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# DePaul University College of Law

## Pro Bono & Community Service Initiative

### Reporting and Award Guidelines Agreement

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**Overview** – The Pro Bono and Community Service Initiative (PBCSI) presents four annual service awards: the Dean’s Certificate of Service, the Chancellor’s Award for Service, the President’s Award for Service and the Benjamin Hooks Distinguished Public Service Award.

1. **Dean’s Certificate of Service**- awarded to students completing 50 hours of volunteer work (legal and/or non-legal) during their time at DePaul.
2. **Chancellor’s Award for Service**- awarded to students completing 100 hours of volunteer work (legal and/or non-legal) during their time at DePaul.
3. **President’s Award for Service**- awarded to students completing 200 hours of volunteer work (legal and/or non-legal) during their time at DePaul.
4. **Benjamin Hooks Distinguished Public Service Award** – Named in honor of one of the law school’s most outstanding alumni, the Benjamin Hooks Distinguished Public Service Award is awarded to graduating third and fourth year students who have completed 200 or more hours of legal and/or non-legal volunteer service during their time at DePaul law school and who best exemplify the Vincentian commitment to service and social justice.

**Requirements** – Students must meet the following requirements to be eligible to receive these awards:

1. **Read this Agreement.**
2. **Meeting with Volunteer Site Supervisor:** If the service is to be ongoing, volunteers must schedule a meeting with their supervisor as soon as possible to discuss the nature of the assignment(s) to be performed, the hours required, and the work schedule.
3. **Tracking Hours:** Students are responsible for tracking and reporting volunteer hours. Volunteer hours that are not reported to PBCSI cannot be considered when determining eligibility for service awards.
4. **Hours Accrual:** Hours accrue from the first day after the College of Law Orientation in the student’s first year of law school through early to mid-April (as determined each year by the PBCSI Director) in the year that the student graduates from the College of Law. Students are strongly encouraged to submit their hours to PBCSI at the end of every semester via the PBCSI electronic reporting form. The electronic reporting form includes both the hours accrued and a short narrative response.
5. **A Knowing or Intentional Violation of these Guidelines may constitute a violation of the College of Law’s Honor Code.**

1) **General Guidelines for Service Hours (legal and non-legal):**

- a. Volunteer hours at different organizations may be combined.
- b. Volunteers should not report time for which they receive school credit or financial compensation.
- c. Volunteers cannot be engaged in any for-profit, private sector activities or any partisan, political campaign activities.
- d. Training time required for volunteering may be included in your hours.

2) **Criteria for non-legal service work:**

- a. Volunteer work must originate with a 501(c)(3)-eligible non-profit organization and should involve service to under-served, disenfranchised or disadvantaged individuals or communities or should benefit the public good or public interest.
- b. Generally, time spent working with or for a student body or group or time spent assisting a College of Law center or institute does NOT qualify for purposes of PBCSI’s service awards, e.g. selling tickets for an SBA social event, soliciting donations for the PILA auction, or setting up for or cleaning up after a Center for Public Interest Law or Child & Family Law Center event. However, volunteering with outside organizations in conjunction with a student organization or College of Law center or institute does qualify, e.g. participating in a Donate-A-Day, DePaul’s Vincentian Service Day, the Child & Family Law’s Just Us Girls Conference or Juvenile Detention Spring Break Project, or an SBA sponsored service event or project.

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Contact [PBCSI@depaul.edu](mailto:PBCSI@depaul.edu) with questions

### 3) Criteria for legal volunteer work:

- a. In order to qualify as legal volunteer work the service must meet one of the following criteria and be supervised by an attorney:
  - i. Pro bono legal work in service or on behalf of individuals of limited means or underrepresented groups or the organizations and agencies that serve them;
  - ii. Pro bono legal services for the benefit of individuals or organizations seeking to preserve or assert civil rights or civil liberties; or
  - iii. Pro bono legal assistance to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental or 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.
  - iv. Public service legal work on a volunteer basis that helps to promote access to justice or promotes the public good or public interest, including but not limited to judicial clerkships, the State's Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Public Guardian's Office, the Illinois Attorney General's Office and other government attorney or public policy positions or work.
- b. The term "legal work" includes all lawyering skills, such as legal research, writing, interviewing, counseling, oral or written advocacy, or representation of individuals in court or administrative hearings. It also includes legal education activities such as lectures or presentations on legal topics, and creating legal brochures or web information on legal topics for underserved communities. Additionally, "legal work" includes helping underserved or disadvantaged individuals find or obtain needed legal information (general information about what the law says or how the court works) or obtain and/or complete legal forms.
- c. Participating in a College of Law clinic, center, or institute's pro bono project, such as the Asylum and Immigration Law Clinic's Spring Break Border Project or U Visa Summer Pro Bono Project or assisting a professor at the College of Law with a project, would count as pro bono or public service legal work, as long as the project meets the requirements set forth in Section 3(a)-(b) and no credit or compensation is earned in relation to the project.
- d. Working on a law firm's pro bono matters would count as pro bono legal work, as long as the projects meets the requirements set forth in Section 3(a)-(b) and no credit or compensation is earned in relation to the work or project.

### 4.) Guidelines for Counting Extra Hours Worked at Externship Site

- a. Students may count hours completed at an externship site that are in excess of the 180 hours required to receive credit for the externship. If the externship site is a law firm, however, the excess hours would only count if they entailed work on the firm's pro bono matters.

### 5) Guidelines for Counting Summer Volunteer Hours When Receiving a Public Interest Stipend

- a. Funding in the amount of \$2500.00 or less is considered part-time funding. Students with part-time funding for the summer may count any hours worked in excess of 200 hours as volunteer hours.
- b. Any funding above \$2500.00 is considered full-time funding. Students with full-time funding for the summer may count any hours worked in excess of 400 hours as volunteer hours.

### 6) Standards of conduct and service

Neither your status as a student nor as a volunteer absolves you of the responsibility of providing competent, ethical and professional service. [Knowing or intentional violation of these standards of conduct may also constitute a violation of the College of Law's Honor Code.](#)

- a. **Conflicts** – If you work for multiple organizations, either simultaneously or consecutively, you may encounter a conflict of interest. It is a best practice to maintain a personal database of clients you assist in order to check conflicts. If you encounter a potential conflict, you should suspend your work on the project and notify your supervisor as soon as possible.
- b. **Confidentiality** – Do not reveal any client confidences or identifying information about your cases. If you need to discuss the case with someone other than your supervisor (for instance, a member of the law school's faculty or staff) you should be careful to reveal only general information.
- c. **Competence and communication** – It is important to communicate regularly with your agency supervisor, particularly if you have questions about your assignment or if you are concerned that you will not be able to meet a deadline. If you have difficulty communicating with your supervisor or feel that you are not receiving adequate supervision, please contact the PBCSI Coordinator for assistance. **If you do not complete the**

**project to the reasonable satisfaction of your supervisor and the Pro Bono and Community Service Initiative Coordinator, no volunteer hours will count for purposes of the service awards.**

- d. **Avoiding the unauthorized practice of law** – Although student volunteers are encouraged to take part in activities that involve “real-world” legal experiences, students who have not received their 711 license should be careful to avoid any activities that might constitute the practice of law, including dispensing legal advice or making court appearances. If you are not sure whether an activity constitutes the practice of law, ask your supervisor and/or the PBCSI Director.