.

Finding a Project: If you are interested in participating in a pro bono project, the best place to start is the Pro Bono Fair. The Fair is held once per semester, in August and January. At the Fair, pro bono project leaders from each project staff a table, answering questions and providing information on how to get involved. If you don't want to wait until the next Fair to get involved, look through this brochure and contact the projects directly or the Public Service Law Center to see which projects are best for you.

Developing a Project: The Public Service Law Center will provide you with step-by-step information on developing, launching, and funding a new project.

Training: Each pro bono project provides its own training, tailored to the type of work and the populations they serve. In addition, the Public Service Law Center schedules workshops throughout the academic year. These workshops focus on building the skills required for participating in nearly any project—skills that will also serve you well in your public service internship or job.

Client Intake and Interview Workshop

Learn how to effectively communicate and interact with clients to conduct successful interviews when working with pro bono projects. Required for all first-time pro bono project participants.

Vicarious Trauma and Self-Care Workshop

Learn to recognize and manage the internalized emotional stress of working with clients in traumatic situations.

We look forward to seeing you at these events and many others throughout the year!

New York State Bar 50-hour Pro Bono Requirement

Candidates seeking admission to the New York State bar must have completed at least 50 hours of pro bono legal work.

This requirement is imposed by the New York state court system, not BLS. Consequently, candidates must complete and submit an affidavit affirming completion of this requirement as part of your application materials to the New York bar.

The rule requires each applicant to have performed “at least 50 hours of law related pro bono work.” Work performed for credit, a stipend, or even a salary may count, but work must be supervised by an attorney. Further details about qualifying work are provided in the FAQ document linked below.

Please note that **while many of BLS’ pro bono projects will fulfill the state bar’s pro bono requirement, not all will**, as not all involve strictly legal work or are supervised by attorneys.

New York State Bar Admission: Pro Bono Requirement FAQs:
nycourts.gov/attorneys/probono/FAQsBarAdmission.pdf

Affidavit as to Applicant’s Compliance with the Pro Bono Requirements, Including Certification by Supervisor:
nycourts.gov/attorneys/probono/baradmissionreqs.shtml

For more information, contact the Public Service Law Center at publicservice@brooklaw.edu.

Information is also available on BLS Connect.

APPELLATE ADVOCATES

Appellate Advocates' Parole Advocacy Project

The Parole Advocacy Project partners student volunteers with people incarcerated across New York State as they prepare to go before the parole board. Volunteers support applicants in preparing for parole interviews, preparing a packet to provide to the parole board, and in getting access to resources while they are incarcerated and if they are granted release. There are also opportunities to support clients seeking clemency. We work in partnership with Appellate Advocates lawyers, paralegals, social workers and re-entry specialists.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: The project is ongoing, with opportunities to begin each semester. Once assigned, students should plan to dedicate at least one hour a week to working with their clients. The length of time depends on when the parole hearing is scheduled.

TRAINING: Trainings are typically held once each semester. The initial 8-hour training is led by Appellate Advocates and includes students from BLS, NYU, and Columbia.

CONTACT: To learn more and get involved, please email paroleadvocacy@brooklaw.edu

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in working with individuals who are incarcerated in the state of New York. May be particularly relevant to those interested in defense work, appeals, and direct advocacy.



Article 17A Guardianship Project (AGP)

Student volunteers provide education, support, and aid to guardianship petitioners, meeting with and assisting clients in drafting petitions. Specifically, students often work with parents seeking Article 17A guardianships over their children who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and are nearing age 18. Working alongside attorneys and with Access Justice Brooklyn, students are trained to give presentations about types of guardianships, the guardianship process, and the responsibilities of guardians.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Access Justice Brooklyn.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Once the training is completed, students will be assigned a client to meet with. After meeting with the client, the student will fill out a 17A guardianship petition on their behalf. Typically, students spend three hours working for the client. The time commitment is flexible, and students can volunteer as many hours as desired.

TRAINING: Virtual training will take place with the Director of Legal Services of Access Justice Brooklyn in fall 2023.

