

MAGISTRATE JUDGE RESEARCH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1 Background

On April 4, 2008, the Supreme Court of Idaho formed a Wellness Committee “to implement strategies to help judges and their families with a wide range of issues and needs.” As part of its work, the Committee is charged with identifying resources to support judges and assist them in the performing their work. For this purpose, the Committee surveyed magistrate judges throughout the state in 2008-2009 to determine the feasibility and desirability of having law students assist with research and writing projects. Almost forty percent of the magistrate judges responded to the survey, which led to creation of the University of Idaho College of Law’s program for law student research and writing assistance.

In an effort to both assist with an identified need in the state judicial system and to provide quality experiential learning and pro bono opportunities for our students, the College of Law began offering law student research assistance to Idaho’s magistrate judges in 2009. Since that time our students have completed numerous research and writing projects for magistrate judges throughout Idaho. Attached is a sample decision created with law student assistance to give you all an idea of how students can help. Each year the number of judges using the program has fluctuated, as have the procedures for submitting a project to students. After some trial and error, we have refined the process for submitting projects. The process is outlined below.

2. Requesting Student Assistance

Projects are submitted to students through Katie Ball, the College of Law’s Externship Director at our Boise Law campus, located in the Idaho Water Center on Front Street, next to the Ada County courthouse. More information about the Externship Director is attached. In short,

because of her work as a law clerk, the Externship Director assists in training and locating students for projects, as well as reviewing their work if requested.

To submit a project, judges should send an email to Katie Ball in the following format:

Email subject line: Project from Judge _____ DUE DATE: _____

Email text: Project Format (e.g., short or long research memo, findings of fact and conclusions of law, or draft decision/order);

Description of issue;

Estimated amount of time work will take;

Statement of whether briefing has or will be submitted.

Ms. Ball's preferred contact information is:

Katie Ball
Externship Director - Boise
University of Idaho College of Law
322 E. Front St., Suite 590
Boise, Idaho 83702
Phone: 208/364-4994
Fax: 208/334-2176
ktball@uidaho.edu
<http://www.uidaho.edu/law/faculty/katherineball>

Ms. Ball also can be reached on her cell phone at 208/870-8072 or with the contact information listed on the Idaho State Bar's website, at the attorney directory: U.S. Courts, District of Idaho, (208) 334-9013, kate_ball@id.uscourts.gov.

The University of Idaho College of Law's website also contains information for submitting a project. This information can be located at the Pro Bono Program page using the link from the Clinics & Professional Programs page. The URL is <http://www.uidaho.edu/law/academics/clinicsprofessionalskills/probonoprogram>.

3. Timing

After a project is submitted, you should hear back from Ms. Ball within two days. Ms. Ball will send an email to you and the student, providing each person with the other person's contact information and confirming the scope of the project and the due date. If for some reason you do not hear back within 48 hours, please contact Ms. Ball at 208/870-8072.

4. Times When Assistance May be Limited

Students will be taking projects year round; however, there will be times when no student will volunteer for a project, such as during final exams. Judges may still submit proposals during this time because there are students who sometimes end up with only one or two final exams depending on how many paper courses and other types of credits they take during a particular semester.

5. Helping Students Complete Paperwork to Earn Pro Bono Credit

Each student is required to keep track of his/her time and have the assigning judge approve the hours worked. This is a fairly simple process. We have a one-page review form the student will send you along with the completed project. It is a fillable PDF and a copy is attached to this memo. The form also is available on the University of Idaho College of Law's website under the Pro Bono Program page, labeled Supervisor's Evaluation of Student.