

**MEETING: 21/03/2019**

**Ref: 15185**

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Advice and Support**

**Pro Bono Community**

**Adv: Geraldine Page**

**Base: City**

**Amount requested: £73,862**

**Benefit: London-wide**

**Amount recommended: 74,000**

**The Applicant**

Pro Bono Community (PBC) is a relatively recently established charity (2014) providing a specialised training programme for junior lawyers, trainees and law students, aimed at preparing them for volunteering in law centres and other advice agencies. In the last 12 months, PBC trained 121 people. Of these, 90 went on to undertake voluntary placements in community-based advice centres.

**The Application**

This application is for two years' continuation funding for a part-time salary and associated costs to train law students to volunteer in community advice agencies you initially funded in 2016. The charity has identified a need for a structured training programme that provides Law Centres and other advice agencies with volunteers who possess the knowledge, skills and commitment to assist their activities and help them to meet the huge and growing gap between the demand for free legal advice and their capacity to deliver it, mostly on matters now outside the scope of legal aid.

**The Recommendation**

PBC has excellent contacts with universities, law schools, law centres and advice agencies in London. Your continuation funding will allow PBC to increasing the number of law students trained to volunteer in advice centres (80 students per year), as well as the number of voluntary sector advice providers supported. There is also a longer-term ambition to extend the programme nationally. However, the project for which funds are sought will be exclusively delivered in London.

**£74,000 over two further years (£36,500, £37,500) for a part-time Training and Volunteer Co-ordinator (2.5 d/p/w), training costs and overheads to train law students to volunteer in community advice agencies in London.**

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
18/03/2016	£110,955 over three years (3 x £36,985) for a part-time salary (2.5 d/p/w), training costs and overheads to train law students to volunteer in community advice agencies

**Background and detail of proposal**

The project has been operating in a financial climate which has seen Law Centres and advice agencies closing and hundreds of thousands of fewer people receiving legal advice. This has led to an urgent need for well-trained and highly-motivated volunteers to help meet the large and growing gap between the demand for free legal advice and the capacity of advice organisations to deliver it.

The students receive training in legal advice and one or more areas of social welfare law. The training has been refined over the first 3 years of delivery and is highly interactive focusing on practical skills. PBC then coordinates volunteering placements for the students at the network of Law Centres and advice agencies with which it has established relationships. An important component in the project is managing and monitoring the placements through PBC's unique online volunteer portal which records the activities of the volunteers and any other issues they may want to raise which can then be followed up directly with agencies

### Financial Information

The charity's finances are stable, and its income is a combination of income earned through fees charged to law firms for its services, and grants and donations. PBC reserves policy is to hold free unrestricted funds of between three and six months of expenditure and this is reflected in level of reserves held.

Year end as at 31 August	2017 Examined Accounts	2018 Draft £	2019 Forecast £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	99,819	115,655	114,984
- % of income confirmed as at 24/01/19	N/A	100%	77%
Expenditure	(91,186)	(103,325)	(133,508)
<b>Total surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>8,633</b>	<b>12,330</b>	<b>(18,524)</b>
<b>Split between:</b>			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	4,176	(2,237)	(12,175)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	4,457	14,567	(6,349)
	<b>8,633</b>	<b>12,330</b>	<b>(18,524)</b>
<b>Cost of Raising Funds</b>	<b>19,083</b>	<b>20,164</b>	<b>19,907</b>
- % of Income	19.1%	17.4%	17.3%
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>91,186</b>	<b>103,325</b>	<b>133,508</b>
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	43,548	58,115	51,766
No of months of total expenditure	5.7	6.7	4.7
Reserves policy target	22,797	25,831	33,377
No of months of total expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
<b>Free reserves over/(under) target</b>	<b>20,752</b>	<b>32,284</b>	<b>18,389</b>