CONTACT: Email Sidney Cherubin, Director of Legal Services, at sidney@accessjusticebk.org

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in trusts and estates, guardianship, elder law, disability law, and health law. Students will gain experience meeting with clients and drafting legal documents. Students looking for a simple pro bono opportunity with flexible time commitment options are welcome.



Asylum Relief Project (ARP) – Winter or Spring Break Trip

Every year, Brooklyn Law School students partner with a nonprofit organization during the last week of winter break to provide legal support to recently arrived migrants seeking asylum in the United States. In January 2020, students partnered with Al Otro Lado, working directly at their legal clinic in Tijuana, Mexico; BLS partnered with Al Otro Lado again in January 2021 and March 2022, performing remote legal work. In January 2023, BLS students worked with the Central American Refugee Center assisting with client intake, preparing individuals for credible fear interviews, drafting affidavits, petitioning for humanitarian parole, and advocating to protect due process rights.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: The Asylum Relief Project will work in collaboration with a nonprofit immigrants' rights organization.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: The project will take place over winter or spring break. Operation is contingent on the guidelines of the partner organization.

CONTACT: Email Alma Lawson-Garcia at alma.lawson-garcia@brooklaw.edu or Kevyn McConlogue at kevyn.mcconlogue@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in getting a glimpse of immigration law and the issues in the immigration system, as well as those interested in gaining experience with direct client services and general advocacy work. Bilingual applicants strongly preferred.

PLEASE NOTE: For projects that involve travel, BLS covers the costs of flights/trains to the destination city and places to stay, but students are expected to fundraise to cover other costs.



Brooklyn Law Alternative Spring Break Trip (BLAST)

BLAST is an excellent opportunity for Brooklyn Law School students to spend their spring break working with legal services and other public interest organizations across the United States. Students will work in teams and with seasoned attorneys to provide much-needed legal assistance during the one-week period. In previous years, students worked at the Miami-Dade County Public Defender's Office, Bread & Roses Legal Center in Denver, Louisiana Civil Justice Center in New Orleans, Miami Community Justice Project, Catholic Charities of Atlanta, and Gideon's Promise in Atlanta.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: TBA.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: The trips will take place over BLS' spring break.

TRAINING: Specific training on the legal area of the project will occur once trip destinations are selected.

CONTACT: Email Alessandra Antuzzi at alessandra.antuzzi@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Any student who is interested in public service and/or looking to earn pro bono hours by serving a public interest organization outside of New York City.

PLEASE NOTE: BLS covers the costs of flights/trains to the destination cities and places to stay, but students are expected to fundraise to cover other costs.



Civil Legal Advice and Resource Office (CLARO)

Volunteers assist low-income New Yorkers sued in civil court by debt collectors, most often for alleged debts from credit cards but also from student loans, medical debt, rental arrears, and auto loans. CLARO was created with the help of the civil court system to give self-represented litigants a fighting chance against debt collection agencies. Become well versed in New York civil procedure, gain experience working with clients, and learn about economic justice issues affecting consumers.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: [Access Justice Brooklyn](#), Kings County Civil Court.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Expected commitment of two hours per week. **Note:** While this project is not yet operating fully due to aftereffects of the pandemic, it is expected to be back up to full capacity by spring 2024.

TRAINING: Students are welcome and encouraged to begin pro bono work with CLARO as soon or late into the semester as they desire. Students will be paired with attorneys who guide them through the process. Typically, a short, non-mandatory training is held at Brooklyn Law School in the early fall and spring.

CONTACT: Email publicservice@brooklaw.edu if interested.

OF INTEREST TO: Any student seeking hands-on experience working in fast-moving civil litigation in New York state court and those interested in the public interest, economic justice, bankruptcy, finance, or consumer protection fields.



Courtroom Advocates Project (CAP)

With CAP, students advocate for survivors of domestic violence seeking civil orders of protection in New York City family courts. Primarily, students work with survivors to file petitions and may go to court with them. They also maintain contact as necessary to ensure that the petitioner returns for their subsequent court dates. Students may also advocate for the petitioner before the judge on the return date.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Legal Association for Women.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Sanctuary for Families and New York Legal Assistance Group.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: About two full weeks during the semester. Students spend about one week interviewing the client and drafting the petition. At the end of the week, generally, the petition is filed, and the client may appear in court that same day. Students may go to court if the client agrees. These appearances have been remote since the start of the pandemic, but this is subject to change. Additionally, the time commitment will vary between clients.

