

Akin Gump

STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP

2016 Pro Bono Scholars Program



Dallas | Houston | Los Angeles | New York | Washington, D.C.

The Akin Gump Summer Pro Bono Scholars Program, started in 2008, provides top first year law students interested in law firm practice the opportunity to develop an early expertise in public interest law. The skills acquired during this program build a foundation for pro bono work and billable practice that will serve participants throughout their careers. The program spans two summers, with the Pro Bono Scholars working both at the firm and at a public interest organization during the first summer (as rising 2Ls). The next (rising third year) summer, the Pro Bono Scholars join the firm as participants in the firm's general summer associate program.

In 2016, the Pro Bono Scholars Program will be offered in our Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C. offices.

FIRST SUMMER: Following the first year of law school, the Pro Bono Scholars will spend at least seven weeks at a public interest organization. In past years, the firm has placed Pro Bono Scholars directly with organizations with which the firm works, while other Pro Bono Scholars have obtained their public interest positions independently. The Pro Bono Scholars also spend four weeks with the firm working on pro bono matters; receiving substantive assignments and training in areas in which the firm focuses its pro bono practice.

SECOND SUMMER: During their second summer at the firm, Pro Bono Scholars will join Akin Gump's Summer Associate Program for rising third-year law students in their selected offices. The summer program includes a workload of commercial assignments, as well as pro bono opportunities. Like all other summer associates, after completing their second summer at Akin Gump, the Pro Bono Scholars are eligible for consideration for an offer of employment to join the firm as an associate in one of the firm's commercial practices following their law school graduation.

COMMITMENT: The firm expects Pro Bono Scholars to return for a second summer (following the second year of law school) to gain experience in Akin Gump's commercial practice. Accordingly, Pro Bono Scholars will be exempted from the on-campus interview process during fall of their second year. In the event that the Pro Bono Scholar's performance does not meet the firm's standards, the firm may decline to ask the student to return for the second summer, or may decline to make an offer of future employment as an associate.

QUALIFICATIONS

Open to exceptional law students completing their first year of law school in 2016 and who expect to graduate from law school in late 2017 or by summer 2018. Applicants must have all the qualifications expected of a summer associate, including a strong academic background, demonstrated leadership qualities, and a commitment to developing into a successful law firm associate.

COMPENSATION

Pro Bono Scholars are paid the summer associate salary while employed by the firm and receive a stipend totaling \$17,000 for their time spent working at a public interest organization. The Pro Bono Scholars receive the first half of the stipend (\$8,500) when they begin work at the public interest organization. The second half of the stipend (\$8,500) is paid upon the Pro Bono Scholars honoring the commitment to return to the firm as a summer associate following their second year of law school.

APPLICATIONS

First-year law students interested in this program must submit an application in order to be considered. **The firm will accept applications between January 4, 2016 and February 12, 2016.** The application should include a resume, transcript (uncertified is acceptable) and writing sample. In addition, each candidate is required to submit a short statement (no more than 500 words) describing his or her interest in having a career at Akin Gump and making pro bono a part of his or her practice.

Applications must be submitted through our online application system. Please visit: <http://www.akingump.com/en/careers/students/recruiting-process/submit-a-resume.html> and click to apply under Pro Bono Scholars Program. You will need to upload the above listed required documents at the end of the application process. The firm recognizes that first semester grades at some law schools are not released until early February; accordingly, we will accept applications with the transcript to be sent once it is released. Applicants will receive instructions as to how to submit their transcript upon receipt of the other application materials.

Candidates may apply to, and be considered by, only one Akin Gump office. The firm will only consider applications that contain all of the requested documents and offers will not be extended before the firm has received the applicant's full transcript. Decisions are made on a rolling basis and we expect the selection of the 2016 Pro Bono Scholars to be completed by early March.

QUESTIONS

Questions can be submitted to Akin Gump Pro Bono Partner Steven Schulman at ssschulman@akingump.com. Additional information regarding Akin Gump and the Pro Bono Scholars Program is available at www.akingump.com/probono/probonoscholarsprogram.



