

Answering the Call Clemency Project 2014

Clemency Project 2014's elevator pitch

The American Bar Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, Families Against Mandatory Minimums, the Federal Public and Community Defenders, and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers have joined together under a working group they call Clemency Project 2014. Through the efforts of Clemency Project 2014, the participating organizations will identify potential clemency petitioners and recruit and train volunteer lawyers to assist them in securing clemency.

Our Objective

To ensure that every prisoner who has asked for our help and who we agree meets the DOJ's clemency initiative criteria is assisted by pro bono counsel in submitting a clemency petition to the Office of the Pardon Attorney.

Our Work

Recruit, train and support volunteer lawyers to:

- Determine if a prisoner meets the clemency initiative criteria, and if so,
- Represent that prisoner by assisting in preparing a petition for commutation.

Where things stand

- Over 1000 individual lawyers have volunteered
- 400 lawyers from 35 large law firms have agreed to take 750 cases (so far)
- 1010 lawyers have commenced training
 - 370 have completed training and will be assigned cases starting this week.
- 20,000+ prisoners have asked for our help.
- 13,000 are sentenced to more than ten years.

75,579

prisoners are serving a mandatory minimum sentence.

USSC's 2011 Mandatory Minimum Report

Clemency Project 2014 - a working group composed of lawyers and advocates including the Federal Defenders, the [American Civil Liberties Union](#), [Families Against Mandatory Minimums](#), the [American Bar Association](#), and [National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers](#), as well as individuals active within those organizations - launched in January after Deputy Attorney General James Cole asked the legal profession to provide pro bono assistance to federal prisoners who would likely have received a shorter sentence if they'd been sentenced today. Clemency Project 2014 members collaborate to recruit and train attorneys on how to screen for prisoners who meet the criteria listed below and assist prisoners who meet the criteria to find lawyers to represent them at no cost.

Clemency Project 2014 will review requests from prisoners to determine if a prisoner has served ten years and does not have an obviously disqualifying feature (such as a crime of violence). Prisoners who appear to qualify will be assigned a lawyer. That lawyer will write to the prisoner for permission to review documents in his or her case to determine if the other criteria are met. If the criteria are met, the prisoner will be assigned a lawyer to help them fill out and file a clemency petition. That might be the same lawyer who wrote to the prisoner for permission to review their documents or it might be a new one. In either event, the lawyer will write to the prisoner to be sure they want free counsel to help them write and submit a petition for commutation.

The criteria released by the Justice Department, prisoners must be:

CLEMENCY PROJECT

2014

[Home](#) [Participating Organizations](#)Find information for: [Families](#) | [Volunteers](#) | [Media](#)

Learn how to get involved

Lawyers wishing to volunteer should go to [Training section](#) to learn the steps to volunteer. Lawyers in large firms may wish to contact the firm's pro-bono coordinator as the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights is working to coordinate the work of large firm lawyers and may be working with the firm.

Lawyers

Complete the [Preliminary Survey](#) and start training.

Non-Lawyers

Send us an email about how you can help at volunteer@clemencyproject.org.

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