TRAINING: There is a four-hour mandatory training session where students also receive a CAP manual to guide them through the process. The training is in person at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. If you cannot attend in person, there is a Zoom option.

CONTACT: Look for flyers and emails with training dates or email cap@brooklaw.edu. You can also contact the group leaders, sarah.corsico@brooklaw.edu and elena.gaffney@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in court experience and who want client contact and/or experience in domestic violence law. This is a good opportunity for students who want to step out of their comfort zone and improve their communication skills.



CUBE Consultation Center (CCC)

The CCC is a pro bono project sponsored by Brooklyn Law School's Center for Urban Business Entrepreneurship (CUBE). It offers students a unique platform for gaining valuable practice experience and the opportunity to interact with local entrepreneurs in Brooklyn's dynamic business community. Participating students work under the supervision of corporate law alumni (from Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, Nixon Peabody, White and Case, Davis Polk, Cleary Gottlieb, and Goodwin Procter) and faculty, and alongside community partners and incubators including NYC Business Solutions, the Brooklyn Innovators Center and the Brooklyn Public Library. Consultations tend to focus on providing small business owners and start-ups with essential legal services and resources. During the consultations, students hear directly from the client as they work alongside supervising attorneys to issue spot and assess their legal needs and provide them with valuable information and advice related to contracts, entity formation, leases, intellectual property, tax and other issues.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: BLS CUBE-affiliated clinics – Community Development Clinic, Corporate and Real Estate Clinic, Brooklyn Law Incubator and Policy Clinic. CUBE Student Organization – CSA.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: CUBE Consultation Centers will be held approximately once or twice per semester in different locations around NYC. They may be held remotely. Students can volunteer their time at any or all of these consultations.

TRAINING: The CUBE E-Board will provide all relevant information to participating students prior to the CCCs.

CONTACT: Email CUBE President Nicholas Mead, nicholas.mead@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students with interest in business law, entrepreneurship, real estate, and community development. Students who are interested in gaining experience performing consultations and improving communication skills with clients.



Foreclosure Legal Assistance Group (FLAG)

FLAG is a partnership among Brooklyn Law School students, the BLS Public Service Law Center, [Access Justice Brooklyn](#), and Kings County Supreme Court. FLAG's mission is to assist homeowners in Kings County facing foreclosure. FLAG provides homeowners entangled in foreclosure litigation with information about New York's unique foreclosure process. It offers students an opportunity to provide meaningful assistance to members of our community, learn about foreclosure law, attend foreclosure settlement conferences, and gain direct exposure to the mandatory foreclosure litigation process, sharpening essential interpersonal skills through hands-on experience.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Access Justice Brooklyn.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: FLAG clinics typically operate Monday, Tuesday and/or Wednesday afternoons (2:30–4 pm) at the Kings County Supreme Court building on the 3rd floor.

TRAINING: Students attend a one-hour training in the fall.

CONTACT: Email Peter White, Supervising Attorney, at peter@accessjusticebk.org. FLAG welcomes all full- and part-time students.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in foreclosure law, housing law, economic justice, helping fellow members of our community, and refining interviewing and counseling skills.



If/When/How

If/When/How is a student-driven national nonprofit network of law students and lawyers committed to fostering the next wave of legal experts for the reproductive justice movement. If/When/How works to transform the law and policy landscape through advocacy, support, and organizing so all people have the power to determine if, when, and how to define, create, and sustain families with dignity and to actualize sexual and reproductive wellbeing on their own terms. Through our clinic escorting project, students have the chance to support and help people seeking abortions safely enter a Bronx abortion clinic despite protestor presence.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: If/When/How.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Clinic Escorts NYC.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Volunteers can participate in abortion clinic escorting on Saturday mornings throughout the school year, shifts range from 2–4 hours and take place at the partner clinic in the Bronx.

