What is the DC Alternative Spring Break?
The DC Alternative Spring Break Program, sponsored by Georgetown University Law Center, the Columbus School of Law (at CUA) and American University Washington College of Law (AUWCL), is a program that provides law students with opportunities to engage in hands-on, law-related volunteer work in the DC area during their spring break. Participating in an Alternative Spring Break is a great way to serve the community, gain exposure to the world of lawyering opportunities, build connections in the community, and accumulate pro bono hours.

What kind of work will I do if I volunteer?
The work you will do varies from project to project. Please see the detailed project descriptions below for additional information and details. Some common assignments may include: conducting intakes or interviewing clients, answering hotlines, investigating cases, performing outreach in the community, evaluating court proceedings, and undertaking legal or policy research.

I’m interested! How do I sign up?
Below is a complete list of organizations and a description of available projects. If you are interested in signing up to participate in a project, please use this online form to sign up and rank your choices: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RSYP8LH. The deadline for submitting your request form is Monday, March 2nd at 12:00pm.

How do I find out if I am matched with a project?
You will be notified of your placement by e-mail by Wednesday, March 5th. The email will contain the contact information to get you started. Please be aware that due to space limitations, we may not be able to place all students who sign up to participate in a spring break project. If you are not matched with a project, we will let you know that as well.

Anything Else?
If you have questions about the DC Alternative Spring Break program or projects, you are welcome to contact the Pro Bono manager at your school:
Georgetown University Law Center: Sara Jackson; skj27@law.georgetown.edu; (202) 661-6641
Catholic University Columbus School of Law: Jen Tschirch; tschirch@law.edu; (202) 319-5132
AU Washington College of Law: Jasmeet Sidhu; jsidhu@wcl.american.edu; (202) 274-4099

*Note regarding the NY Bar Pro Bono Requirement: If you are considering applying for admission to the New York State bar, please visit http://www.nycourts.gov/attorneys/probono/baradmissionreqs.shtml to learn about the 50-hour pro bono requirement. While the definition of what qualifies as pro bono under the New York rule is expansive, we cannot guarantee that the Alternative Spring Break projects will fall within it – the ultimate decision about whether the Pro Bono Requirement is satisfied will be made by the Character and Fitness Committee of the Appellate Division Department to which your application for admission to the New York Bar is submitted. Inquiries may be made directly to the Court via ProBonoRule@nycourts.gov.
CAPITAL AREA IMMIGRANTS’ RIGHTS (CAIR) COALITION
CAIR provides advocacy, education, representation and outreach to the immigrant community of the Washington metropolitan area. While CAIR is open to students participating in one shift, they note that the experience is more meaningful for both sides if volunteers commit to at least two.

➔ Project: Staff CAIR’s Detention Hotline from 9-11 on March 9, 10, 11 or 13 (up to 4 volunteers needed). Detainees wishing to contact the CAIR Coalition may call the detention hotline for free Monday-Friday from 9:00 am–5:00 pm. Volunteers will staff this hotline on a 2-hour slot basis. Volunteers are in charge of answering phones and helping detainees connect with their attorney free of charge using our conference system, conduct phone intakes, or provide information about upcoming jail visits, procedures, and follow up messages. A half-hour training will be provided at the outset of the initial volunteer slot.

CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK (CLINIC)
The Catholic Legal Immigration Network is the nation’s largest coalition of charitable immigration legal service providers. CLINIC’s advocacy department seeks to bring the experience of more than 250 affiliated organizations to bear on immigration policy and to educate the public about leading issues affecting immigrant communities.

➔ Project: Research and monitoring (3 volunteers needed). Conduct research on the effect of proposed state legislation affecting immigrants, such as offering driver’s licenses to undocumented individuals or amendments to statutes prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law. Support the BIA Pro Bono Project’s periodic case inventory. Monitor ongoing developments regarding the implementation of the President’s immigration-related Executive Actions, including updates to our members regarding the recent injunction in State of Texas, et al., v. United States.

COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR SAFE SPACES
Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS) has evolved from a blog to a dynamic organization that mobilizes the community to end public sexual harassment and assault in the DC metropolitan area. It does this through both online and offline activism, including workshops, innovative direct services, policy advocacy, and community outreach. Currently volunteer-led and -run, CASS utilizes the creativity and energy of the DC community to further its mission and vision.

➔ Project: Safe Bars Legal Research (2-3 law students, full week). The Safe Bars Project is an initiative to have DC bars and restaurants become active bystanders in addressing sexual harassment and assault. Part of empowering these establishments involves knowing what may be their liability. Law students working at DC SAFE will research and draft a legal memo covering the relevant DC-based regulations (e.g., ABRA), public safety statutes, and other DC case law that would impact CASS's Safe Bars work. Questions to address may include: What are alcohol serving establishment legally required to do? What can't they do? What have they (or subsidiaries) won or lost in court as it relates to claims of sexual harassment or assault? Work can be completed remotely after an initial in-person meeting.
MOTHERS’ OUTREACH NETWORK
Mothers’ Outreach Network is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization that helps low-wage and chronically unemployed D.C. residents address barriers to full employment through education and outreach, training, legal screening and referrals, and advocacy. Mothers’ Outreach Network focuses upon low-skilled women and men who are transitioning into the workforce after periods of unemployment due to child care responsibilities or incarceration.

➤ Project: Communications and Legal Research Associate (1-2 students needed). Student volunteers will update MON’s Workers Rights’ curriculum by drafting and editing program material through research and writing; focusing upon updating the curriculum with user-friendly case law examples. Work can be completed remotely.

