

# The City Bridge Trust

## Bridging Divides: Application for a grant



### About your organisation

#### Organisation Details

Name of your organisation: <b>Pro Bono Community</b>	
If your organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name?	
In which London Borough is your organisation based? <b>City</b>	
Contact person: <b>Mr Bill Skirrow</b>	Position: <b>Director</b>
Website: <b><a href="http://www.probonocommunity.org.uk">http://www.probonocommunity.org.uk</a></b>	Social Media Accounts: <b>@Probonocomm; @ProBonoCommunity</b>
What Quality Marks does your organisation currently hold?	

#### Legal Status

Legal status of organisation: <b>Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation</b>			
Charity Number: <b>1153220</b>	Company Number:	CIC Number:	Bencom Number:
When was your organisation established? <b>08/02/2013</b>			
<b>Alms of your organisation:</b> Pro Bono Community's aim is to increase the amount and quality of pro bono legal advice available by providing structured training aimed at equipping law students, trainees and lawyers with the skills and expertise to become effective volunteers in Law Centres and advice agencies.  By training and placing volunteers in Law Centres and advice agencies we aim to prevent and relieve poverty, hardship and distress by increasing the amount and improving the quality of free legal advice in the areas of law most likely to affect those in poverty or need and who are unable to afford to pay for such advice.  In a wider context, the charity aims to play its part in relieving the burden on public resources by intervening early before legal problems spiral out of control and changing the culture towards pro bono work within the legal profession by engaging with young lawyers			

**Main activities of your organisation:**

Pro Bono Community seeks to improve access to justice by providing specialist training in legal advice and social welfare law to students, trainees and lawyers and then placing them as volunteers at Law Centres and advice agencies. PBC went live as a charity in late 2014, since when it has delivered training and volunteer placement programmes to more than 900 people.

PBC has also built relationships with a network of Law Centres and advice agencies to facilitate the placement of volunteers. Volunteers trained by PBC have gone on to work at advice organisations across London and elsewhere, providing free legal support and advice to an estimated 23,000 people since the charity was established.

The charity's activities have included a project funded by City Bridge Trust to train and place students as volunteers which has achieved all its targets and is now in its third year. This application seeks to extend this project for a further two years.

**Your Staff & Volunteers**

Full-time:	Part-time:	Trustee/Board members:	Active volunteers:
<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

Do you have a Safeguarding policy? **No**

**Are the following people in your organisation subject to DBS checks?**

Paid Staff  
**No**

Volunteers  
**No**

Trustees / Management Committee Members  
**No**

**Property occupied by your organisation**

Is the main property owned, leased or rented by your organisation?	If leased/rented, how long is the outstanding agreement?
<b>Leased</b>	<b>Undefined office space licence</b>

**Environmental Impact****What action have you taken in the past year to progress environmentally sustainability principles and practice?**

Pro Bono Community is a small charity with a low carbon footprint. We operate from a shared workspace which minimises the amount of energy the charity uses by spreading the use of light, heating, air conditioning and kitchen and office equipment across multiple organisations. Over recent years, we have continued to restrict our use of private transport for company business to just a handful of journeys as well as conducting an increasing volume of business digitally rather than using paper. We participate in a group-purchase scheme which procures stationery from a company which places emphasis on environmental value.

## Finance Details

### Organisation Finances

	Year of most recent audited / examined accounts	Current financial year forecast	Next financial year budget
End of financial year date	31/08/2017	31/08/2019	
Grants & donations:	£45,000	£67,285	£0
Earned Income:	£54,775	£47,300	£0
Other income:	£44	£47	£0
<b>Total income:</b>	<b>99,819</b>	<b>£114,585</b>	<b>£0</b>
Charitable activity costs:	£72,103	£114,233	£0
Cost of raising funds:	£19,083	£20,037	£0
Other costs:	£0	£0	£0
<b>Total expenditure:</b>	<b>£91,186</b>	<b>£134,270</b>	<b>£0</b>
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end:	£43,548	£62,988	£0

#### What is your organisation's reserves policy?

Pro Bono Community's trustees recognise that it is important that there are sufficient free reserves to tide an organisation over in difficult financial circumstances. The principal risk to Pro Bono Community is an unexpected shortfall in either sales or grant income and the trustees have agreed to keep a level of financial reserves to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of 6-12 months in the event of severe financial difficulties (this is a summary).

