

University of Toronto Faculty of Law (U of T Law) Public Interest Programs'

Joint Volunteer Recruitment Process (Fall 2023)

INTRODUCTION

Law students in all years can volunteer with one of the public interest programs at U of T Law. The following 6 public interest programs at U of T Law have developed a **joint-volunteer recruitment process** for assigning students to their programs' respective volunteer opportunities: The David Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights (Asper Centre), Downtown Legal Services (DLS), the Future of Law Lab (FoL), the International Human Rights Program (IHRP), the Investor Protection Clinic (IPC), and Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC).¹ Please note, Law in Action Within Schools (LAWS) has a separate application process that can be accessed [here](#).

This Guide provides an overview of how students can learn about the various volunteer opportunities available at the above-mentioned 6 programs, how students should select/rank their preferences and how students will be assigned to a volunteer placement with one of the programs.

SUMMARY of Volunteer Opportunities in the Joint-Volunteer Recruitment Process

Asper Centre >> Asper Centre [student working groups](#) are student-led projects that bring together approximately 12-15 students to work in conjunction with U of T Law faculty, civil society groups and members of the bar on Charter rights advocacy projects or current constitutional law issues. The working groups are led by upper year law students and are supervised and supported by the Asper Centre Program Coordinator and Director. This year, the Asper Centre is pleased to support the following 4 working groups: 1) Bail Reform, 2) Climate Justice, 3) Indigenous Child Welfare & Self-Government, and 4) Responding to 2SLGBTQI+ Hate.

DLS >> Client and community services provided by DLS are offered in five divisions: Criminal Law & University Offences, Employment Law & Academic Appeals, Family Law, Housing Law, and Refugee Law. Each division is supervised by a staff lawyer and led by experienced student caseworkers called Division Leaders. This year, we are recruiting approximately 60 volunteers into our program where they will:

¹ Any questions can be directed to the relevant public interest programs (Asper Centre: tal.schreier@utoronto.ca; DLS > law.dls@utoronto.ca; FoL and IPC > josh.morrison@utoronto.ca; IHRP > sandra.wisner@utoronto.ca; PBSC > probonostudents.utoronto@gmail.com. Questions about this document more generally can be directed to tal.schreier@utoronto.ca or josh.morrison@utoronto.ca.

- Conduct intake on the phone, in-person or in the community to screen potential clients for our services
- Shadow Division Leaders in one of our five divisions and assist them with their clinic work. This may include sitting on client meetings, conducting case-specific legal research, drafting pleadings, and attending court/tribunal proceedings. It may also include developing and delivering public legal education, engaging in community outreach, collaborating on law reform projects, and contributing to systemic litigation
- In partnership with a Division Leader, take carriage of a casefile where you will be jointly responsible for client counselling, conducting case-specific legal research, drafting pleadings, and appearing in a court/tribunal proceedings
- Work directly with clients seeking pardons for past criminal offences in our Record Suspension Project

Volunteers will receive training and will be supported throughout their experience at DLS by Division Leaders and DLS Staff. DLS believes that a team that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve strengthens our ability to achieve our mission. We welcome volunteers from communities that experience structural discrimination including from marginalized racialized and cultural backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and with a range of life experiences. Your lived experience, as it relates to our work, will be valued.

FoL >> This year, students will have the opportunity to volunteer with a variety of Future of Law Lab working groups, focused on novel and cutting-edge areas of the law. This year's groups will include topics such Artificial Intelligence, News & Media, Video Game Law, and Space Law. Each group is an amazing opportunity to engage with high-profile issues, build your skills as a writer and researcher, and gain experience presenting your work to regulators and other practitioners. Visit [our website](#) for more information.

IHRP >> This year, the IHRP has 4 working groups: Women's Human Rights Resources, Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan, Cameroon Anglophone Crisis Database of Atrocities, and the Venezuela Accountability Project. IHRP working groups are student-led projects that provide experiential learning opportunities in several areas of international law. The groups are led by upper year law students and are supervised and supported by the IHRP Program Coordinator and Director.