TRAINING: Students must participate in training prior to signing up for an escorting shift. This training typically occurs once per semester; more information will be shared at If/When/How's General Body Meetings.

CONTACT: Email Mackenzie Kramer, mackenzie.kramer@brooklaw.edu and Augusta Leng, mengfei.leng@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students who are passionate about reproductive justice for all, intersectionality within modern social justice movements, healthcare accessibility, and on-the-ground participation in upholding access.



Sanctuary for Families

Immigrant Youth Assistance Project (IYAP)

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) is a form of humanitarian immigration status available for immigrant children under the age of twenty-one, who cannot be reunified with one or both of their parents due to abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect, and it is not in their best interest to return to their home countries. The Immigrant Youth Assistance Project (IYAP) provides students with the opportunity to interview clients and potential guardians, draft guardianship petitions, affidavits, and motions, as well as prepare clients for hearings before the New York Family Court. Upon completion of the Family Court piece of the SIJS process, immigrant youth are then eligible to apply for SIJS before United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: [Sanctuary for Families](#).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: About 20 hours total over the course of the semester, including training, interviews, and drafting petitions, affidavits, and other supporting documentation, with flexible scheduling.

TRAINING: Attendance at one training session, offered at BLS, is required.

CONTACT: Email Syd Oliver at Sydney.oliver@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in immigration law or serving survivors of domestic violence.



Law Student for a Day

For over a decade, Brooklyn Law School has partnered with high schools to bring students from diverse communities into the law school through the Law Student for a Day program. During this program, high school students shadow law students to learn about the law school experience and increase the accessibility of the legal profession. This program provides students from underserved communities exposure to the law school, legal profession, and higher education. The goal is to empower students who may have never met a lawyer or don't have any positive associations with the legal profession.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: The Urban Assembly School for Law & Justice (SLJ).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Approximately 12 high school students, each semester, are selected by SLJ to visit Brooklyn Law School and shadow a law student through their classes for a morning. The event is held in both the fall and spring semesters. Dates are TBD.

CONTACT: Contact the Public Service Law Center at publicservice@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in mentoring youth and fostering diversity in the legal profession.

Motivating Youth Through Legal Education (MYLE)

Do you want a head start in constitutional law? Updates on the current SCOTUS docket? Networking opportunities with NYC attorneys and judges? BLS Public Service Award pro bono hours? MYLE is an underrated experience for law students. How does it work? First, you join MYLE as a debate coach. Next, Legal Outreach pairs you with a high school student who has already taken extracurricular courses on constitutional law, criminal law, and criminal procedure. Then, you help with their legal and public speaking skills. Finally, you judge the debate, which is always based on a case currently on SCOTUS's docket. Completion of constitutional law is not a prerequisite!

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS MYLE.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Legal Outreach Inc.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: There are two debates throughout the school year (one in the fall and one in the spring), each requiring a minimum of six hours of preparation with your student and three hours to judge each debate. Meetings with high school students are flexible and done based on the law student coach's schedule. Both full- and part-time students are welcome!

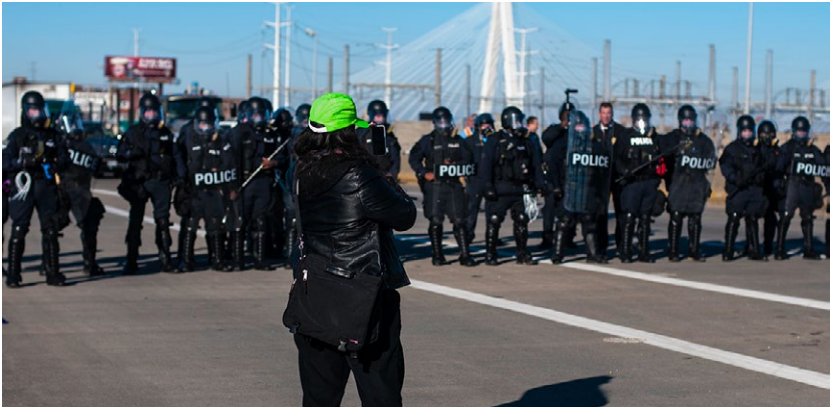
TRAINING: Brief mandatory coach training at the beginning of the year. Optional review of the legal issue, case law, and fact pattern halfway through the semester.