The main concerns of

For your most recent financial year, what % of your income was from statutory sources?  
**0%**

#### Organisational changes

Describe any significant organisational changes to your structure, financial position or core activities since the date of your most recent accounts.

**N/A**

## Grant Request

Which of the Trust's programmes and priority areas will your application deliver?  
**Advice and Support/Provision of advice and support**

Which of the programme outcome(s) does your application aim to achieve?

Please describe the purpose of your funding request in one sentence.  
**We want to provide more free legal advice in London by training law students to work as volunteers in Law Centres and advice agencies.**

When will the funding be required? **01/06/2019**

Is this request to continue work that is currently funded or has been funded in the last year by:

City Bridge Trust?

**Yes**

Another funder? (if so which)

How much funding are you requesting?

Year 1:  
**£36,385**

Year 2:  
**£37,477**

Year 3:  
**£0**

Year 4:  
**£0**

Year 5:  
**£0**

**Total Requested: £73,862**

**What 3 main differences or outcomes do you want to achieve through your funding proposal?**

The clients of Law Centres and advice agencies across London benefit from increased access to free legal advice and support from well-trained volunteers.

Law Centres and other advice agencies are able to expand their capacity and help more clients as a result of increased access to and support from well-trained and committed volunteers.

High-quality training in legal advice and social welfare law improves the capability of student volunteers to provide effective advice and support in Law Centres and advice agencies whilst embedding pro bono culture in the lawyers of the future.

**What are the main activities or outputs you will deliver to achieve these differences?**

**At least 3,000 vulnerable people with legal problems per year receive free legal support and advice from trained volunteers at Law Centres and advice agencies across London.**

**At least 1,000 volunteering sessions per year undertaken by trained law students at Law Centres and advice agencies across London.**

**At least 80 law students per year trained to undertake volunteering placements of at least three months at Law Centres and advice agencies across London**



## **You and your grant request**

### **What, specifically, are you applying for (your project)?**

We are applying to continue a project funded by City Bridge Trust for the last three years to train at least 80 law students per year from universities in London and place them as volunteers at Law Centres and advice agencies across the capital.

The students receive training in legal advice and one or more areas of social welfare law. The training has been refined over time 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 the charity 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 we can then follow up directly with agencies.

### **How will the project described achieve your stated outcomes?**

We are confident that the project will achieve our stated outcomes, having met or exceeded the targets set for the first two years of the project and currently being on course to do so again this year.

The principal outcome of assisting at least 3,000 people with legal problems will be achieved by training at least 80 students who will undertake a minimum of 13 volunteering sessions each and assist an average of three people per session.

PBC's volunteer portal provides a large body of supporting data on volunteer's activities and outputs demonstrating the extent to which the project has built capacity at advice agencies and helped clients and we will also continue to encourage advice agencies to provide us with quantitative and qualitative data of their own.

PBC's training programmes have consistently achieved over 95% approval from participants and we have testimonials from numerous students.

### **How do you know there's a need for this work?**

We have demonstrated the need for this work during the first three years of this project which has already seen our student volunteers assist more than 9,000 people with legal problems.

The project has been operating in a financial climate which has seen Law Centres and advice agencies closing down and hundreds of thousands 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.

Law students represent a large and relatively untapped source of volunteers because not only do they recognise the inherent value of volunteering but also, subject to receiving suitable training, students understand that volunteering enhances their employability by providing them with client-facing experience and the opportunity to develop their practical knowledge of legal processes.

