

What You Need to Know When Working with PBSC: **A Reference Guide for Partner Organizations**

Updated: May 2020

About Pro Bono Students Canada

Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) is on a mission to provide free legal support to people and communities facing barriers to justice. Our work and partnerships are guided by our three core values: dignity, equity and humility.

PBSC recruits, trains and matches law student volunteers with organizations working on the frontlines of Canada's access to justice crisis, including community organizations, firms, courts and tribunals. All student volunteers work under the supervision of qualified lawyers.

What Students Can Do

PBSC deliverables vary depending on the needs of our Partner Organizations and/or the project. For example, our students can:

- research pending legislation, legal issues or current policy questions and draft memoranda;
- pro-actively monitor pending legislation, legal issues or current policy questions;
- develop and deliver public legal education workshops and seminars to low and middle-income individuals; and
- provide legal information to the clients of partner organizations.

Our projects typically run from October to March and/or May to August. Please note that students are not expected to volunteer during their exam periods, which include the months of December and April.

What Students Cannot Do

Our law student volunteers are not qualified as lawyers, do not have professional liability insurance, and are restricted from providing legal advice or otherwise holding themselves out as lawyers or legal professionals. While PBSC requires that all projects are legal in nature, students cannot give legal advice, and may only provide *legal information*. Generally, legal advice is a legal opinion or interpretation about specific facts or problems, while legal information merely provides a general sense of the state of the law. Student volunteers are not permitted to draft by-laws or contracts for Partner Organizations. Additionally, PBSC volunteers

are not expected to incur any expenses in relation to materials created or distributed as part of their placement.

Expectations for Partner Organizations

To ensure quality of programming, adherence to PBSC's policies, and to achieve optimal impact, all of PBSC's Partner Organizations are required to:

1. Complete all forms provided by PBSC (including the Project Description Form and Organization Agreement Form), and to return them to PBSC in a timely fashion.

Please note, for the McGill Chapter only, organizations are required to complete the Faculty's "Request for Assistance, Release and Disclaimer of Liability" form.

2. Ensure that each project has an insured Lawyer Supervisor available to the student(s) over the course of the project.

The role of the insured Lawyer Supervisor is to answer questions of a legal nature, as well as to review the student(s) work product periodically over the course of the project, and at least once upon final completion. If a Partner Organization does not have a lawyer on staff, PBSC can help find a qualified lawyer supervisor.

3. If the insured Lawyer Supervisor is not a staff member, Partner Organizations are required to designate a Project Supervisor to oversee the student(s) over the course of the project.
4. Project Supervisors are required to monitor students and their progress throughout the placement so that potential issues will be discovered before they turn into problems. If a problem does arise, the Project Supervisor is required to notify the PBSC Coordinator(s).
5. Integrate student volunteer(s) where possible. For example, if the student is volunteering on-site, provide an appropriate workspace, resources and other applicable materials where necessary.
6. Participate in PBSC's project monitoring process, which typically includes a meeting or phone call, in November, February and/or July.
7. Complete and return all program evaluations provided by PBSC in a timely fashion.

What Partner Organizations Can Expect of PBSC

1. A qualified law student who will provide approximately 3-5 hours per week of legal services without charge.
2. Assistance with finding a qualified Lawyer Supervisor to oversee your student's work.
3. Ongoing support and monitoring of the student volunteer(s) and their progress.
4. Opportunities to attend events hosted by PBSC's Chapters.
5. The final deliverable(s) as set out in the Project Description Form.

Student volunteers are required to notify Partner Organizations and PBSC of any concerns or delays they may encounter.