

Public Service Organizations in the St. Louis Area

American Civil Liberties Union of Eastern Missouri (ACLU)

The ACLU is a private, non-profit organization that works to defend individual rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Their work includes protecting First Amendment rights, Equal Protection rights, Due Process rights, and Privacy rights. The ACLU defends clients without charge and relies on volunteer lawyers and law clerks to litigate and research cases.

- **Opportunities:** Law clerk positions are available. Clerks will: assist Legal Director in developing cases for litigation; conduct legal research and prepare memoranda; draft demand letters, pleadings, and briefs; attend meeting of the Legal Steering Committee; attend court hearings on cases and participate in other special intern activities; organize and manage case files; meet with lawyers and clients as needed. Law clerks get hands-on experience and have direct contact with clients, often serving as the primary contact person on a case.
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** basic research and writing skills, interest in constitutional law and civil liberties (coursework in these areas not necessary but helpful)
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Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

The purpose of the ADL is stop defamation of Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.

- **Opportunities:** Please contact Elizabeth Walsh for current opportunities.
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** Security background check; preference for 2nd or 3rd year students.
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Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)--St. Louis County

County CASA advocates for abused and neglected children in need of safe and permanent homes, consults with all affected parties and professionals, monitors service plans and their implementation, assists with guardian ad litem duties when requested, and conducts independent investigation and prepares reports for the courts.

- **Opportunities:** advocate for abused or neglected child as an officer of the court, make all contacts and access all recording pertaining to the child to determine what is in his/her best interest; may also serve as "Friends of CASA" volunteer
- **Qualifications/Requirements:** must attend an informational meeting, interview, background (criminal and child abuse/neglect) check, training (33 hours over 3 week

period); after training is complete, requires approximately 15 hours per month time commitment

- **Contact:** Allie Ray , 121 S. Meramec, 2nd Floor, St. Louis, MO 63105, 615-2908, fax 615-0621, information@casastlcounty.org

Voices for Children (CASA in St. Louis City)

The mission of Voices for Children is to speak on behalf of abused and neglected children in the City of St. Louis. Voices for Children promotes and supports quality volunteer representation for children and advocate for safe, permanent, and nurturing homes for each child.

- **Opportunities:** legal internships representing children, organize book drives for book project, maintain children's waiting room, office work, volunteering at fundraising events (such as a 5K walk in October); appointment as Guardian ad litem.
- **Qualifications/Requirements:** background check, interview, special training (have a weekend session for students); hours are flexible
- **Contact:** Megan Feely, Volunteer & Community Relations Assistant, 920 N. Vandeventer, St. Louis 63108, 552-2516, fax 535-8870, mafeely@voicesforchildren.org, www.voicesforchildrenstl.org

FOCUS St. Louis

The organization's mission is to create a cooperative, thriving region by engaging citizens in active leadership roles to influence positive community change. The organization also functions as the region's citizen's league. FOCUS develops leaders by providing cutting-edge program opportunities; engages citizens to examine and address critical issues which shape the region and its future; and influences community policy by promoting region-wide dialogue and problem-solving, facilitating collaborative initiatives, and informing policy-makers. Good government, racial equality and social justice, quality educational opportunities, and sustainable infrastructure are the group's highest priorities.

- **Opportunities:** Legal intern positions are available to work on the Environmental Justice Project, which is an EPA contract. Issues to be addressed include hazardous household waste and smart growth (e.g., real estate, land use). Interns will have the opportunity to research; draft model codes, position papers and briefs; do advocacy; and assess public policy. Will provide good experience in educating the government and interacting with agencies.
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** 2nd or 3rd year student, resume, interview, training, 15 hours per week but can be done any days and some evenings, work need not be done on site
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Gateway Legal Services

Gateway is a non-profit legal aid law firm dedicated to helping the poor and disabled, focusing primarily on consumer and social security issues.

