

New York Bar Pro Bono Requirement: How to Describe Your Work on the Affidavit of Compliance¹

This guide will assist you in drafting the description language of your pro bono work. It is recommended that you read the full rule ([Rule 520.16](#)) and explanation of the requirement on the NY Courts website. The NY Bar has also created a great [FAQ guide](#).

Completing your Affidavit:

- If you are using more than one project to satisfy the 50 hour requirement, you must submit an affidavit for each project.
- Remember that training hours cannot exceed service hours!
- **Address:** If you anticipate that you will relocate after you submit your affidavit to the Bar office, include an address where they can reach you, even if the address is out of the country. If your future address is to be determined, include an address where you can be reached regardless (i.e. parent's address).
- Your signature must be notarized and only original, printed versions of Affidavits of Compliance may be submitted.
- Only a supervising attorney (not a student pro bono project leader) may certify pro bono hours. However, if a project is supervised by the TPIC staff attorney, that attorney will certify NY forms.

Describing your work:

- **Remember this formula:**
 - **Who (organization and/or student project), supervisor, specific tasks, what was the purpose (overall task/client needs).** Please see [FAQ #11, 12, 34](#)
- **If the partnering organization is a 501(c)(3), always include it! (a simple google search may tell you.)**

Sample Descriptive Language:

A. Client based work:

- Please check with your student leader(s) if language has already been approved.
- **Formula:** As a student volunteer with ___(project name)___ and in partnership with __(legal services provider)___, a 501(c)(3) (if applicable), and under the supervision of attorney _____, I _____. My work helped low-income clients access (what was the ultimate purpose of your work?).

¹ This document was created as of June 2018, following the November 2015 NY Bar Pro Bono admission requirements revisions. As the New York Bar may update and revise their policies periodically, it is strongly recommended that you visit the NY Bar [page](#) for the most up to date information.

- *As a student volunteer of the Penn Law Homeless Advocacy Project, in partnership with the Homeless Advocacy Project of Philadelphia (HAP), a 501(c)(3), and under supervision of attorney Jane Smith. I represented clients by completing intake services and assisting them with birth certificate applications, SSI/SSD applications, landlord/tenant disputes, and other civil legal issues. Additionally, I provided general information and referral resources to clients. My work helped indigent and low-income clients access fundamental resources including identification, housing, employment, and public benefits.*
- B. Research-based projects**
- *In partnership with the Pennsylvania Health Law Project, a 501(c)(3) legal service organization, and supervised by attorney Jane Smith, I researched statutes, practices and case precedent; then summarized and presented information for community education to individuals with disabilities, low-income families, and the elderly who are struggling to obtain health care services or coverage. This analysis and guidance helped individuals and families more efficiently access health care and other benefits.*
- C. Judicial Externship**, see [Rule 510.16\(b\)\(2\)](#), [FAQ 12](#).
- *I served as a judicial extern for the Honorable Jane Smith, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, Criminal Law Division. I conducted research and drafted memoranda that assisted the Court in its decision-making process.*
- D. Penn Law Legal Clinics**
- At the beginning of the semester please speak with your clinic professor regarding your intent to satisfy the NY Pro Bono requirement with this experience, see [FAQ #15](#).
 - **Entrepreneurship Clinic:** *During the (dates of service), I performed qualifying pro-bono transactional legal work through the University of Pennsylvania Law School's clinical program including the supervised representation of persons of limited means, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations, or individuals, groups, or organizations seeking to secure or promote access to justice including community economic development. The time spent on legal work exceeded the time spent on incidental administrative work and instructional training.*
 - **Civil Practice Clinic, Child Advocacy Clinic, Criminal Defense Clinic, and Transnational Legal Clinic:** *During the (dates of service), I performed qualifying pro-bono legal assistance through the University of Pennsylvania Law School's clinical program on behalf of low-income or disadvantaged individuals who cannot afford counsel and whose unmet legal needs prevent their access to justice. The time spent on legal work exceeded the time spent on incidental administrative work and instructional training.*
 - **Legislative Clinic:** *During the (dates of service), I performed qualifying pro-bono legal work through the University of Pennsylvania Law School's clinical program by using my legal skills for a legislative body. The time spent on legal work exceeded the time spent on incidental administrative work and instructional training.*
- E. Pro Bono work completed with a private law firm**
- If you worked for a private law firm during the academic year or as a summer associate receiving a salary but engaged in pro bono work with the firm, this work should qualify. ([FAQ #27](#))
 - **Formula:** As a summer associate with _____ (law firm) and under the supervision of attorney Jane Smith, I engaged in pro bono work with the firm. I assisted (insert tasks).
- F. LLMs**
- You may use qualifying pro bono work service outside of the U.S. up to **one year** before the commencement of your LLM program at Penn. ([FAQ #4](#))

- If you were employed as a government attorney, worked for an NGO or engaged in pro bono work for a law firm, this work should qualify!
- **Formula for law firm pro bono work:** As an associate with the law firm of _____ in _____ (city and country), and under the supervision of attorney Jane Smith, I completed legal work on a pro bono basis. I (insert tasks).