

## UCI Law Alternative Spring Break 2025

**Applications are due by Sunday, December 8th at Midnight.**

Submitting this application is not a guarantee that you will be chosen for a spring break pro bono placement.

If chosen, **you agree to provide a non-refundable \$150 check by Monday, December 23rd (checks only - payable to UC Regents)** to Alexis Mondares (amondares@law.uci.edu). If you need an extension on this date or a fee waiver, please discuss with Anna Davis (adavis@law.uci.edu). If you do not attend the trip, you forfeit the \$150.

**Please note that information provided in this application will be used to book flights. The identifying information you provide must match exactly as it shows on whatever form of identification you will use at the airport.**

### Pro Bono Offices

Review the descriptions of the legal organizations taking volunteers in the attachment, then rank the offices you are interested in volunteering with on the Google Form. ***Do not rank an office if you are not willing to volunteer at that location.***

- **Mississippi Center for Justice, Biloxi – 4 spots:** MCJ has a tradition of movement lawyering, having focused its work on what the community identifies as its most important needs. More than 200 UCI Law students have volunteered with MCJ since 2011. The areas of law that they worked on have varied, but tend to include: Post-Hurricane Katrina work, the Gulf/BP oil spill, construction of a new port (effect on low income communities), education, housing insecurity, and post-conviction relief (expungements). It should be noted that even when students work on similar subject matter as in California, such as expungements, the law in Mississippi is so different that students have really enjoyed seeing the divergences between the two states' laws and implementation. MCJ attorneys use the law, media, and the public to provide access to justice. Please note that over the past few years the work has tended to be more research based with less visits to the community. **THIS TOTALLY VARIES—but you should volunteer with the understanding that you *may* be in an office 90% of the time working on a computer (with the opportunity to “check out” the area at night).** MCJ works hard to organize opportunities outside of the office, including attending meetings, court hearings, or special events, but nothing is guaranteed.
- **Mississippi Center for Legal Services, Jackson – 3 spots:** This is the third year to offer work with this organization. MCLS is a provider of direct legal services to those in Central and Southern Mississippi. The organization focuses on populations with vulnerabilities (elder law, DV, and disabilities); family support (bankruptcy, divorce, custody, education); economic stability (social security, SSI, unemployment, food stamps); preserving the home (evictions, foreclosures, deeds & wills); and safety & stability (healthcare, advanced healthcare directives). The Jackson office most often gives legal research assignments with opportunities to draft various documents. Students in Jackson should be aware that client contact is limited. There is a possibility that the

Gulfport office may also need volunteers, and that office has given opportunities for client interviewing and providing direct legal services to clients. Assignments from both offices will vary depending on what issues come in the door.

- **Disability Rights Mississippi, Jackson – 4 spots:** This is the fourth year for students to volunteer with Disability Rights Mississippi. This is a statewide organization, dedicated to protecting the rights of those with disabilities, either physical or mental. Students will be focused on several areas regarding disability rights, including adult care and possibly prison conditions. The last two years students had a variety of experiences, visiting small group homes, mental health hospitals, and detention facilities. This site emphasizes experience over traditional legal work. The attorneys and staff are incredibly kind and welcoming to our students.
- **Big Horn County, Montana Prosecutor and Crow Reservation – 6 spots:** Students will be working with Jeanne Torske, Big Horn County Attorney (prosecutor). She is a former Special Assistant US Attorneys (SAUSA) assigned to the Crow reservation, and still works closely with prosecutors on the Reservation, which is located just outside of Billings, MT. Students will volunteer at a rural county prosecutor's office and also tour tribal courts, and offices in Billings. This is the third year students have worked with Ms. Torske and previous students have called it a transformative experience, including the consideration of professional ethics in a jurisdiction where defendants are not legally entitled to an attorney. The experience varies greatly from year-to-year, but volunteers will almost certainly get a sense of the work of a prosecutor, and the jurisdictional and social issues involved with trying cases next to a Reservation.
- **Legal Services of Northern California, Ukiah – 5 spots; Auburn – 5 spots:** LSNC provides legal services to 23 counties in Northern California with eight locations. Students will be working in one of two offices. Five (5) students will be based in Ukiah (serving Lake and Mendocino counties) and Auburn (serving Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer and Sierra counties). LSNC is a traditional legal services provider with assistance in housing, government benefits, health, and other civil legal issues. Student volunteers at both offices will be providing expungement and record clearing assistance at clinics located near either office. This is a chance for students to get into rural communities and see first-hand the challenges and benefits to providing legal assistance to clients, who are seeking to clean up their criminal record, usually to increase employment opportunities.