**How will the work be delivered - specifically, what will you do?**

The project has two principal components:

- Recruiting and training law students who wish to become volunteers
- Coordinating and managing the training programmes and volunteering placements

PBC has developed a range of training modules enabling us to tailor programmes to the needs of different Law Centres and advice agencies. The training comprises a general introduction to legal advice and the practical skills involved in volunteering before going on to focus on specialist areas of social welfare law such as welfare benefits and housing.

PBC will train four cohorts of 20 or more law students from universities in London and then coordinate volunteering placements for them at Law Centres and advice agencies across the capital. PBC is able to monitor and manage the placements through the charity's unique online volunteer portal which records the activities of the volunteers and any other issues they may want to raise.

**Why are you the right organisation to do this work?**

PBC is the right organisation to do this work because it is an extension of an existing project supported by City Bridge Trust which has met or exceeded all its targets to date. This project has already seen our student volunteers assist more than 9,000 people across London with legal problems, a figure which it is anticipated will increase by several thousand by the middle of 2019.

PBC is the only organisation in the UK dedicated to training students, trainees and lawyers and then placing them as volunteers at Law Centres and advice agencies. As such, we have accumulated a significant amount of expertise in this niche area and developed an extensive network of relationships in the advice, higher education and legal sectors. The experience we have gained through the existing project and other activities will inform our work going forward.

**How does your work complement and not duplicate other services within your area?**

As stated above, PBC is the only organisation in the UK dedicated to training students, trainees and lawyers and then placing them as volunteers at Law Centres and advice agencies. Some organisations including PBC help to facilitate and coordinate relationships between law firms and advice agencies and the work we do with universities complements these activities. Rhianon Hughes, volunteer coordinator at Advising Communities, sums this up as follows: "Often our publicly recruited volunteers have limited skills in computers, letter writing and limited understanding of law... PBC volunteers have offered us the fantastic opportunity to work with volunteers that already have an understanding of law and skills in letter-writing, research and are computer literate. It has amazed all of our team how thorough the students have been... Our clients have also greatly appreciated the [students'] professional manner and have given very positive feedback."



**How will you ensure that your project will hear and represent the views and needs of disadvantaged people and/or diverse communities?**

We work closely with Law centres and advice agencies to ensure that our training programmes and the support we provide to volunteers throughout their placements reflects the needs of the agencies' clients, most of whom are disadvantaged people. Some advice organisations are better than others at encouraging clients to express their views and help to shape services but we encourage all our partners in the advice sector to help us gather data and feedback on service quality that is relevant to our training and volunteers.

**How does your project engage and empower individuals and/or communities to come together on this issue? Will you be working with people who are particularly excluded?**

Following cuts in legal aid and government funding, Britain is experiencing a legal advice deficit in which hundreds of thousands fewer people, many of whom are severely excluded, receive free legal advice and assistance. Those Law Centres and advice agencies that have remained open are overstretched and under-resourced. Pro Bono Community is committed to providing these organisations with well-trained volunteers who can help them to overcome the challenges they face and improve access to justice for people in need. As such, PBC's volunteers will be working directly with particularly excluded people and helping advice organisations to empower vulnerable individuals ranging from victims of the Grenfell Tower fire to people facing eviction as a result of problems with Universal Credit and others struggling to complete applications for Personal Independence Payment.

**Is the focus of your project meeting an already identifiable need (acute or otherwise) or are there elements which are preventative and/or incorporate early action?**

The focus of our project is to meet an identifiable need which is to provide well-trained and highly-motivated volunteers to help plug the large and growing gap between the demand for free legal advice and the capacity of advice organisations to deliver it.

Having said that, we believe that early and effective legal support and advice also has a preventative role as it can prevent problems from spiralling out of control and reduce the number of Litigants in Person, ie individuals who are representing themselves in court and posing a major challenge to the efficient running of the judicial system.

**Who might you need to work closely with in delivering this project - whether before, during or afterwards?**

The organisations we need to work most closely with to deliver this project are universities and advice agencies.