CONTACT: Email Iris Lin at iris.lin@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in youth, teaching, constitutional law, debate or mentoring.

"In three years at Legal Outreach, it has been my pleasure to get to know the brightest high school students. Together with their mentor attorneys, I've impacted the students' education, confidence, and exposure to the professional world. Not to mention, I've been micro-dosing constitutional law the whole time. You'll thank yourself during bar prep. And all in 12ish hours per semester? Yes, please."

—Karissa Smith '23



National Lawyers Guild (NLG): Legal Observation at Protests

The Legal Observer program is part of the comprehensive legal support coordinated by NLG's Mass Defense Committee designed to ensure that people can express their political views without unconstitutional disruption or interference by the government. Legal Observers work with NLG attorneys who represent individual activists and political organizations and play a distinct role from that of participants at demonstrations and protests. They are trained to promote police accountability by witnessing and documenting arrests, abuse, or civil rights violations. The presence of Legal Observers helps discourage police abuse, and the information collected by Legal Observers is used in all stages of defending arrestees and in lawsuits against the police or other government agencies when a person's rights are violated.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS NLG.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: New York City Chapter and the National Office of the NLG.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: As appropriate and as each student chooses during protests or street actions.

TRAINING: Held remotely at least once per semester, date TBD.

CONTACT: Email Stephanie Pettit, stephanie.pettit@brooklaw.edu and Jeremy Nelson jeremy.nelson@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in progressive politics and First Amendment issues.



Brooklyn Law School

NAME CHANGE PROJECT

OUTLaws

OUTLaws' Name Change Project (NCP)

OUTLaws' Name Change Project is a pro bono project focused on assisting transgender, gender non-conforming, and other individuals with the legal name change process. Students will have the unique opportunity to aid participants with completing their name change petition and educate community members on the name change process, all under the supervision of an attorney.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: OUTLaws.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: NCP hosts a student training in the fall of each school year. Student participants are then paired in teams and meet with their supervising attorney to discuss their assigned case. Case timelines vary by team; however, students should expect to spend about 8 to 12 hours on their case. The project hosts periodic general body meetings for all student participants.

TRAINING: Students must complete the Public Service Law Center's Client Intake and Interviewing Workshop along with training provided by the participating organization.

CONTACT: Look for emails with updates throughout the year. If interested, please contact OUTLaws' Pro Bono Chair, Catherine Sautter, at ncw@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in advocating for the rights of transgender, gender non-conforming, and LGBTQ+ individuals, as well as students who are interested in public service, working with the community, and/or looking to earn pro bono hours.

"During the fall semester, my partner Catie and I had the privilege of working with NYLAG and Outlaws on the Name Change Project. Working directly with clients and learning how to complete a name-change petition was an incredible privilege! Aiding people in obtaining their chosen names and identities was a spectacular experience that jump-started my passion for public service. This was my first true experience working in the legal field, and I am so grateful to have been a part of this amazing project!"

—Jo Garner '25



Parole Preparation Project (PPP)

PPP collaborates with and advocates on behalf of parole-eligible individuals serving long or life sentences in New York State prisons. The project trains volunteers to work with parole applicants, many of whom have spent decades in prison and have been repeatedly denied parole despite eligibility for release. Advocates, working alongside parole applicants and staff at PPP, develop comprehensive release plans, create compelling advocacy materials, and practice interviewing skills with their applicant.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: With a team of 2–3, students are expected to commit 2–3 hours per week for 8–12 months per case. In addition to the initial training, volunteers must attend monthly meetings that will focus on antiracist practices and community building. Locations and dates of the training and monthly meetings are TBD.

Students will be expected to communicate regularly with their parole applicant, which may involve visits to the individual where they are currently incarcerated. PPP will reimburse the student for travel costs.

TRAINING: The next training will be held in fall 2023.

TO APPLY: Apply via PPP's website at www.paroleprepnny.org/volunteer

CONTACT: Email Claire Miolene at claire.miolene@brooklaw.edu or visit www.paroleprepnny.org for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in helping and building relationships with individuals directly impacted by New York's carceral system.



