Mission Statement

PILI engages, inspires and empowers those advancing equal access to justice.

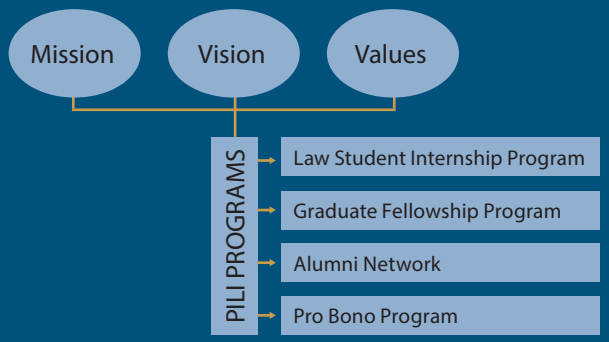
Vision Statement

We envision making equal access to justice a reality through a legal community with a deeply rooted culture of service, where pro bono and public interest law engagement is optimized to best serve people, families and communities in need.

Values Statement

We believe equal access to justice is a fundamental right. We believe serving those in need through public interest law and pro bono service is the key to ensuring that right. We believe the Illinois legal community should work together to provide these services, and that it is PILI's role to facilitate this collaboration. We expect our work to result in a more accessible justice system for all.

PILI's mission, vision, and values guide everything we do—from engaging future public interest lawyers to empowering legal professionals and sustaining a lifelong culture of service. Together, they shape the pathways of impact through our four programs.



Carrying our mission *forward*

Thank you for being part of PILI's community. Through your participation, partnership, and continued support, you help advance our shared mission of equal access to justice.

Stay connected as we continue this work in the year ahead, and look for the full *2025 Impact Report* coming February 2026, where we'll share even more stories, milestones, and impact across Illinois.

Volunteer

Scan to find pro bono opportunities and get involved across Illinois.

Connect

Follow PILI's statewide community on social media and join the conversation.

Stay Informed

Subscribe to our newsletter for updates, stories, and impact throughout the year.

www.pili.org

PILI Public Interest Law Initiative®

2025

PILI Impact Brief

Stories, Highlights, and Milestones

Together, We **Advance** Justice

"This year's milestones remind us that progress toward equal access to justice is not achieved alone—it's the shared work of a community dedicated to service."

- Michael G. Bergmann, Executive Director

Law Student Internship Program

Engages law students across Illinois in public interest law work, providing funded summer and school-year placements that expand legal aid capacity statewide.

80 Law Student Interns

27,800 Hours Worked

2,523 Clients Served

Graduate Fellowship Program

Places new law school graduates at legal aid organizations before they begin their law careers, building pro bono experience and professional networks from day one.

53 Graduate Fellows

15,900 Hours Worked

811 Clients Served

Law Student Interns and Graduate Fellows rated both programs an average of 4.7 out of 5.0

Alumni Network

More than 5,000 former PILI Law Student Interns and Grduate Fellows maintain their connection to public interest and pro bono service through the Alumni Network—staying connected, engaged, and united by the pursuit of equal access to justice.

The Alumni Network is supported by the (1) Alumni Network Leadership Council, (2) Alumni Council Teams, and (3) Alumni Class Representatives.

5,000+
Alumni since PILI's founding in 1977

Pro Bono Program

Expanding Access, Empowering Communities

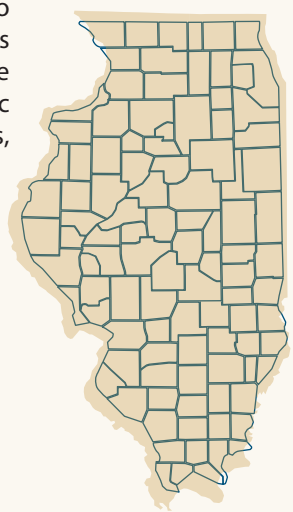
3,293 Civil Legal Questions Answered on Illinois Free Legal Answers