IPC >> This year, the IPC will provide law students with unique opportunities to hone your legal skills through developing and delivering public legal education, as well as collaborating with a variety of regulators and key stakeholders on policy projects intended to modernize the financial services industry. Projects will include partnerships

with the Ontario Securities Commission around AI regulation, a collaboration with the Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization on access to markets, and a comparative analysis of the regulators themselves, among others.

PBSC >> This year the PBSC has over 40 projects placing students across all years of study. Student volunteers will have the opportunity to develop their legal skills by supporting the work of community organizations under the supervision of lawyers in nearly every area of law, including family, constitutional, human rights, immigration and refugee, landlord and tenant, employment and labour, LGBTQ2S+ rights, and environmental law. For a full listing of projects, please see here:

<https://pbsc.law.utoronto.ca/projects>

PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

While each public interest program welcomes upper year students, best efforts will be made to ensure that all 1L students who would like a placement receive a volunteer opportunity.

Students are encouraged to rank multiple volunteer opportunities in order to increase the likelihood of being matched with an opportunity of their choice. In other words, the more choices that you list, the greater chance you will obtain a volunteer opportunity that matches your interests.

In an attempt to provide as many students with opportunities as possible, please note that 1L students are **not** permitted to accept more than **one (1)** placement as between:

- Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights (Asper Centre)
- Downtown Legal Services (DLS)
- Future of Law Lab (FoL)
- International Human Rights Program (IHRP)
- Investor Protection Clinic (IPC)
- Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC)

However, 1L students may accept an opportunity with Law in Action Within Schools (LAWS) in addition to an opportunity from one of the above noted programs.²

For example, a 1L student may accept a volunteer opportunity with LAWS **and** a volunteer opportunity in an Asper Centre student working group, however they may **not** accept both an Asper Centre volunteer opportunity **and** a PBSC volunteer opportunity.

Please note that this policy will be strictly enforced by the public interest programs.

² Students interested in applying for an opportunity with **LAWS** should visit the following page: <https://www.lawinaction.ca/get-involved/law-student-volunteers/apply/>

U of T Law Clubs Fair

This event will introduce students to each of the public interest programs at U of T Law, so that students can begin to learn about the opportunities to volunteer with each program.

Thursday, September 7: U of T Law Clubs Fair from 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. (in the Rowell Room and Jackman Law Building Atrium)

INFO SESSIONS

Info Sessions are intended to introduce students to the various public interest program opportunities that exist at U of T Law. Info sessions will allow students to meet program leaders, student working group leaders, hear from former volunteers and community partners, and learn more about program requirements.

Students are encouraged to attend as many info sessions as possible to maximize their decision making in advance of expressing interest.

Monday, September 11 @ 12:30 p.m. EDT: Law in Action Within Schools (LAWS), Future of Law Lab (FoL), and the Investor Protection Clinic (IPC)

- Moot Court Room - Room J250

Tuesday, September 12 @ 12:30 p.m. EDT: International Human Rights Program (IHRP) and Asper Centre (Asper)

- Moot Court Room - Room J250

Wednesday, September 13 @ 12:30 p.m. EDT: Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) and Downtown Legal Services (DLS)

- Moot Court Room - Room J250

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

In order to best match students to the various volunteer opportunities at the Asper Centre, DLS, FoL, IHRP, IPC, and PBSC, this joint-volunteer recruitment process has been centralized for the most part. Students who wish to volunteer for one of these 6 programs' opportunities must fill out the [Public Interest Application Form 2023](#), ranking their choices before the application closes.

Students are encouraged to rank as many programs and projects/working groups within each program as possible, in order to ensure that they get placed in a suitable volunteer opportunity.

