



**Pro Bono in January Winter Break Trip, January 2012  
Application Packet**

**Trip Overview**

UT Law students will travel to the **Rio Grande Valley, Laredo, and El Paso** to participate in law-related volunteer projects from **January 7-13, 2012**. The trips are organized by PB in J, a law student organization, and the UT Law Pro Bono Program, whose joint vision is that UT Law students will have the opportunity to participate in meaningful pro bono work through a week-long service trip during the second week of January.

Past trip projects have engaged students in law-related work such as interviewing, hosting legal clinics, drafting, researching, translating legal documents and more (see [texas.edu/law/centers/publicinterest/probono/opportunities/pbjtrip.html](http://texas.edu/law/centers/publicinterest/probono/opportunities/pbjtrip.html)). This year, students will engage in one or more projects involving similar work in collaboration with either **South Texas Pro Bar, South Texas Civil Rights Project, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services** and/or the **UT Colonias Contract for Deed Project**. Detailed descriptions of the projects are included on page 2 of this packet. Some projects must be staffed by Spanish-speakers, although Spanish ability is not a requirement to participate. However, the selection committee will consider students' language abilities to ensure there are enough Spanish-speakers to cover project needs.

Participants are expected to attend a mandatory pre-trip meeting on **November 30, 2011 at 5:30 pm** in **TNH 3.125**. Trip packets will be distributed at this meeting. Trip participants must also attend a post-trip debriefing meeting, to be scheduled for sometime in late January.

Trip participants will be reimbursed after the trip for the following trip expenses:

- Fuel costs for those who drive carpools that include at least 2 additional passengers<sup>1</sup>
- Meal costs based on a modest daily stipend.

The Pro Bono Program will make lodging arrangements and trip participants will be expected to stay at the designated lodging site and to share a room with up to three other students. If space is available, students may choose to stay in a single room at their own cost. The Pro Bono Program will make carpool and lodging assignments for the group; expect lodging to be modest.

The application is open to all UT Law students, but space is limited. To apply, submit a completed Application and Trip Commitment form, 1-page essay, and resume to the Justice Center by **4:30 pm on Friday, November 4, 2011**.

Participants will be selected and announced via email on **November 9**. Those selected have until **noon, November 10** to confirm their participation. We will keep a waitlist and offer spaces to students on the list if participants withdraw. **Students who want to remain on the waitlist must also attend the Nov. 30 meeting.** If you are not committed to participating, please do not apply. It may be difficult for students on the waiting list to change their plans. For questions, please contact Pro Bono Administrator, Elena Yujuico ([eyujuico@law.utexas.edu](mailto:eyujuico@law.utexas.edu)).

<sup>1</sup> Due to distance, the Pro Bono Program will make flight arrangements for those who need to travel to El Paso for PB in J.



## Project Descriptions

### UT Colonias Contract for Deed Project (Locations: Laredo or Rio Grande Valley)

The Contract for Deed Project ("Colonias CFD Project") will document and analyze patterns of land acquisition and transfer in Texas colonias. The project is being commissioned by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs at the request of the Texas Legislature in order to understand the impact of legislation designed to protect residents from certain potentially deceptive forms of land transfer, including the use of informal contracts for deed.

Law students will receive training on the history of titling and real estate practices in the border region and of the legislation passed in Texas over the past two decades, which is now being replicated in a number of other states with similar settlements. Students will apply their legal backgrounds to document the impact of these laws on contracting practices in each county of study. Students' duties may include things such as visiting local appraisal districts and county clerk offices in order to assemble, analyze, and categorize all relevant legal documents and information for inclusion in a full report to be delivered to the Texas Legislature.

### Wills on Wheels Project (Location: Rio Grande Valley)

*Students who work on this project in the Valley will also work on the Colonias CFD Project. Laredo CFD participants will not work on this project.*

Students will work with attorneys from Texas RioGrande Legal Aid and South Texas Civil Rights Project to staff wills clinics in various Valley cities. Students will meet with and interview low-income property owners about their estate needs and then draft wills based on the information received. Attorneys will review the wills before finalizing them for the clients. According to Corrina Spencer-Scheurich, an attorney with STCRP, "this is one of the biggest, almost-entirely-unmet needs in the community. A lot of future probate and property issues will be solved with these clinics. In addition, we will be helping very low-income people preserve whatever small wealth they are able to acquire through their lifetimes and pass it on to hopefully give a step up to future generations." In past years, clients have been affiliated with community development organizations including Proyecto Azteca and Project ARISE.

### **Training and Trip Dates for the Colonias CFD Project (both Vally and Laredo) and Wills on Wheels Project:**

Students will be trained during the **November 30** meeting and again on **Friday, January 6** at the law school, at a time to be determined. Students participating in these projects must be available to attend both trainings.



Immigration Projects (Locations: El Paso or Rio Grande Valley)

Several small groups will work on immigration matters.