11 Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committees

639 Attorneys Attended CLE Programming Through PILI

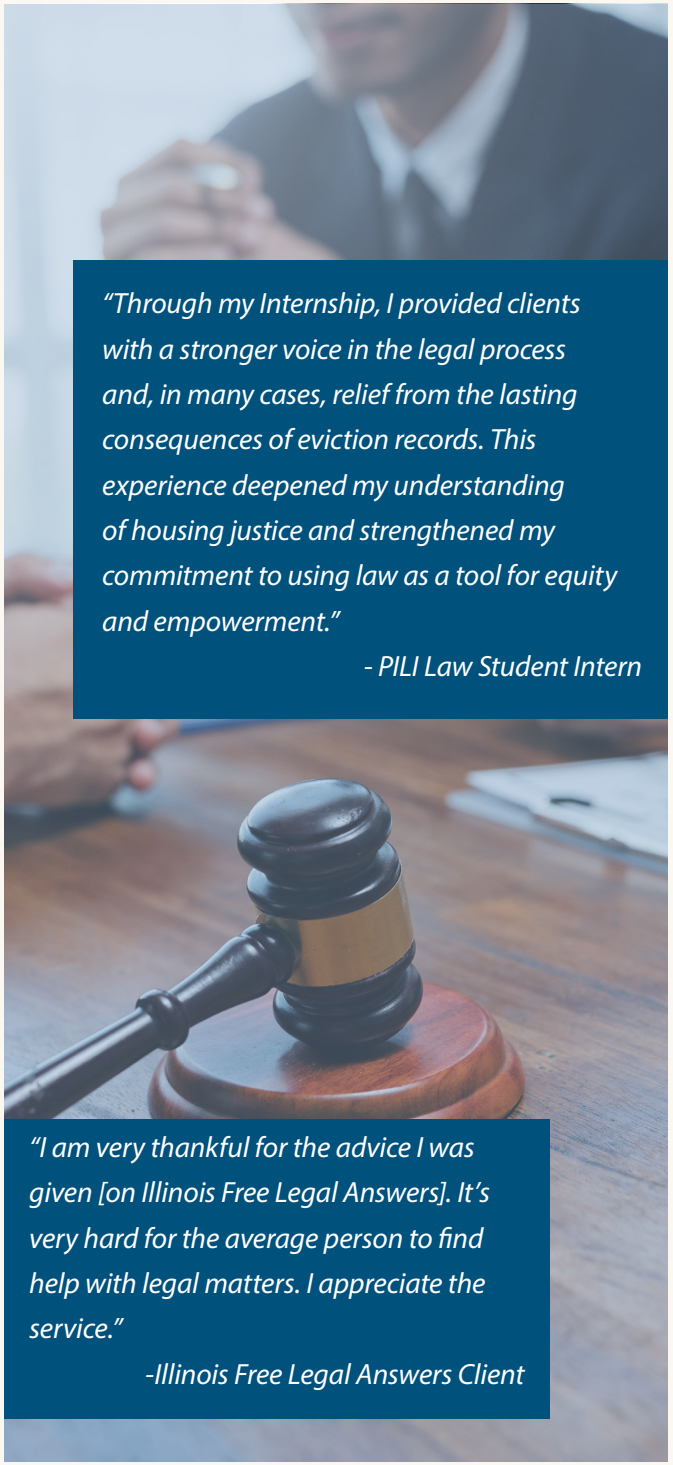
With limited legal aid capacity statewide, pro bono service helps to closes the gap. PILI's Pro Bono Program mobilizes attorneys, law students, and legal professionals to provide legal help to those who need it most.

Through Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committees, PILI builds local networks across the state to meet community specific needs—hosting forums, clinics, and trainings that strengthen the justice system from the ground up.



Pro Bono Opportunities:

- Illinois Free Legal Answers
- Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network
- Legal Help Within Reach Clinics
- Self-Represented Litigant Help Desks
- Conflict of Interest Pro Bono Referral Panel



"Through my Internship, I provided clients with a stronger voice in the legal process and, in many cases, relief from the lasting consequences of eviction records. This experience deepened my understanding of housing justice and strengthened my commitment to using law as a tool for equity and empowerment."

- PILI Law Student Intern

"I am very thankful for the advice I was given [on Illinois Free Legal Answers]. It's very hard for the average person to find help with legal matters. I appreciate the service."

-Illinois Free Legal Answers Client