THE PETEY GREENE PROGRAM

Petey Greene Program (PGP)

Since 2008, PGP has been supporting the academic goals of incarcerated and formally incarcerated students through high quality volunteer tutoring, while educating volunteers on the injustice manifest in our carceral system.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS PGP.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: PGP has been active in New York since the fall of 2014. They recruit, train, and coordinate undergraduate and graduate student volunteers, as well as community member volunteers. Current partner institutions and programs include the Close-To-Home Initiative, the Manhattan Detention Center, Rikers Island, and the Vernon C. Bain Center.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: PGP is recruiting tutors to work in person with students at Rikers Island once a week in two-hour long sessions. The time commitment over the course of the semester is 11–15 hours.

TRAINING: The next training will be held in fall 2023.

CONTACT: Email shannon.herman@brooklaw.edu and visit peteygreen.org to learn more.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in supporting educational equity for justice-impacted students.



LALSA'S Spring Break Puerto Rico Legal Brigade

After Hurricane Maria, student-led BLS brigades traveled to Puerto Rico to assist El Colegio de Abogados y Abogadas de Puerto Rico (CAPR) or the Bar Association of Puerto Rico. In past years, BLS students also assisted locals with legal issues ranging from preparing forms required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to help survivors prove ownership of damaged property, to assisting lawyers in preparing appeals to FEMA, SBA, and Tu Hogar Renace's administrative procedures. Students have also visited Fajardo, Rio Grande, and Canovanas while being based in San Juan for most of the trip. In March 2023, the brigade worked with the Escuela de Derecho, a law school in Ponce, to teach students about PR's legal system, tour PR's capital building, and learn about the history of American influence and the law-making process. Students also met with local law students to compare their educational experiences.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: TBD.

TRAINING: TBD.

CONTACT: Email Stephanie Argueta at stephanie.argueta@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in public interest work, helping low-income populations, community organizing, economic justice, legal interviewing, counseling and/or research skills. Spanish-speakers preferred.

PLEASE NOTE: BLS covers the costs of flights to the destination city and places to stay, but students are expected to fundraise to cover other costs.

SRP

THE SUSPENSION REPRESENTATION PROJECT

Suspension Representation Project (SRP)

New York City public school students who receive long-term suspensions in elementary, middle and high school are hurled into the “school-to-prison pipeline.” SRP’s goal is to advocate for students to keep them in school and on a path to graduation. SRP is a consortium of student organizations from five NYC law schools – each composed of law student advocates who are dedicated to protecting the educational rights of young people in the five boroughs. SRP provides advocates with comprehensive training on interviewing and counseling, hearing procedures, direct and cross examination techniques, and developing a “theory of the case” so that they can effectively represent students and their families in front of hearing officers at NYC Department of Education Superintendent Suspension Hearings. New advocates are always paired with experienced advocates and can turn to the BLS SRP Executive Board for support and guidance at any time.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS Suspension Representation Project.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: [Suspension Representation Project](#) (of NYU Law).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Each case requires 5-10 hours of time (including preparation and the hearing itself). Advocates must be available between 8:30 am and 2 pm on days they sign up to take a case. Part-time students with flexible daytime commitments are able to participate in SRP.

TRAINING: Advocates must attend one training session before they can take a case. Trainings are presented virtually by NYU Law School in the fall with other law schools in the consortium.

CONTACT: Email Grace Vetromile at grace.vetromile@brooklaw.edu and Caroline Strauss at caroline.strauss@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in education law, children’s rights, juvenile justice, direct client representation, administrative law, or trial advocacy skills.