- **Opportunities:** client intake interviews and obtaining case files and medical records
 - **Requirements/Qualifications:** approximately 3-4 hours per week; reliability
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Great Rivers Environmental Law Center

The firm's practice focuses on environmental litigation and consultation. The litigation practice includes the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, solid waste, hazardous waste, Superfund, underground storage tanks, RCRA, NEPA, and wetlands regulation. The firm's consultation practice includes environmental permitting, environmental compliance and environmental contamination.

- **Opportunities:** Legal and factual research opportunities on environmental cases
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** 2Ls and 3Ls, interview; flexible hours
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The Immigration Project

Incorporated by a Wash U Law graduate and funded by grants, the Project serves indigent and disadvantaged people from 70 countries in almost 200 southern Illinois communities. It is the only downstate agency of its kind with accreditation from the Board of Immigration Appeals to represent eligible amnesty applicants before the INS; fewer than one percent of the applications it handles are denied. Almost half of its cases involve family reunification matters, and it also handles issues such as discrimination in the workplace and educational opportunities, landlord-tenant difficulties, and the deleterious effects of new immigration on legally permanent residents.

- **Opportunities:** brief writing, legal research, case management, clerical/filing/data entry
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** interview, need own transportation, language skills/translators preferable; time commitment of 5-10 hours per week
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Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation

Provides legal and supportive services to improve the lives of its clients to assist them in obtaining social and economic justice.

- **Opportunities:** serve as a legal intern in the senior citizens, homeownership, or domestic violence projects; interns typically interview clients, investigate cases, draft pleadings, and in some cases represent clients in administrative or court hearings
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** prefer 2Ls and 3Ls, prefer students who can make a two semester commitment; interview, training provided by directing attorney; can take 2-4 weeks before an internship can start; requires 10 hours per week (Monday through Friday)
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Lawyer Referral & Information Service (LRIS)

LRIS is a public service of the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis (BAMSL) which refers members of the public to area lawyers.

- **Opportunities:** Using referral software, volunteers answer phone calls and emails to provide resources and/or make referrals in 120+ legal areas.
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** Must be able to spot legal issues quickly and possess professional demeanor; strong commitment to public service; computer proficiency; attention to detail. Must be a student in good standing and have a brief personal interview.
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Legal Advocates for Abused Women (LAAW)

LAAW is dedicated to helping victims of abuse during times of crisis, working within the legal system, law enforcement and courts. LAAW provides crisis intervention and support, legal information and advocacy, safety planning, and legal and social service referrals for victims of abuse who have been battered, stalked or harassed. LAAW also specializes in providing free legal representation at order of protection hearings for low-income victims of abuse.

- **Opportunities:** crisis line support and legal information, intake for orders of protection, court advocate for City of St. Louis civil court (meet with petitioners and offer information, support and referral), legal intern opportunities
- **Qualifications/Requirements:** application, interview, resume; 30 hours of training required (*training is offered three times a year*); the time commitment is one shift of 3½ hours per week (Monday-Friday) but other arrangements may be available, would like 6 months-1 year commitment

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri

LSEM is a private, non-profit organization providing legal assistance and equal access to justice for low-income people in civil cases. Some of the areas addressed by the office include: domestic violence/family law, subsidized housing, homelessness (including homeless adolescents), homeowners' mortgage default and foreclosure, elderly issues, AIDS, health and welfare, immigration, access for children to appropriate educational services, and the volunteer lawyer program.

- **Opportunities:** legal interns needed for above departments; tasks include: client intake, drafting pleadings and motion, filing at courthouses, research, assisting with interviewing clients, setting court dates, case management, drafting financial agreements, investigation, and advocacy.
- **Qualifications/Requirements:** positions for all level students, some positions have preference for Rule 13, immigration unit prefers students who have had immigration class(es) and speak a second language; initial screening and then interview with attorney in desired unit; hour long orientation required

Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing Opportunity Council (EHOC)

EHOC is the only private, not-for-profit fair housing enforcement agency working to end illegal housing discrimination and ensure equal access to housing for all people through education, counseling, investigation and enforcement.