Please indicate in the Google Form which office(s) where you would like to work. Rank offices as 1 being your 1st choice, and so on up to 6. ***Do not rank an office if you are not willing to volunteer at that location.***

- Mississippi Gulf Coast - Mississippi Center for Justice, Biloxi (4 volunteers)
- Mississippi Gulf Coast - Mississippi Center for Legal Services, Gulfport (TBD if offered)
- Jackson, Mississippi - Disability Rights Mississippi (4 volunteers)

- Jackson, Mississippi - Mississippi Center for Legal Services (3 volunteers)
- Billings, Montana - Big Horn County Attorney's Office (Prosecutor) (6 volunteers)
- Ukiah, California - Legal Services of Northern California (5 volunteers)
- Auburn, California - Legal Services of Northern California (5 volunteers)

### **Information for Flight Reservations**

Please provide the following information in the Google form:

- Name (**EXACTLY** as it appears on your driver's license, passport, or other identification you use at the airport)
- Date of Birth
- Gender (as it appears on identification used at the airport)
- Law School email address
- Phone number

**The information above will be used to book flights. *The identifying information you provide must match exactly as it shows on whatever form of identification you will use at the airport.***

### **Trip Information**

**Dates:** Sunday March 2, 2025 - Friday March 7, 2025

**Please review each section and confirm your understanding on the Google Form.**

Agreeing to be responsible for a carpool, rental car, or hotel deposit does not guarantee you will be needed to do so. Your ability to be responsible for these items does not affect your chances of being selected to attend the trip - they merely help us plan logistics for the trip.

**Student Conduct:** You are expected to be good ambassadors for UCI Law, acting professionally at all times. This applies while working with employees of the organizations where you are volunteers, organizations working alongside your host organization, and the community that the organization serves. For example, if given the option to work remotely, you should opt to work in the office to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the work and respect for their providing you office space.

You will be expected to work all five (5) days (**Mar. 3-7**), or as much as required by the office where you are volunteering. In the past, students typically work from 9:00am-5:00pm, but some of the projects required travel to rural areas, creating longer days. All of the offices have allowed our students to depart on Friday in time to get to the airport. The number of hours that you can count as pro bono tends to average 30-40 hours for the week.

**Academics:** This trip takes place during Mid-Semester Review Week (Mar. 3-7). During this time, students often complete long writing assignments, work on outlines, and prepare for mid-term exams.

You will be expected to work all five (5) days (**Mar. 3-7**), or as much as required by the office where you are volunteering, which will total around 30-40 hours for the week.

**If you are struggling academically, we strongly suggest you not participate and focus on your studies.**

**COVID-19 Information:** Please note that the vaccination status of clients, attorneys, and others at the offices and locations that you will be visiting is unknown, and mask wearing in many areas is sporadic or non-existent.

**Cost:** Each student will provide a \$150 payment. The rest of the trip expenses are subsidized by the Pro Bono Program. The price includes flights (described below) for all volunteers, hotel (**2 people per room**), one dinner, car rental, and gasoline for the rental cars. You are responsible for your food and entertainment costs. Please note that we expect all hotels where we are staying to provide breakfast, but that is not guaranteed. You are also responsible for the costs of travelling to the airport (LAX, parking at the airport, and any baggage fees). If you cannot afford the \$150 fee, please send an email to Anna Davis ([adavis@law.uci.edu](mailto:adavis@law.uci.edu)) explaining why you are requesting a waiver.

**Flights:** All students will travel together on group flights. This simplifies travel arrangements, and also allows for a group discount. Only under exceptional circumstances will any student be allowed to travel separately.

All students will fly together with one of the three groups (Mississippi, Montana, or Northern California) out of LAX or SNA. Once we land, everyone will travel to their respective cities to prepare to volunteer on Monday morning.