THE PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
The Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDS) is a federally funded, independent legal organization created by a federal statute enacted to comply with a constitutional mandate to provide defense counsel to poor people in criminal and juvenile proceedings. PDS is a model program applying a holistic approach to representation and uses both general litigation skills and specialty practices to provide complete, quality representation in its complex cases.

➤ Project: Legal research (1-3 students needed). Volunteers will work with a group of attorneys in the Trial, Appellate, Mental Health, Special Litigation, Civil Legal Services, Community Defender or Parole Divisions on brief research projects. PDS strongly prefers second and third-year law students, although first-year students with relevant pre-law experience are encouraged to apply. In all cases, PDS seeks a weeklong commitment.

PUBLIC JUSTICE CENTER/RIGHT TO HOUSING ALLIANCE
The PJC’s Human Right to Housing Project seeks to realize the human right to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing and to fair and equal treatment by Maryland’s landlord-tenant laws, courts, and agencies. Within the local legal services community, the PJC continues to be a significant legal services provider to tenants who live in privately owned housing – who are the vast majority of tenants – and tenants in foreclosure. The Right to Housing Alliance is an organization led by low-income tenants, homeowners and homeless focusing on the eradication of Baltimore’s housing crisis. Through direct action, coalition building, education, and advocacy, they are empowering new community leaders and building a movement to transform the housing system in Baltimore to value human rights.

➤ Project: Rent Court Reform Initiative (1-2 students needed). “Justice” as administered by the Baltimore rent court is swift and efficient, but entirely unbalanced. The PJC and RTHA believe that a Rent Court that is balanced to enforce tenant rights as well as landlord rights would result in fewer evictions, better housing quality, and a changed perception of rent court as a court of law rather than as a landlord collection agency. To achieve this balance, PJC and RTHA are conducting a study of renters’ experiences in the judicial process of eviction. Student volunteers will contribute to this work by conducting a survey of defendants at the rent court, gathering important information about tenants’ access to justice and housing security. The data collected by volunteers will be used to raise public awareness about housing unaffordability and the harsh legal and social realities of rental eviction. Direct engagement with renters is conducted between 8:30AM and 3:00PM, Monday through Friday, at the Baltimore City District Court (501 E. Fayette Street). Phone surveys are conducted at the RTHA office throughout the day.
SO OTHERS MIGHT EAT (SOME)
For over 40 years, SOME has provided comprehensive services to residents of the District of Columbia who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Advocacy & Social Justice Department at SOME takes citywide leadership roles on public policy and community education. Their goal is to reduce the causes of poverty and homelessness by working on the District’s budget, affordable housing, homeless services, access to food, senior services, family services, health care, and income supports.

→ Project: Advocacy Internship (1-3 students needed). Law student volunteers will assist with one or more of the following: analyze and/or draft potential legislation; analyze DC budget needs and participate in an advocacy strategy; conduct research and prepare written memoranda; update poverty and homelessness statistics; help with outreach and education of staff and clients; help with social media and advocacy outreach; educate community groups on homelessness and poverty; participate in Advocacy Department meetings, if timing permits.

Please Note: applicants for this position must submit a resume, writing sample, and 2 references to Nechama Masliansky at nmasliansky@some.org for SOME to keep on file.

WASHINGTON LEGAL CLINIC FOR THE HOMELESS
The Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless’ mission is to use the law to make justice a reality for our neighbors who struggle with homelessness and poverty. Combining community lawyering and advocacy to achieve our clients’ goals, our expert staff and network of volunteer attorneys provide low barrier, comprehensive legal services at intake sites throughout the District of Columbia, helping our clients to access housing, shelter, and life-saving services.

→ Project: Conduct “Know Your Rights” Outreach to Homeless Families (5-8 volunteers needed). The Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (WLCH) provides outreach at the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center (FRC) to homeless families year-round, with particular emphasis during hypothermia season (November – March). Volunteers inform families of their legal right to shelter and to appeal the denial of shelter. Volunteers will be provided the necessary information to assist consumers, including information about how to contact the WLCH Attorney of the Day if shelter has been denied and contact information for local elected officials so that families’ concerns may be voiced at a systems level. Outreach at the FRC is conducted from 8:30AM or 3:45PM, Monday through Thursday (spring break volunteers must commit to staffing at least 2 – 3 shifts that week). Location: The Virginia Williams Family Resource Center, 920 Rhode Island Avenue, NE. Closest metro is the Rhode Island metro station (red line). A video will be made available to student participants who have not attended a WLCH training prior to beginning their placement.

WHITMAN-WALKER HEALTH AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS
A number of DC health and legal advocate organizations are conducting a monitoring project at the DC Economic Security Administration (ESA) service centers. The ESA is the agency responsible for eligibility determinations for Medicaid, DC Healthcare Alliance, TANF, IDA, SNAP benefits. Organizations participating in the monitoring project are: Whitman-Walker Health, Legal Aid Society of DC, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, Bread for the City, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, and Terris, Pravlik, and Millian.

→ Project: DC ESA Monitoring Project (5 students needed). This monitoring project is to document how long consumers are waiting for service, what time they are arriving to secure their place in line, and whether they are able to complete their visit or require multiple trips to
the ESA Office. With reports that consumers line up very early in the morning (often 4 or 5 am) to secure their place in line to apply or renew their benefits, local organizations have been interviewing consumers outside the offices before they open. During spring break, law students are sought to staff outside the ESA service centers during business hours to interview consumers about their experiences. This information will be shared with the agency to continue to improve service to low-income DC residents. There are 5 service centers locally, but this project will focus on 3 particular centers. Students will monitor wait times from 7 AM-5PM at the centers. Two additional students will be assigned to input data collected on wait times at one of the participating organization’s offices. No consumer should need to line up hours before an office opens to get benefits to which they are legally entitled. Brief orientation/materials will be provided.