Reflections from our Past Pro Bono Scholars

Andrew Lillywhite | Columbia University School of Law 2017 – Teach For America, New York

“My experience last summer exceeded all of my expectations. Akin Gump made me part of the team from my first day in the New York office. I was immediately assigned a range of pro bono work, including drafting a full brief in a pending asylum case, helping a new nonprofit to secure tax-exempt status, and leading a client interview in a Violence Against Women’s Act case. Given my interest in transactional pro bono, Akin helped me secure a placement working closely with the general counsel of Teach For America, where I gained tremendous experience dealing with the variety of legal issues facing nonprofits. I came away from the summer knowing that I made a real contribution with my work at both Akin and Teach For America. I am immensely grateful to have been a part of the Pro Bono Scholars Program and can’t wait to return to Akin next summer.”

Amanda Lowe | Georgetown University Law Center 2017 – Human Rights First, Washington, D.C.

“The Pro Bono Scholars Program is one of a kind, offering the extremely valuable experience of working both at a large law firm and in public interest. The opportunity to interact with attorneys at Akin Gump and to participate in ongoing client matters truly demonstrated the depth of commitment that the firm has to pro bono work. My placement at Human Rights First complimented the first four weeks of the program extremely well by giving me the chance to see firsthand the needs and efforts of Akin Gump’s pro bono clients. I am thrilled to have the chance to return to the firm next summer and apply the skills I have learned, and to help strengthen the relationships between Akin Gump and its pro bono clients.”

A.Y. Mernick | University of California Los Angeles School of Law 2017 – Bet Tzedek, Los Angeles

“My experience as an Akin Gump Pro Bono Scholar was immensely valuable. Spending time at the firm’s office provided me with a great introduction to life at a large international law firm, and the pro bono asylum work was both insightful and rewarding. My public interest placement with the Tax Law Project at Bet Tzedek allowed me to work on income tax disputes on behalf of underserved low-income taxpayers. I am deeply impressed by Akin Gump’s commitment to pro bono, and I am excited to return to the firm next summer.”

Jack Polisini | The University of Texas School of Law 2017 – KIPP Foundation, San Francisco, CA

“You would be hard pressed to find a better summer program out there than the Akin Gump Pro Bono Scholars Program. Thanks to Akin Gump, I had the unique opportunity to work for a large law firm, perform public interest work and work in-house directly under the General Counsel at a great organization. All in one summer! In my time at the firm’s Houston office, I was immersed in a variety of pro bono projects with a family of attorneys whose shared enthusiasm for pro bono work is unparalleled. Next, at the KIPP Foundation in San Francisco, I was able to pursue my interest in narrowing the education gap nationwide while working directly with the General Counsel. My work was hands on, substantive, and extremely gratifying. Akin Gump’s extensive pro bono connections introduced me to an organization that I will be closely involved with for the entirety of my legal career. My summer with Akin Gump dramatically exceeded my expectations and the legal experience I received was unmatched by any other summer program. I cannot wait to return to Akin Gump next year.”

Jeff Roderick | Harvard Law School 2017 – Bronx Defenders, New York

“The Pro Bono Scholars Program is unique, existing within that tension—which all law students come to recognize, if not to feel—between doing the kind of work you feel drawn to do and being the kind of person you feel drawn to be. For those of you who, like me, know this tension well, the Pro Bono Scholars Program offers something difficult to find anywhere else: Balance. In my experience, Akin Gump truly sets itself apart from other law firms with the emphasis and value that it places on pro bono work and pro bono culture.”

Ursula Rothrock | University of California Los Angeles School of Law 2017 – Bet Tzedek, Los Angeles

“The Pro Bono Scholars Program offers an unrivaled summer opportunity for law students. I learned a tremendous amount both at Akin Gump and at Bet Tzedek Legal Services. At Akin, I was introduced to the firm and its incredible attorneys, both at the Los Angeles office and at the D.C. office through the Pro Bono Boot Camp. I also got to work with attorneys on their current pro bono cases. In Bet Tzedek’s kinship care group, I was able to help kids who have had terribly difficult experiences establish more secure and safer lives. Being part of such a prestigious and impactful program as the Pro Bono Scholars Program is my proudest accomplishment as a law student.”

Sarah Williamson | Duke University School of Law 2017 – Children’s Law Center, Washington, D.C.

“I have a personal passion for and commitment to public service so it was very important for me to find a law firm with the same values. Akin Gump was the only firm I found that truly fit that bill. From the Pro Bono Scholars Program to the firm-wide Pro Bono Awards, the attorneys at Akin are clearly and deeply committed to serving the community at all levels and across all practice areas. Through my work at Akin Gump and the Children’s Law Center in Washington, D.C., I was able to gain a thorough understanding of all of the aspects of pro bono work and the partnerships that make it possible.”

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