

UT Law Public Service Commendation Program

The Beginning

In January 2007, The University of Toledo College of Law launched a new initiative, the Pro Bono Commendation Program, to encourage student engagement in the community. Students who commit 30 hours a semester to volunteer law-related public service projects under this Program will receive a Public Service Commendation Certificate at the Spring Public Service Awards Reception. They will also be listed in the graduation bulletin when they graduate.

In the two years since the program began, our students have responded with enthusiasm. Under the supervision of licensed attorneys, our students have donated *over 9,000 hours of service* to disadvantaged members of our community.

Goals

The Program seeks to instill a pro bono ethic among law students, to help them explore public service careers, and to provide them with practical legal experience. Most importantly, their first hand exposure to society's problems will make them better lawyers, judges, legislators, and citizens throughout their careers.

Pro Bono On Many Fronts

Because the needs of the disadvantaged cover a broad spectrum, our students' volunteer work helps on many fronts. They help the community by:

- *Assisting in Pro Se Juvenile and Divorce Court Clinics;*
- *Facilitating "Know Your Rights" Seminars at Senior Centers;*
- *Investigating Predatory Lending Practices;*
- *Advocating for the Best Interests of Abused and Neglected Children;*
- *Staffing the Domestic Violence Resource Center; and*
- *Supporting Pro Bono Attorneys in a wide range of cases.*

Community Partners

We are fortunate to have the support and encouragement of many noted public service agencies including Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, The Toledo Bar Association Pro Bono Services Program, Lucas County Court Appointed Special Advocates, and the City of Toledo Department of Law.

More Information

To learn more about this program, please contact Jessica Mehl, Esq., Public Service Coordinator in our Law Career Services Office at 419-530-4996 or jessica.mehl@utoledo.edu.