New York Bar Pro Bono Requirement: Step by Step Instructions

Contents:
1. The NY Bar Rule
2. What Counts?
3. Which Projects Count?
4. What Does Not Count?
5. Reporting
6. More Information
7. Completing the Affidavit: Step By Step Instructions

1. The NY Bar Rule:
All individuals who are admitted to the New York bar after January 1, 2015 must demonstrate that they have completed 50 hours of qualifying pro bono work. The New York Pro Bono Requirement is different from the Penn Law Pro Bono Requirement. Read the full rule (Rule 520.16) and explanation of the requirement on the NY Courts website.

2. What Counts?
Please keep in mind that Penn Law cannot officially verify that a particular pro bono activity is eligible (or ineligible) for New York’s pro bono requirement. If you have specific questions about eligibility, the New York bar indicates that you may email them directly. However, here is a short summary of what work may satisfy the NY Pro Bono requirement:

- Pro bono work that is law-related and supervised by an attorney, judge, or law school faculty or instructor to qualify.
- Law school clinics that provide legal assistance to low income clients or to nonprofit or government entities. Because the clients that clinics serve can vary, it is recommended that at the beginning of the semester you speak with the clinic professor regarding your intent to satisfy pro bono hours with this experience.
- Externships or internships (even if paid, for academic credit, or performed during the summer) for a legal services or legal aid organization, judge or court system, Public Defender, U.S. Attorney, District Attorney, or State Attorney General or any government agency.
- Private sector pro bono work (even during the summer and even if you are compensated by the firm as long as the work benefits low income clients and the firm is not being compensated).
- Eligible law-related, student pro bono projects or ad hoc assignments that serve low income populations (see the list of possible New-York-bar-eligible pro bono projects below).
- Pro bono work abroad may qualify if it is law-related and supervised by an attorney in that jurisdiction. You will be asked to explain the nature and circumstances of the work in detail.

---

1 This document was updated as of October 2016, 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.
• You are allowed to receive funding or academic credit for qualifying pro bono work and still satisfy the NY Pro Bono requirement. (This is not the case for the Penn Law Pro Bono Requirement).
• Training hours should not exceed direct service hours.

3. **Penn Law Pro Bono Project Eligibility**
   Based on the information provided by the New York bar thus far, the work performed with these internal, student pro bono projects is expected to be eligible for the New York pro bono requirement:
   • Animal Law Project
   • Civil Rights Law Project
   • Criminal Records Expungement Project
   • Custody and Support Assistance Clinic
   • Domestic Violence Assistance Project
   • Employment Advocacy Project
   • Environmental Law Project
   • Guild Food Stamp Clinic
   • Health Law and Policy Project *(Please note that certain HeLPP sub-projects may not be eligible for the New York requirement.)*
   • Innocence Project
   • International Refugee Assistance Project
   • International Human Rights Advocates *(Please note that certain IHRA sub-projects may not be eligible for the New York requirement.)*
   • Pardon Project
   • Penn Housing Rights Project
   • Penn Law Advocates for the Homeless
   • Penn Law Immigrant Rights Project *(Please note that certain PLIRP sub-projects may not be eligible for the New York requirement.)*
   • Reproductive Rights Law Project *(Please note that certain RRLP sub-projects may not be eligible for the New York requirement.)*
   • School Discipline Advocacy Service
   • Veterans Law Project
   • Women’s Legal Assistance Project
   • Youth Advocacy Project
   • A list of external pro bono opportunities that may be NY bar pro bono eligible can be found [here](#).

4. **What Does Not Count?**
   • Acting exclusively as an interpreter or providing translation services. *(see FAQ #21)*
   • Scholarly research, such as academic research for a professor or work for a law journal or publication.
   • Community service that is not law-related, such as working at a soup kitchen.
   • For JD’s, pro bono work done before law school does not count. However, LLMs can count work completed up to 1 year prior to the LLM program. *(see FAQ #4)*
   • Transportation to/from sites.

5. **Reporting**
   • All applicants must submit an **Affidavit of Compliance** confirming that they have completed at least 50 hours of pro bono work signed by their supervising attorney. Each project requires a separate affidavit and supervising attorney signature.
The affidavit should be completed in the same semester, or the same academic year if it is ongoing service, that the service is completed, as it may be extremely difficult (if not impossible) to locate supervisors and/or specific information about pro bono work in the months or years after it took place.

Please note that only a supervising attorney or faculty member (not a TPIC staff member or student pro bono project leader) may certify pro bono hours for purposes of the New York requirement. Of course, when the project is supervised by the TPIC staff attorney, that attorney will certify NY forms.

As the forms require that your signature be notarized, only original, printed versions of Affidavits of Compliance may be submitted. Therefore, you must use the utmost care to keep these documents safe and well-organized until you submit them to the NY Bar.

6. More Information
- The text of the rule can be found here.
- The full New York Pro Bono Bar Admissions Requirement can be found here.
- For complete information on New York’s pro bono guidelines, please see the New York pro bono requirement’s FAQ page.
- If you have questions about navigating the New York Bar Requirements in relation to Penn Law’s Requirement and/or about specific Penn Law pro bono opportunities, please contact Sarah Egoville, TPIC Staff Attorney at segovill@law.upenn.edu or all-tpic@law.upenn.edu.

Completing the Affidavit

1. **STUDENT:** Type your information and review for typos. The rest of the information in this section should be provided by your project leader. If you did an external placement, complete this information with your placement’s information.

![Affidavit Template Image]
2. **STUDENT:** Fill out the beginning and end dates of service, as well as total hours completed. If you did an internal Penn Law Project, select “Law School Sponsored Program” and ask your student project leader for a description of your work. For external projects, refer to the [NY Bar FAQs](#) for language to use in your description and check the box for either a Legal Services Provider, Government Service, or Other. It is important that you show how your work meets NY’s definition of pro bono.
3. **STUDENT**: Once you complete the first two sections, take this form to a Notary and bring your photo ID. Penn Law has Notaries in the Registrar’s Office as well as a notary in the TPIC office. **DO NOT COMPLETE ANY OF THIS SECTION UNTIL YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE NOTARY.**
4. **SUPERVISOR**: This section is to be filled out by the attorney supervisor of the project you worked on. Note: this section CANNOT be completed by a TPIC staff member (unless the project is supervised by the TPIC Staff Attorney) or student project leader.