



# UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF LAW

## Public Interest Programs Recruitment Process Fall 2025

### Introduction

This guide provides an overview of how students can learn and participate in the Faculty of Law's (U of T Law) public interest programs' volunteer opportunities.

To be matched with a public interest program volunteer opportunity, students are required to participate in the joint volunteer recruitment process. Law students in all years can volunteer in the following six public interest programs (listed throughout in alphabetical order): The David Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights (Asper Centre), Downtown Legal Services (DLS), the Future of Law Lab (FLL), the International Human Rights Program (IHRP), the Investor Protection Clinic (IPC), and Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC).

Please note, Law in Action Within Schools (LAWS) has a separate application process that can be accessed [here](#).

***We ask that students read the whole guide before reaching out with questions. Questions about the joint volunteer recruitment process can be sent to: Jennifer Hsu <jennifer.hsu@utoronto.ca> and will be responded to by September 5, 2025.***

### 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 their top five volunteer opportunities 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.

To provide as many students with opportunities as possible, **1L students are not permitted to accept more than two placements in total from:**

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

However, 1L students may accept an opportunity with LAWS in addition to an opportunity from one of the above noted programs.

For example, a 1L student may accept a volunteer opportunity with LAWS and a volunteer opportunity in an Asper Centre student working group plus a PBSC volunteer opportunity. However, they should not accept a third volunteer position from another program.

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

To ensure that all 1Ls interested in volunteering receive at least one placement, we will run the matching process in two rounds. ROUND ONE will be for 1Ls only, and ROUND TWO will be for 1Ls applying for their second project/working group, as well as for 2Ls, 3Ls, and graduate students.

## RECRUITMENT PROCESS

To best match students to the various volunteer opportunities at the Asper Centre, DLS, FLL, IHRP, IPC, and PBSC, this joint-volunteer recruitment process has been centralized for the most part. 1L students who wish to volunteer for one of these six programs must fill out the **ROUND ONE FORM** ranking their choices before the application closes.

**1L students are encouraged to rank up to five projects/working groups in order to ensure that they get placed in a suitable volunteer opportunity.**

**Please Note:** Although 1L students who wish to volunteer in one of these programs must “apply” using the **ROUND ONE FORM**, this is not meant to be a formal recruitment process like 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.

## **ROUND ONE**

- ROUND ONE FORM Opens: Thursday, September 11 at 10:00 a.m.:
  - 1L students interested in an opportunity with Asper Centre, DLS, FLL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC must express their interest by completing the **ROUND ONE FORM.**
  - 1L students interested in an opportunity with LAWS will express their interest by completing an application [here](#).
- ROUND ONE Application Deadline: Monday, September 15 at 10:00 a.m: this is the application deadline for all ROUND ONE public interest program volunteer opportunities.
  - 1L students interested in an opportunity with Asper Centre, DLS, FLL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC must express their interest by completing the **ROUND ONE FORM.**
  - 1L students interested in an opportunity with LAWS will express their interest by completing an application [here](#).
- ROUND ONE Placement Notification Date: Thursday, September 18 between 12:30 – 3:00 p.m. and thereafter on a rolling basis
  - All 1L students placed on projects will be notified at this time.
- ROUND ONE Placement Acceptance Period: Thursday, September 18 from 12:30 – 3:00 p.m.
  - Please note that 1 L students must promptly accept no more than one placement between Asper Centre, DLS, FoL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC.
  - 1L students may accept a placement with LAWS in addition to one other placement.
  - 1L students who do not accept a placement offer within this three-hour window will be deemed as having rejected this placement offer.

## **ROUND TWO**

- ROUND TWO FORM Opens: Friday, September 19 at 11:00 a.m.:
  - All students interested in an opportunity with Asper Centre, DLS, FLL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC must express their interest by completing the **ROUND TWO FORM.**
  - All students interested in an opportunity with LAWS, who haven't already done so, will express their interest by completing an application [here](#).
- ROUND TWO Application Deadline: Monday, September 22 at 12:30 p.m.: this is the application deadline for all remaining public interest program volunteer opportunities.

- All students interested in an opportunity with Asper Centre, DLS, FLL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC must express their interest by completing the **ROUND TWO FORM**.
- All students interested in an opportunity with LAWS, who haven't already done so, will express their interest by completing an application [here](#).
- ROUND TWO Placement Notification Date: Tuesday, September 23 between 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. and thereafter on a rolling basis
  - All students placed on projects will be notified at this time.
- ROUND TWO Placement Acceptance Period: Tuesday, September 22 from 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
  - Please note that students must promptly accept no more than one placement between Asper Centre, DLS, FLL, IHRP, IPC, or PBSC.
  - All students may accept a placement with LAWS, if they haven't already done so, in addition to one other placement.
  - All students who do not accept a placement offer within this three-hour window will be deemed as having rejected this placement offer.