**Flights are not yet finalized and are subject to change.**

Mississippi Volunteers (Southwest Airlines)

Sunday 3/2/25 LAX to New Orleans (MSY) — 11:30am depart, 6:35pm arrival  
Drive to Gulf Coast—1.5 to 2 hours  
Drive to Jackson—2.5 to 3 hours  
Friday 3/7/25 New Orleans (MSY) to LAX — 6:00pm depart, 10:45pm arrival

Montana Volunteers (Alaska/Delta)

Sunday 3/2/25 SNA to Billings (BIL) — 7:45am depart, 2:14pm arrival  
Friday 3/7/25 Billings (BIL) to SNA — 6:35pm depart, 10:11pm arrival

Northern California Volunteers (Southwest Airlines)

Sunday 3/2/25 LAX to Sacramento (SMF) — 9:05am depart, 10:40am arrival  
Drive to Ukiah - 2.5 to 3 hours  
Drive to Auburn - 40 min to 1 hour  
Friday 3/7/25 Sacramento (SMF) to LAX — 6:00pm depart, 7:30pm arrival

**Airport Parking/Shuttle:** Students are strongly encouraged to carpool or get rides to the airport to reduce the cost of parking. Airport parking is not reimbursable by the university.

**Baggage:** Students are responsible for paying any baggage fees (usually \$25-30 per bag, each way—carry-ons are free). Keep in mind that you will need to pack for potentially cold weather—even in the South, plus you should bring at least one outfit appropriate for going to court.

**Car Rental:** We will be renting full-size cars, paid for by the Pro Bono Program. The goal will be to have at least one vehicle assigned per organization. Thus, if three students are at MCJ in Biloxi and two are at MS Center for Legal Services, that group will have two cars.

Students are asked to drive these vehicles, which requires students to be at least 25 years old, have a valid driver's license, and place a credit card down at the car rental office. **The credit card will be charged at the end of the trip for the car rental. The cost of the car rental and gasoline will be reimbursed upon return.**

To alleviate primary drivers, we ask other students to be alternate drivers, which requires students to be at least 25 years old and have a valid driver's license.

**Lodging:** The hotels will most likely provide breakfast. Students will be staying 2 people per room. Rooms will be same-gender, unless other arrangements are made and everyone in the room agrees. If you wish to have your own room, you will need to pay for it yourself.

**Gulf Coast:** La Quinta Inn & Suites Biloxi

**Jackson:** La Quinta Inn & Suites Pearl

**Billings, MT:** La Quinta Inn & Suites Billings

**Ukiah:** SureStay by Best Western Ukiah

**Auburn:** Best Western Golden Key

At least one student per room must put down a credit card for the hotel room deposit for incidentals. This should be refunded to you by the hotel at the end of the stay, provided no extra charges are incurred (long-distance phone calls, damage, tv purchases, etc.).

**Food:** You will be responsible for *most* of your food costs. The hotels usually provide breakfast, and we will go out for a group dinner one night in each city. You will have the opportunity to get groceries once we are settled in town, and we are doing our best to ensure each hotel has a mini-fridge.

**Guests:** This is a UCI Law event where you will be expected to spend a considerable amount of time doing pro bono work. Thus, it is not an appropriate setting for guests.

**New Orleans:** Although volunteers may be flying in and out of New Orleans, you will NOT be spending any time in the city. The group will pick up the rental cars and drive to their destination cities and return to the airport after working at MCJ on Friday. Sorry, we know you want to visit. Given the time of arrival at MSY, it is unlikely there will be time for a visit to New Orleans for dinner, but if such a visit occurs it will be brief. **Please keep in mind that this will be the week of Mardi Gras so it will be crowded and congested, making a visit even more**

**difficult on Sunday. There will be NO TRAVEL TO NEW ORLEANS DURING THE WEEK.**

**Purpose:** AGAIN, THERE WILL BE NO TRAVEL TO NEW ORLEANS DURING THE WEEK. We expect all student travelers to participate in a mature and responsible manner. This is a pro bono trip to provide legal assistance to an underserved area of the country. This is not a spring break party trip. At all times you are to provide exceptional legal assistance to your host organization and serve as ambassadors for UCI Law.

### **Statement of Interest**

Please provide answers to the following questions by uploading a document on the Google Form.

Answers to all questions should not exceed two pages total, double-spaced:

- Please describe your interest and motivation for participating in the pro bono spring break trip to volunteer. If applicable, discuss your interest in a specific organization, or organizations.
- Please indicate any experience that you have that may be relevant to this pro bono volunteer work.
- Please discuss how you intend to incorporate public interest, public service, or pro bono work into your legal career.