- **Opportunities:** legal research on housing discrimination issues, case analysis, investigation & serving as a "tester"/"secret shopper," designing housing discrimination surveys, grant writing and research, interviewing clients, general office assistance
- **Qualifications/Requirements:** please call for more information

Missouri Coalition for the Environment

The Missouri Coalition for the Environment works to preserve, protect and enhance an environment that is livable, healthful and sustainable through a comprehensive program of education, citizen action and legal defense. It is a citizen watchdog organization that promotes public information and education on environmental issues that directly affect the entire state of Missouri, and lobbies for better laws. The coalition addresses a wide range of issues, including clean air and water, safe and renewable energy options, efficient alternative transportation, protection of public lands, cleanup of toxic and radioactive wastes, adequate parks, preservation of wildlife habitats, and solid waste management.

- **Opportunities:** a variety of volunteer opportunities exist including: working on teams that address specific issues such as clean air and recycling and smart growth, serve on the legislative or media teams, teach, provide office assistance, help plan and coordinate events, do fundraising and membership development, assist with legal work on issues
 - **Qualifications/Requirement:** please call for more information
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Missouri Commission on Human Rights

MCHR was created by the state legislature and enforces the Missouri Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations due to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, handicap, age and familial status.

- **Opportunities:** practical experience; assist with and conduct investigations alleging violations of Missouri anti-discrimination laws: interviewing, writing investigative reports and summaries, making recommendations, analyzing documents and records.
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** interview
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Missouri State Public Defender

The mission of the Missouri State Public Defender System is to provide high quality, zealous advocacy for indigent people who are accused of crime in the State of Missouri. The lawyers, administrative staff and support staff of the Public Defender System will ensure that this advocacy is not compromised. To provide this uncompromised advocacy, the Defender System will supply each client with a high-quality, competent, ardent defense team at every stage of the process in which public defenders are necessary.

- **Opportunities:** legal internship opportunities in various public defender offices, including the youth division
 - **Qualifications/Requirement:** please call for more information
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Midwest Pension Rights Project

The Pension Benefits Project was started with seed money from the U.S. Administration on Aging as one of six projects nationwide to help individuals who have pension problems. The Project provides individual counseling and assistance to older women (over 55), as well as men and younger women, with pension problems free of charge. This is a good opportunity to gain exposure to ERISA and federal bureaucracy.

- **Opportunities:** Client intake and interviewing; legal research

- **Qualifications/Requirements:** interview, resume, references, interest in working with the community; 2 hours per week, times available Monday-Friday from 9:00 am-5:00 pm
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PROMO

PROMO is a statewide, non-profit membership organization working to ensure the right to privacy of everyone. PROMO is an advocate for the civil rights of all Missourians, and focuses on gaining equality under the law for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. PROMO worked to ensure privacy in sexuality, reproduction and parenting, AIDS, anti-cohabitation ordinances, collection of information, drug testing, and equal rights through political, electoral and educational efforts.

- **Opportunities:** intern duties such as legal research (particularly on local ordinances) and drafting of legislation and amendments; also community organizing, phone outreach, districting, data entry, volunteer recruitment, mailings
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** no minimum hour requirement; hours available anytime Monday-Friday from 10:00 am-6:00 pm, and Wednesdays from 6:00-9:00 pm
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St. Louis Better Business Bureau (BBB)

The St. Louis Better Business Bureau's mission is "to help make the entire region a better place in which to live, work and do business by encouraging positive business practices." It serves 50 counties in Eastern Missouri and 49 counties in Southern Illinois. BBB utilizes volunteers to assist consumers and companies in settling disputes amicably through cost-free mediation and arbitration.

