

Akin Gump

STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP

2017 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.

The Pro Bono Scholars Program identifies and develops rising stars for Akin Gump.

FIRST SUMMER: Following the first year of law school the Pro Bono Scholars first 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. After the time at the firm, the Pro Bono Scholars 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 others have obtained their public interest positions independently.

SECOND SUMMER: During their second summer at the firm, Pro Bono Scholars 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. Twenty-two former Pro Bono Scholars are now associates at Akin Gump.

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 2017 and who expect to graduate from law school in late 2018 or by summer 2019. 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 3, 2017 and February 13, 2017.** 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 without the transcript, to be supplemented once grades are 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 2017 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 2016 Pro Bono Scholars

Ali Boyd | University of Michigan Law School 2018 – Pro Bono Institute, Washington, DC

“This past summer as an Akin Gump Pro Bono Scholar was truly a dream come true. This program brings together two worlds that I previously thought I would never be able to reconcile in my legal career - commercial practice and public interest work. The fact that Akin has a program like this is an incredible testament to their true commitment to encouraging pro bono work in a commercial world. Evidence of this commitment was only furthered in my eyes by the people I met this past summer, the clients I worked with, and the training I received through both the firm and my public interest placement at the Pro Bono Institute. Even after only one summer, I feel like I’ve found a community of like-minds at Akin - a community that cares not only about representing their clients to the best of their ability, but also about leaving the world a better place than they found it. I cannot wait to go back next summer.”

Tyler Conte | Duke University School of Law 2018 – Tahirih Justice Center, Houston

“My experience as a Pro Bono Scholar has been the best thing to come out of law school for me so far. Throughout the summer, first at Akin Gump and later at Tahirih Justice Center, I dove into the world of asylum law. During the first four weeks at Akin Gump, I worked on challenging, interesting cases with experienced attorneys who inspired me through their devotion to pro bono on top of their usual billable work. At Tahirih Justice Center, I was directly exposed to what people seeking asylum and other forms of immigration relief have gone through in their lives and continue to go through with our immigration system. The highlight of my summer was helping a young woman who had been domestically abused for most of her life in Guatemala prepare for and succeed at her asylum merits hearing. At the start of my 1L year, I would have never thought that my summer job would allow me to both feel like I’m making a positive difference in our world and provide me with an introduction to life at a big law firm. That’s the beauty of Akin Gump’s Pro Bono Scholars program.”

Ashley Garcia | Fordham University School of Law 2018 – Teach for America Legal Affairs, New York

“My experience this past summer greatly exceeded my expectations. From the first day of the program I immediately felt welcomed and supported by the staff and attorneys at the firm. I was able to lead a client interview, write a request for reconsideration for a pro bono client seeking asylum, and help prep clients for interviews with the FBI and immigration officers. Moreover, as a former Teach for America corps member I especially appreciated my pro bono placement because I was able to learn about the interrelationship between law and education. All and all, the knowledge, experience, and relationships that I gained throughout the summer are truly invaluable and I cannot wait to return to Akin Gump again next summer.”

Michelle Marshall | University of California Berkeley School of Law 2018 – KIPP, San Francisco

“Akin Gump’s commitment to pro bono work sets it apart from the rest of the top firms. The Pro Bono Scholars Program introduced me to the type of pro bono work I will be able to continue at the firm after law school while also exposing me to the responsibilities of a general counsel at a large non-profit. One of the most impactful parts of the program was attending Pro Bono Boot Camp in San Antonio, where we assisted with Credible Fear Interviews at the Karnes Detention Center and attended immigration court. I now know that I want to continue to help with asylum pro bono cases throughout my career. I could not have asked for a more valuable and meaningful experience for my 1L summer.”

Sangita Sahasranaman | Emory University School of Law 2018 – Bronx Defenders, New York

“When applying for 1L summer jobs, I struggled with my desire to pursue social justice issues with my interest in working at a private law firm. The Pro Bono Scholars Program taught me that these two goals are not mutually exclusive; at Akin, you can work in a world-class law firm while maintaining a dedication to public interest through pro bono projects. Working at the Bronx Defenders over the summer allowed me to further develop my passion for public defense, and my time at the firm helped me understand how I can develop a healthy pro bono practice in my future career. Akin constantly dedicates itself to socially-relevant causes, and I enthusiastically recommend the program to anyone interested in working at a top firm that maintains a strong commitment to public interest. I could not have imagined a better summer experience, and I can’t wait to return next summer.”

Matthew Smith | University of California Los Angeles School of Law 2018 – Public Counsel, Los Angeles

“The Pro Bono Scholars Program provided me with an ideal blend of experiences for my 1L summer. Akin demonstrated a commitment to providing me with experiences to match my interests. In addition, by working in the Akin office and at Public Counsel in Los Angeles, I participated in direct pro bono client service and learned about how pro bono organizations place clients with law firms. I’m excited to use this experience to help Akin continue its commitment to pro bono service while maintaining a thriving commercial practice. Akin is a special law firm for even having this program, and the program’s execution makes that even more true.”

Steven H. Schulman

Pro Bono Partner

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