

Law Day: Project Ideas

EDUCATIONAL PROJECT IDEAS

Small Bar

- Lawyers in the classroom discussing law as a career, our rights and responsibilities as citizens, etc. Could be at a schoolwide career day assembly or in a classroom. Speak to high school students about their legal rights and responsibilities when they turn 18. A free app is available called “OBA Young Adult Guide” to provide you with information. Be sure to mention this to the students so they can download it too.
- Judge in the classroom – Invite judges to classes or community groups to discuss their role in our justice system.
- Coordinate with local teachers to award good citizenship ribbons or t-shirts to elementary students.
- Work with local teachers to award outstanding civics or social studies students.
- Lawyer for a Day – High school seniors shadow an attorney and/or judge for a day or afternoon to experience what it really means to be a lawyer.

Medium Bar

- Law Day Open House or Courthouse Tour – Invite classes (or one grade only) to tour the building and have offices explain what they do. Hold an open house in the evening, encourage children to bring parents, combine with a mock trial demonstration.
- Field trip for students to court to observe trials in progress
- For high school students, organize a panel discussion with the district attorney, public defender and individuals who have been convicted of crimes (Oklahoma County Bar Association sponsors this project.)
- Mock Trial in Classroom – Who doesn’t enjoy a good legal drama? Mock trials can take many forms. They might be organized as virtual or live stream public performances where students participate as attorneys, jurors and witnesses.
- Forum in the Classroom – Using the town hall meeting format, students could hold a forum on a current or historical topic by taking roles representing various positions on the topic and engaging in an orderly discussion. Lawyers, judges and other community representatives can participate as guest speakers, advisors or observers of the forum. A sample forum topic could be the restriction some shopping malls have placed on

students coming to the mall in large groups. Some malls now require the presence of an adult; others do not permit students to enter in groups after a certain time. Malls have taken these actions to protect other shoppers.

- Speak to adult learners enrolled in literacy, English as a second language, graduate equivalency degree (GED programs). Focus can be on constitutional rights, duties of citizenship, etc.
- Essay contest over the Constitution for grade-school students.

Large Bar

- Mock trials in courtroom with local attorneys and judges participating
Examples: Put a teacher on trial for giving too much homework or a student for talking too much, or physical education coach for making students run too many laps.
- Drunk Driving Awareness project at local high school (for high school seniors). Involve local law enforcement to give talks, show films of accidents or present a wrecked vehicle to emphasize the dangers of drinking while intoxicated. Or have a victim of a drunk driver speak, etc.
- Arrange for juvenile offenders to share their experiences with their peers about what they've learned the hard way.
- Sponsor a college scholarship for a student or students in your county.
- Hold a public blood drive at the courthouse.

FUNDRAISER IDEAS

Small Bar

- Host a food night at a local restaurant – determine a portion of proceeds that would be donated to a local charity/nonprofit organization

Medium Bar

- Sponsor golf tournament fundraiser. Use proceeds to benefit a worthy cause or for prize money for county art and writing contests.

Large Bar

- Law Day "Run for Justice" 5K fundraiser to benefit a local nonprofit organization.

- Have a silent auction at your meeting or banquet to raise money for community organizations that help our profession, such as your local domestic violence shelter, homeless shelter, Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma office or CASA (OSU and OU can help you get autographed items for your auction).

COMMUNITY SERVICE IDEAS

Small Bar

- Voter registration drive.
- Worksite-based lunchtime presentations on practical legal issues, such as writing a will, landlord/tenant law, when and how to use a lawyer and how to find one, buying and selling a home, credit and bankruptcy. Contact large employers in your area. Employees provide their own brown bag lunches and enjoy the convenience of not having to leave the workplace. The purpose is to provide information, not to solicit potential clients.
- Speak at Senior Citizen Centers – The OBA offers free legal information brochures available at www.okbar.org/freelegalinfo.
- Contact community civic and professional organizations and offer to provide attorneys to speak at meetings on practical law issues.
- Participate in the Ask A Lawyer hotline project – Recruit attorneys to staff phone(s) locally throughout the day and give free legal advice to residents.

Medium Bar

- Finger printing of youth at local courthouse.
- Plan a free seminar to educate the public on specific practical law issues like owning private property or landlord/tenant rights.
- Arrange to do a radio or cable TV talk show or be a guest on an existing show. Select a topic that will click with the audience. Practical law issues such as how to buy and sell a house or when to draw up a living will could be of great interest to your community.
- Develop and distribute resource guides, including addresses and phone numbers for community services such as women's shelters, literacy groups or victim's assistance programs.
- Having your local radio and TV show interview local attorneys about what they do and/or particular legal issues.

Large Bar

- Naturalization ceremonies – Call attention to civic rights and duties and witness new Americans pursuing their dreams by hosting a swearing in service. Ask new citizens to explain why they've chosen U.S. citizenship.

PROFESSIONAL CAMARADERIE

Small Bar

- Chili cookoff – Individual attorneys or law firms compete for top chili chef.

Medium Bar

- Sponsor golf tournament fundraiser – (For a worthy cause or for prize money for locally sponsored art and writing contests).
- Recruit a group of lawyers to help a nonprofit organization build a house, serve food to the homeless, paint a needy older person's home or other handson project (great opportunity for professional image building).

Large Bar

- Law Day luncheon – Present a Liberty Bell Award to a nonlawyer or lay organization who has given outstanding community service by promoting a better understanding of the law. Or make the event a community mini-forum on justice issues. Encourage each to bring one nonlawyer guest.