

ERIE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT INTERNSHIP/EXTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



AT VLP, STUDENTS GAIN VALUABLE EXPERIENCE WORKING DIRECTLY WITH CLIENTS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF OUR ATTORNEYS. THE FOLLOWING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE IN INTERNSHIP AND EXTERNSHIP FORMATS.

INTERNSHIP:

- AVAILABLE TO ALL LAW STUDENTS
- HOURS COUNT TOWARD 50-HOUR PRO BONO REQUIREMENT FOR ADMISSION
- NO MINIMUM HOUR REQUIREMENTS

EXTERNSHIP:

- 2ND AND 3RD YEAR LAW STUDENTS ONLY
- 3 HOURS COURSE CREDIT THROUGH UB LAW
- MINIMUM HOUR REQUIREMENTS

THERE ARE SIX DIFFERENT VLP INTERNSHIPS OR EXTERNSHIPS TO WHICH STUDENTS MAY APPLY.

FAMILY COURT

Location: Help Desk in Erie County Family Court, Buffalo, New York operates Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11:15 am to 2:15 pm. Additional remote work possible with the Family Court Help Desk phone line, serving all counties of the 8th Judicial District.

VLP's Family Court Help Desks are the 8th Judicial District's resource for unrepresented, low-income parties with legal questions about filing petitions, obtaining emergency relief, general handling of cases, and the overall Court process. Volunteer attorneys from the Family Court Bar along with VLP staff attorneys offer limited scope consultations to clients while discussing the matter and related law with the student extern. At the Help Desk, the student extern will meet with pro se litigants, conduct intakes to determine eligibility, develop and improve interviewing and issue spotting skills, discuss cases with experienced family law litigators, develop mentoring relationships, and participate in networking opportunities. VLP attorneys also handle full representation cases for clients in non-parent custody and visitation matters, child support matters, and domestic violence cases. There will be opportunities to shadow the attorneys and conduct research for their cases. The work is fast paced and emotionally challenging, but also very rewarding. Remote work is only available in combination with a minimum of one shift, preferably two, at the Erie County Family Court Help Desk. Students may elect to work only at the in-person desk.

FEDERAL COURT PRO SE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PSAP)

Location: United States District Court of the Western District of New York, 2 Niagara Square, Buffalo, New York. PSAP operates Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm.

The Pro Se Assistance Program (PSAP) provides free limited scope civil legal assistance to low-income, self-represented people with legal matters in Federal Court. PSAP fosters access to justice by helping pro se litigants unable to afford an attorney navigate the complex Federal Court system. PSAP also assists the Court in managing these cases more efficiently. Highly experienced Federal Court litigators volunteer to assist these litigants on a walk-in basis. Law students are a critical component and support the program by (1) conducting client intake to obtain essential financial eligibility information and legal information; (2) briefing the volunteer attorney and observing the client consultation; and (3) supporting the volunteer attorney by obtaining relevant docket information, court forms and undertaking legal research. Student externs will also observe court proceedings, respond to prisoner letters, and complete an assigned writing project. By participating in the PSAP program, law students obtain significant and valuable client contact and have a unique opportunity to interact with and observe some of our region's finest attorneys.

LOW-INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC

Location: VLP, Buffalo, New York

The ECBA VLP Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic provides representation, education, and advocacy to low-income taxpayers in Western New York. The Clinic, through an in-house staff attorney and volunteer attorneys, CPAs, and Enrolled Agents, provides direct representation to taxpayers in federal tax controversies. A federal tax controversy can be any situation where the IRS claims the taxpayer owes more taxes than the taxpayer filed on their return, the taxpayer is eligible for a refund of taxes paid or credits and the IRS opposes that position, or the taxpayer does not contest the amount of taxes owed but does not have the ability to pay. Further, the tax clinic provides educational outreach to low-income taxpayers, ESL taxpayers, and the organizations that serve those populations. Lastly, the tax clinic helps identify systemic issues in tax administration and alert the Taxpayer Advocate's Office to ensure a fair and just tax system. The extern may receive a student practice order to represent clients directly before the IRS. The student will work in any number of IRS matters, including audits, collections, and appeals. They will also be expected to participate in VLP's Tax Court Calendar Call program, in which VLP provides on-site consultations and potentially representation to low-income pro se Tax Court petitioners. Preference will be given to a student who has taken Federal Income Tax and Administrative Law courses.

IMMIGRATION

Location: VLP Buffalo or Batavia, New York

Some background in immigration law is required. This can either be from having taken one or more law school classes concerning immigration law or practical experience working with immigration law matters. Fluency in a foreign language is a plus, but not required.

The student extern will engage in legal research and country conditions research and be offered the chance to observe and participate in an Immigration Court hearing. The student may also be involved in interviewing clients and assisting with the VLP cases as needed by staff or volunteer attorneys. This internship/externship will take place in the VLP Immigration Program located in either Buffalo or Batavia, New York.

LANDLORD-TENANT

Location: Buffalo City Court, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

VLP's Attorney of the Morning Program (AOM) provides representation to low-income tenants who are facing eviction in Buffalo City Court. The program operates on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. In this program, VLP lawyers and volunteer attorneys meet with clients to represent them in their eviction case. The goal is to help prevent tenants from becoming homeless. Law students will be responsible for performing client intake at the courthouse, working with the attorneys in the quick preparation and representation of cases, negotiating stipulations, writing up stipulations (over 80% of cases settle in the hallway), making appropriate follow-up referrals for clients, taking care of follow-up paperwork and recordkeeping back at the office, and debriefing with the program coordinator or staff attorney. Depending on the student's schedule, the student also helps the attorneys prepare for the court cases. Students not only learn to think on their feet, but they get to work with clients, court clerks and a wide variety of attorneys. Possibility for Student Practice Orders. Students must be available to cover at least one shift in Buffalo City Court each week as part of the experience.

WORKING WITH POSITIVE FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

Location: VLP, Buffalo, New York

VLP has two attorneys who work exclusively with HIV positive individuals and their families. This work can be emotionally challenging, but also very rewarding. A wide range of case types are handled. These include planning for the long-term care of the clients' children, other family law matters, wills, powers of attorney, bankruptcy, debt collection defense, discrimination, confidentiality, health law and a variety of other types of matters. The student will interview clients, handle legal research, and accompany the attorneys to court appearances.

TO APPLY VISIT: [HTTPS://ECBAVLP.COM/VOLUNTEER/INTERNSHIP/](https://ecbavlp.com/volunteer/internship/)



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