Uncontested Divorce Project (UDP)

Sanctuary for Families serves domestic violence and trafficking victim-survivors from diverse backgrounds who are seeking a life free from abuse and exploitation. The contribution of law students participating in the UDP Project enhances Sanctuary for Families' capacity to meet the overwhelming demand for help. Divorcing an abusive spouse can be one of the most liberating moments for a victim-survivor of domestic violence. For many, divorce allows them to reclaim their pre-abuse identity and empowers them by cutting off any remaining ties to their abusive past. In some cases, it also offers victim-survivors a chance at obtaining much-needed financial relief through the distribution of marital assets and/or maintenance. Access Justice Brooklyn assists low-income individuals of all genders seeking uncontested divorces in any circumstances.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Legal Association for Women.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: [Sanctuary for Families](#) and [Access Justice Brooklyn](#).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: UDP works primarily with victim-survivors of domestic violence who identify as women. Participants devote an average of about 10 hours to the petition. Two students will partner to meet with a client approximately twice throughout the academic year and can complete the divorce paperwork on their own time. The project is flexible and can be done at the student's and client's convenience. Part-time students can also participate. Volunteers of all genders are welcome.

TRAINING: The two-hour training takes place in the fall, usually at the end of September. Then, students are assigned a client whom they help initiate an uncontested divorce. They conduct interviews, meet with their client, prepare divorce petitions, file court papers.

CONTACT: Look for emails in the fall for training dates or email Jami Nicholson jami.nicholson@brooklaw.edu or Amanda Mintz, amanda.mintz@brooklaw.edu with any questions.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in direct client services, public interest work, family law, helping low-income members of our community, or working with victim-survivors of domestic violence. Students will develop skills in interviewing, cultural competency, and preparing petitions for divorce actions. Participation counts toward the 50-hour pro bono requirement for the New York bar.



Unemployment Action Center (UAC)

Interested in gaining hands-on client experience while helping New Yorkers in need? Every year, New Yorkers lose their jobs unexpectedly and sometimes unfairly, and this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. For many, unemployment insurance is the only way they can meet their needs and provide for their families. UAC advocates represent unemployed workers in hearings before administrative law judges and get to do everything lawyers do: interview and advise clients, interview and cross-examine witnesses, and deliver arguments. UAC not only provides a vital service to workers but also offers students meaningful experience in advocacy.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: The citywide Unemployment Action Center, which distributes available cases among participating law schools.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Scheduling is flexible. Advocates choose cases that fit their schedules and take as many or as few cases as they wish. Part-time students are welcome, including those with daytime commitments.

TRAINING: Training sessions will be held multiple times throughout the semester. In addition, experienced advocates are available for advice and assistance on cases.

CONTACT: Email UAC – BLS Chapter president Nick Lindsey at nick.lindsey@brooklaw.edu with questions or to get on our email list to learn about upcoming meetings and trainings.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in trial and appellate advocacy, labor and employment law, workers' rights, and direct legal services.

Brooklyn (BDS) Defenders

Working Families Justice Project (WFJP)

The WFJP will give law students the opportunity to represent parents throughout the administrative review process and at administrative hearings to seal their record with the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR).

In New York, individuals are placed on the SCR, a registry that brands them as child abusers and significantly limits their employment prospects, based on limited evidence provided by the city's Administration for Child Services (ACS). The parents who students will work with are primarily from Black and brown communities of Brooklyn who have been accused of neglecting their children usually for reasons related to poverty. Their cases are "indicated" by ACS caseworkers based on a very low standard of evidence. These findings exclude people from a wide range of employment opportunities in fields such as education, health care, security, and transportation – the very jobs most often available to clients.

WFJP will ensure that New Yorkers are not denied employment based on unproven accusations of child maltreatment or reports that are not relevant or related to employment with children. Students will assist attorneys and other advocates at Brooklyn Defender Services in getting clients' "indicated" reports in the SCR amended to "unfounded" and sealed. Participants will initiate administrative review of parents' indicated reports, write client affidavits, gather and submit evidence, represent clients during administrative hearings with the state Office of Children and Family Services, and file motions to vacate Family Court findings of neglect.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Defender Services' Family Defense Practice.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: 3 hours of training; afterwards, the commitment throughout the semester can vary depending on the projects and number of clients students would like to take on.

CONTACT: Email Alison Peebles at alison.peebles@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in public defense, the family regulation system, and poverty law; gaining experience working directly with clients, drafting affidavits, gathering evidence, and filing motions; and improving their written and oral advocacy skills.



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