We have developed relationships with many of the universities in London and generated real enthusiasm for the volunteer training and placement programmes involving their students. It is important to gain the trust and cooperation of the universities so that we can promote the scheme to their students effectively.

We have also developed close relationships with Law Centres and advice agencies across the capital. Their cooperation is vital in helping PBC to secure, manage and monitor volunteering placements as well as tailoring training to the needs of their clients.

**Our aim as a funder is to help people move positively between any of the four stages of Surviving, Coping, Adapting and Thriving. For your project at which of these stages will most people begin their journey?**

Most of the clients our volunteers interact with at Law Centres and advice agencies are likely to be at the Surviving and Coping end of the spectrum where the focus is on meeting and stabilising acute needs or encouraging and developing the clients' capacity to address their legal problems.

Student volunteer Rahul Medappa describes a typical scenario: "I assisted a couple to fill out a Universal Credit application? they had a disabled child and the mother was also unwell to the point where the husband was required to leave his job to care for her. I helped to instruct them on how to use the Universal Credit journal and helped to input information on their financial accounts. I received extremely positive feedback from the couple who said that they would have been unable to cope with the process without my help.?"

**Will there be any elements of this project that will help you or your beneficiaries to reduce your environmental footprint?**

Pro Bono Community is a small charity with a low carbon footprint. We operate from a shared workspace which minimises the amount of energy the charity uses by spreading the use of light, heating, air conditioning and kitchen and office equipment across multiple organisations. Over the last year, we have succeeded in reducing our use of private transport for charity business to just a handful of journeys and in conducting a growing amount of business digitally rather than using paper. We have developed an online volunteer management portal which replaced a previously paper-based system.

## Funding required for the project

### What is the total cost of the proposed activity/project?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Training	10,000	10,000	10,000			30,000
Training	6,000	6,180	0	0	0	12,180
Materials	3,040	3,040	3,040			9,120
Materials	3,200	3,296	0	0	0	6,496
Training & Volunteer Coordinator (0.5)	11,900	11,900	11,900			35,700
Training & Volunteer Coordinator (0.5)	12,731	13,113	0	0	0	25,844
Central overheads	12,045	12,045	12,045			36,135
Central overheads	14,454	14,888	0	0	0	29,342
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>36,385</b>	<b>37,477</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73,862</b>

### What income has already been raised?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### How much is requested from the Trust?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Training	10,000	10,000	10,000			30,000
Training	6,000	6,180	0	0	0	12,180
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<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>36,385</b>	<b>37,477</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73,862</b>
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## Who will benefit?

How many people will directly benefit from the grant per year?

**3,000**

In which Greater London borough(s) or areas of London will your beneficiaries live?

**London-wide**

Does this project specifically target any groups or communities?

**No - open to everyone**

This project will specifically work with the following age groups:

This project will specifically work with the following gender groups:

This project will specifically work with the following ethnic groups:

If Other ethnic group, please give details:

This project will specifically work with Deaf and disabled people:

**No**

This project will specifically work with LGBTQI groups:

**No**

<p><b>This project will specifically work with other groups or communities:</b></p>
<p><b>How will you target the groups/communities you have identified? What is your expertise in providing services for these groups?</b></p>
<p><b>Are there any groups or communities you think your organisation will find hard to include through this project?</b>  <b>No</b></p>
<p><b>If yes, please specify which groups or communities? Where possible using the categories listed above.</b></p>
<p><b>If yes, what steps will you take to make your services accessible to and meet the needs of the groups/communities you have identified?</b></p>

**Declaration**

<p>I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, all the information I have provided in this application form is correct. I fully understand that City Bridge Trust has zero tolerance towards fraud and will seek to prosecute and recover funds in every instance.  Please confirm: Yes      Full Name: <b>Bill Skirrow</b></p>
<p>Role within                      <b>Director</b>  Organisation:</p>