### **What happens if I don't get any of my top five choices? How do rolling offers work?**

The public interest programs will make best efforts to match students to programs based on their top five choices. However, some projects have specific requirements (e.g. language requirements, requirements for upper-year students etc.) and so it is possible that students may not receive an offer for their top five choices. As noted above, students are encouraged to select as many opportunities of interest as possible when completing the application form(s).

For both rounds, once you have been offered and accepted an offer via email, you should immediately decline any other offered placements. This is to help ensure the programs can begin opening opportunities to other interested students. Prospective students should monitor their email regularly beginning **Thursday, September 18 at 12:30 p.m. for ROUND ONE (1Ls only) and Tuesday, September 23 at 12:30 p.m. for ROUND TWO (all students)**.

## 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 and/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 Executive Director. This year, the Asper Centre is pleased to support the following three working groups: 1) Encampments and the Charter, 2) Court Interventions, and 3) The Notwithstanding Clause.

**DLS:** Client and community services provided by DLS are offered in six divisions: Criminal Law & University Offences, Employment Law & Academic Appeals, Family Law, Housing Law, Refugee Law, and Disability, Health, and Income Security. 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:

- 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 in on client meetings, conducting case-specific legal research, drafting pleadings, and attending court or 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.

**FLL:** 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, Entrepreneurship and the Lifecycle of a Start-up, Privacy Law, Blockchain, and more. Each group provides 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:** [IHRP working groups](#) are student-led projects that provide experiential learning opportunities, which may involve legal research and/or open-source investigation into current, emerging, or contentious international human rights issues. Working groups are led by upper year law students in collaboration with project partners, and are supervised and supported by the IHRP Director, Research Associate, and Program Coordinator. This year, the IHRP has seven working groups: Women's Human Rights Resources (WHRR); Cameroon Atrocities Project (CAP); Venezuela Accountability Project (VAP); Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan (GAA); Israeli Apartheid: Canada's Obligations (IACO); Migrant Workers' Legal Advocacy in Canada (MLAC); and Equipping Human Rights Advocates (EHRA).

**IPC:** This year, the IPC will provide law students with unique opportunities to hone their 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 Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) around AI governance, as well as ongoing partnerships with FSRA, the Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization, FAIR Canada, and the Ontario Securities Commission as we assist them in implementing their 2024-2025 action plans.

**PBSC:** This year Pro Bono Students Canada 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 click here](#).

**[ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY] LAWS:** Students have the opportunity to accept a position from the above opportunities in addition to LAWS. The LAWS program offers law students the chance to make a meaningful impact by supporting high school youth who face barriers to postsecondary education. Volunteers can engage in flexible roles, including Public Legal Education (PLE) Workshop Facilitator, PLE Research and Development, After-School Program/Mock Trial Leader, Law Firm Trip Leader and more. Each role provides an opportunity to develop essential legal skills such as mentoring, public speaking, research and development for legal workshops, and advocacy, while connecting with participating legal sector volunteers. The time commitment is flexible and varies depending on the role. For more information and the separate LAWS application form please [visit the LAWS Website](#).

## 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 4, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.** Location: Rowell Room and Jackman Atrium

## INFO SESSIONS

Info Sessions 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 8, 12:30 p.m.:** Law in Action Within Schools, Future of Law Lab, and the Investor Protection Clinic

- Location: J140

**Wednesday, September 10, 12:30 p.m.:** Pro Bono Students Canada, and Downtown Legal Services

- Location: J140

**Thursday, September 11, 12:30 p.m.:** International Human Rights Program and Asper Centre

- Location: J140

## 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). 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.

FLL: 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 (stay tuned for the date and more details, which 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 are required to complete a mandatory training. This orientation will introduce volunteers to their specific roles, connect them with others in their projects, and cover essential best practices and skills. Stay tuned for the date and additional details, which will be provided in the volunteer assignment offers before the event.

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

- General Training: Thursday, September 25 at 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- WestlawNext Legal Research Training:
  - Introductory Workshop (mandatory for First-years): Tuesday, September 30 at 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
  - Advanced Workshop (mandatory for Upper-years on legal research project. Open to other PBSC student volunteers if space permits): Thursday, October 2 at 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
- 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.](#)

Questions can be directed to the relevant public interest programs:

Asper Centre: [tal.schreier@utoronto.ca](mailto:tal.schreier@utoronto.ca);

DLS: [law.dls@utoronto.ca](mailto:law.dls@utoronto.ca);

FLL and IPC: [josh.morrison@utoronto.ca](mailto:josh.morrison@utoronto.ca);

IHRP: [monika.hanna@utoronto.ca](mailto:monika.hanna@utoronto.ca);

PBSC: [probonostudents.utoronto@gmail.com](mailto:probonostudents.utoronto@gmail.com).

Questions about this document more generally can be directed to [jennifer.hsu@utoronto.ca](mailto:jennifer.hsu@utoronto.ca)