- **Opportunities:** Mediator positions available. Mediators assist in settling disputes, suggest ways for companies to gain good will of customers through resolution of complaints. Volunteers mediate via telephone at BBB offices and are expected to adhere to a schedule.
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** Good communication skills and ability to remain neutral; volunteers are expected to give 8-20 hours per week; interview and training required.
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St. Louis City Law Department

The law department for the City of St. Louis, known as the Office of the City Counselor, provides legal assistance and representation to the City, its related agencies and departments, and its elected and appointed officers. It also serves as General Counsel to the St. Louis Police Board.

- **Opportunities:** Legal research and writing on administrative and real property law.
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** 2nd or 3rd year law students preferred.
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St. Louis City Office of the Circuit Attorney

The office prosecutes misdemeanor and felony cases, as well as offers services to victims, and collecting child support. Divisions include child support, delinquent tax/bad checks, family violence/sex crimes, homicide, misdemeanors, and victim services.

- **Opportunities:** serve as legal intern and participate in bench trials for misdemeanors and preliminary hearings; research and writing in the areas of homicide, sex crimes, domestic violence; serve as second-chair for criminal trials; aid Victim Services' office
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** criminal background check; takes approximately 2-4 weeks before a student can start work; time commitment of at least 10 hours per week, Monday-Friday from 9:00 am-5:00 pm
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St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

The office prosecutes misdemeanor and felony cases, as well as offers services to victims' of crime through the Victim Service Division, and collects child support money that is past due. Divisions include: arson, asset forfeitures, bad checks, child abuse, child support, civil, delinquent state taxes, domestic violence, election law, gangs/drugs, sexual assault, traffic, vice, victim services, and white collar crime.

- **Opportunities:** legal internships (assist in trial and docket preparation, perform legal research and writing, appear in court if Rule 13 certified)
 - **Qualifications/Requirements:** interview after submitting resume and cover letter; time commitment of 15-20 hours per week required
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St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts

VLAA helps painters, poets, musicians, playwrights, photographers, graphic artists, dancers, craft groups, filmmakers, theater companies, orchestras, neighborhood arts councils and others. The VLAA caseload includes obtaining nonprofit, tax-exempt status; negotiating and drafting contracts; protecting intellectual property; developing bookkeeping systems; and providing education and mediation services.

- **Opportunities:** serve as legal intern; nonprofit incorporation
- **Qualifications/Requirements:** please call for more information

Tax Assistance Program (TAP)

TAP is a group of volunteers who provides free tax preparation for low income families. Last year, TAP served 666 families, prepared 1,229 returns, and got these families a total of \$822,179 in refunds (the average refund per family was between \$1100 and \$1300). Many of these families had no knowledge of the earned income tax credit, but with TAP's help, 47% of the total refunds came from families claiming the earned income tax credit.

- **Opportunities:** prepare tax returns for low income families
- **Qualifications/Requirements:** no experience is necessary and training will be provided
- **Contact:** Conner Ash, P.C., 12101 Woodcrest Executive Drive, Suite 300, St. Louis, MO 63141, 205-2510, fax 205-2505

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Missouri

The United States Attorneys serve as the nation's principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. The office prosecutes criminal cases brought by the Federal government; prosecutes and defends civil cases in which the United States is a party; and collects debts owed the Federal government which are administratively uncollectible.

- **Opportunities:** legal intern working on child pornography cases (collect evidence both on and off the internet, assist in the prosecution of cases, obtain help for children victims), legal intern for environmental prosecution unit
- **Qualifications/Requirements:** second or third year students during the school year (please note that there is also a summer program); full background check, which takes 3-4 weeks; call for more information; time commitment of 8 hours or more per week

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Illinois

The United States Attorneys serve as the nation's principle litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. The office prosecutes criminal cases brought by the Federal government; prosecutes and defends civil cases in which the United States is a party; and collects debts owed the Federal government which cannot be collect through administrative means.