Please Note: Although students who wish to volunteer in one of these programs must “apply” using the [Public Interest Application Form 2023](#), this is not meant to be a formal recruitment process similar to a job or articling applications. The basic information gathered during this recruitment process is merely to help ensure that as many students as possible are placed in volunteer positions based on their areas of interest. The public interest programs will make best efforts to attempt to place as many students as possible in their preferred choices. While priority will be given to 1Ls and those without previous experience, some projects will be more suitable for upper-years depending on the nature of the work.

- Application Form Opens: Thursday, September 14 at 2:00 p.m. EDT:
 - Students interested in an opportunity with Asper Centre, DLS, FoL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC must express their interest by completing the [Public Interest Application Form 2023](#).
 - Students interested in an opportunity with LAWS will express their interest by completing an application [here](#).

- Application Deadline: Monday, September 18 at 2:00 p.m. EDT: this is the application deadline for all public interest program volunteer opportunities.
 - Students interested in an opportunity with Asper Centre, DLS, FoL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC must express their interest by completing the [Public Interest Application Form 2023](#).
 - Students interested in an opportunity with LAWS will express their interest by completing an application [here](#).

- Placement Notification Date: Thursday, September 21 at 12:30 p.m. EDT and thereafter on a rolling basis
 - All students placed on projects will be notified at this time.

- Placement Acceptance Period: Thursday, September 21 from 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. EDT
 - Please note that **students must promptly accept no more than one (1) placement** as between Asper Centre, DLS, FoL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC

- **Students may accept a placement with LAWS in addition to one other placement**
- Students who do not accept a placement offer within this three-hour window will be deemed as having rejected this placement.

What happens if I don't get my first choice? How do rolling offers work?

The public interest programs will make best efforts to match students to programs based on their first choice. However, due to the fact that some projects have specific requirements (ex. language requirements, requirements for upper-years etc.), students may not receive an offer for their first choice. Consequently, students are encouraged to select as many programs of interest as possible when completing the Preference Form.

Once you have been offered a placement and accepted via email, you should **immediately** decline any other offered placements, by email. This is to help ensure the programs can begin opening up opportunities to other interested students.

Prospective students should monitor their email regularly beginning Thursday, September 21 at 12:30 p.m. EDT.

TRAINING DATES

Asper Centre: Students will hear directly from their individual working group leaders about training, if required. The leaders will be in touch to arrange the first group meeting and any project-specific trainings that participants must undertake.

DLS: All DLS volunteers will receive mandatory basic orientation & phone training on-site at the clinic (655 Spadina Avenue) on Friday, September 30 from 1 to 3pm. Additional volunteer training for those volunteers joining the Record Suspension Project will take place during a lunch hour of mutual availability, to be determined after recruitment.

FoL: Students will hear directly from their specific working group leaders. The leaders will be in touch to arrange the first group meeting and any project-specific trainings that participants must undertake.

IHRP: Students will hear directly from their specific working group leaders. The leaders will be in touch to arrange the first group meeting and any project-specific trainings that participants must undertake. The IHRP team will also host a welcome lunch for all working group student volunteers and leaders on Monday, October 2nd from 12:30pm – 1:30pm (more details will be provided by working group leaders prior to the event).

IPC: Students will hear directly from their specific working group leaders. The leaders will be in touch to arrange the first group meeting and any project-specific trainings that participants must undertake.

LAWS: All student volunteers must complete the following mandatory training

- Training Session – Monday, September 25th at 12:30pm in Room P105.

PBSC: All student volunteers must complete the following mandatory training:

- General Training: September 26 from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. EDT in Room J130
- WestlawNext Legal Research Training:
 - Introductory Workshop (mandatory for First-years): September 29th from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EDT.
 - Advanced Workshop (mandatory for Upper-years on legal research project. Open to other PBSC student volunteers if space permits): TBD
- Anti-oppression Training: self-directed training module to be provided to all volunteers

Please note that some projects require student volunteers to undergo additional project-specific training given the nature of the work and/or communities being served. Please visit PBSC's projects page for additional info: <https://pbsc.law.utoronto.ca/projects>