In the Rio Grande Valley, one group will help South Texas Civil Rights Project assemble immigration petitions for women filing for legal residency under the Violence Against Women Act. Another group will work with South Texas Pro Bar and work with immigration detainees. Some of the students in this group will work with unaccompanied minors on asylum and SIJ cases, which may include working with clients on filling out applications, including the I-589, writing up personal declarations, and researching country conditions and specific issues of law. Other students in the Pro Bar group will work with detainees in the adult facilities. These students may help people fill out cancellation of removal applications (both LPR and non-LPR), or do a U visa case, a bond hearing, a bond or parole request with ICE, or whatever pro bar/clients need at the time.

Students traveling to El Paso will perform similar work to that described above. They will work with attorneys from Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services and with clients from Annunciation House.

**Training and Trip Dates:**

Students will carpool to the Valley or fly to El Paso early **Sunday, January 8**, and complete work midday on **Friday, January 13**. Students will be trained on-site.



# Pro Bono Program

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF LAW

## Application and Trip Commitment

### Part I. Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip Location:

(Rank your locations in order of preference; if you have no preference, mark "No Preference"):

\_\_\_\_\_ El Paso \_\_\_\_\_ Laredo \_\_\_\_\_ Rio Grande Valley \_\_\_\_\_ No Preference

Have you applied to a previous winter break trip? Yes/No If yes, how many times? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you gone on a previous winter break trip? Yes/No List years: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you taken the Pro Bono Pledge? Yes/No

Are you able to drive your own car to the Valley or Laredo if selected for one of those trips? Yes / No

If so, are you willing to take passengers? Yes / No

How many? \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Drivers who receive reimbursement for fuel costs will be expected to drive at least 2 other passengers to and from the trip location and to and from projects and meals during the week.

Would you prefer to stay in a single hotel room at your own cost? Yes / No

If you are not selected in November, would you like us to put your name on a waiting list? Yes / No

Do you speak Spanish? (If so, please indicate your language ability by marking all relevant options below. If not, indicate this by marking "Do Not Speak Spanish.")

\_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Speak Spanish

\_\_\_\_\_ Basic Conversational

\_\_\_\_\_ Basic Reading

\_\_\_\_\_ Basic Writing

\_\_\_\_\_ Proficient Conversational

\_\_\_\_\_ Proficient Reading

\_\_\_\_\_ Proficient Writing

\_\_\_\_\_ Fluent Conversational

\_\_\_\_\_ Fluent Reading

\_\_\_\_\_ Fluent Writing

Please provide a copy of your resume and a brief essay (no more than 1 page, double-spaced) explaining your interest in participating in this trip. If you feel you have any specialized skills or experiences that might be relevant to the trip, please explain these in your essay (e.g. familiarity with the trip locales, immigration or colonia experience, etc.) This information will help us determine project placement for those selected for the trip.

**To complete your application, read and sign the Trip Commitment on page 5 of this form.**

Please submit a complete Application and Trip Commitment form, essay, and resume to the Justice Center, CCJ 1.324, by 4:30 pm, Friday, November 4, 2011. Questions? Contact Pro Bono administrator Elena Yujuico at 232-1989 or [eyujuico@law.utexas.edu](mailto:eyujuico@law.utexas.edu).



## Part II. Trip Commitment

I have read the Application Packet in its entirety and have indicated my information and preferences on the Application. I understand that students traveling to the Valley and Laredo will provide their own transportation or carpool to the trip location.

I understand that the Law School will reimburse fuel costs for those who drive their own cars to the Valley or Laredo and drive at least 2 other participants to and from the trip location and to and from projects and meals during the week. I also understand that the Law School will pay for hotel/lodging costs for Saturday through Thursday nights at the group lodging and provide a modest daily stipend for meals Saturday through Friday, to be paid after the trip based on my receipts. (Immigration Project participants will be reimbursed for lodging and meal costs from Sunday-Friday.) I will stay at the group hotel/lodging and understand that the lodging will be modest. I will either share a room with up to three other students or, if I have indicated on my application form, and if space is available, pay for a single room at the group hotel at my own cost.

If I am selected to participate in the trip, or choose to remain on the waitlist, I will submit required forms, including a copy of a state-issued ID, health, and auto insurance, if applicable, by the designated due date. I will also participate in a mandatory pre-trip meeting on November 30, 2011 at 5:30 pm and post-trip debriefing meeting to be scheduled in late January. In addition, if selected for the Colonias CFD Project, I will participate in a training at the law school on Friday, January 6, 2012. I will arrive at my trip location by the designated time, which will be included in my trip packet and will attend all scheduled group events. Finally, I will work on my assigned project(s) for at least 8 hours a day, including some evening hours during the duration of the trip.

I understand that the Law School will post information about the trip and trip photographs on its website. I give the Law School and the William Wayne Justice Center permission to post and otherwise disseminate my photograph and information about my participation in the trip.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_