Public Interest Volunteer Opportunities (PIVO)

Public Interest Volunteer Opportunities (PIVO) serves as a clearinghouse for public interest projects and research opportunities. Our aim is to match organizations in need of assistance with Yale Law School (YLS) students who want to build their legal experience by working on important issues. They care about your work and are eager to become familiar with the public interest community.

What Type of Help Can PIVO Provide?
Because few of our partners are located near the law school, attorneys typically request work that can be done from New Haven, such as research and writing on discrete projects or on issues within a larger project. The work is often used for pending litigation or policy, legislative, and advocacy agendas. This research can be strictly law focused or involve broader research. We welcome diverse projects and encourage you to think broadly and creatively about how YLS students can assist your organization.

The Matching Process
Seriously consider the scope of your project so we can evaluate how the project should be staffed to assure success, or whether it can be completed in a timely manner within our program. Once we receive your proposal form, we will work to match a student to your project; if necessary, we can assign a team of students to a larger project. Successful matches usually request a 20-50 hour commitment.

You will hear from your student volunteer(s) as soon as we have a match. If no students express interest, we will notify you. Since PIVO operates on a volunteer basis, we cannot make commitments regarding our ability to match students to a specific project.

Get Started Early
Please submit your project by the beginning of January to allow enough time for your project’s completion during the spring semester.

Maintain Contact
Students welcome and appreciate consistent contact with the project’s supervising attorney. Instruction, comments, and completed drafts are commonly exchanged over the phone and via email due to the distance from your organization. If you are not too far away, consider inviting the student to meet with your staff or the supervising attorney in person, or to attend a proceeding that is relevant to the project.

PIVO staff will follow up periodically with you and the assigned student(s) to ensure the partnership is effective, but be sure to contact us at any time if you have questions or concerns.

Please be aware that faculty or attorney supervision is not available through PIVO. Partner organizations are responsible for all client services and supervision of students.
What are My Responsibilities?

YLS students are ready to commit to your project and provide you with a thoughtful work product. We ask that you commit to a few essential responsibilities in order to ensure a successful PIVO partnership.

- Submit one or more projects, with accurate descriptions of the work and estimates of the time involved, in writing to PIVO. Be sure to clearly state your deadline.
- Designate an attorney who is ready, willing and able to supervise your volunteer(s). Remember, there is no attorney or faculty supervision at YLS for PIVO volunteers. Make sure that the supervising attorney keeps in touch with the student and helps keep them on track throughout the project.
- If a project seems to expand once it has been assigned, talk to your volunteer to see if he or she can absorb the extra work. If not, you should either break off any additions as separate PIVO projects and submit them, or contact us and ask if PIVO can assign additional students to your project.
- When your project is complete, please call or email your student to offer feedback on their work.
- Let us know whether we served your needs and how we might improve by responding to our PIVO Partner Evaluation. This form is available at any time on our website, but we will remind you to complete it once your project is finished.

Questions? Concerns?

Please do not hesitate to contact PIVO staff at any time with questions or concerns about your project.

Juliann Davis
Assistant Director of Administration
Career Development Office
juliann.davis@yale.edu, 203-432-7191

Norma D'Apolito
Director, Public Interest
Career Development Office
norma.dapolito@yale.edu, 203-436-2580

Career Development Office Email
cdo.law@yale.edu