

Contact Lynn Dempsey
214-768-8617 or ldempsey@smu.edu

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SMU'S LAW SCHOOL LAUNCHING HELPLINE JUNE 1 TO ASSIST WITH COVID-19 RELATED LEGAL ISSUES

DALLAS (SMU) — Beginning June 1, [SMU Dedman School of Law](#) will launch a clinic project with an emergency helpline that offers North Texas residents the opportunity to secure free legal assistance with matters related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as housing, immigration and consumer protection. Working under the supervision of SMU Law Clinic faculty, more than 45 law students will staff the COVID-19 Legal Helpline, which may be reached by dialing 214-SMU-COVD (214-768-2683).

Callers seeking assistance with certain COVID-19 related legal problems can receive assistance through the [SMU legal clinics](#) or, when necessary, referral to local law firms and attorneys providing free services in some specialized areas. Dedicated community partners like the law firm, Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP and SMU Law alumnus Mark Melton, whose pro bono project [DallasEvictions2020.com](#) includes more than 80 volunteer attorneys, are already working with the law school to take referrals. Other partners for the project will include the Dallas Bar Association, Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program (DVAP), Legal Aid of Northwest Texas and UNT Dallas College of Law.

“This project is a wonderful example of how deeply committed SMU is to helping our students and to serving the beautiful city in which we are so fortunate to be located,” said Jennifer Collins, Dean of SMU Dedman School of Law. “We are very grateful to have such committed partners and to be able to provide support to our community as we continue to navigate these unprecedented times.”

The COVID-19 Emergency Helpline Project has two primary goals:

- To fill gaps in the availability of reasonably fast, reliable and necessary legal information and advice in certain key areas through a dedicated helpline
- To provide SMU law students with meaningful opportunities to develop important professional values and skills as they work collaboratively with each other, supervising faculty, and volunteer attorneys

“We hope the Helpline will be an important resource for members of our Dallas/Fort Worth community who are struggling,” said professor Mary Spector, Associate Dean for Clinics at SMU. “It will also provide SMU Law students with the chance to gain valuable legal experience and professional skills. I’m proud of our students’ eagerness to step up to the legal challenges the pandemic presents.”

Those interested in making a financial contribution or supporting the Helpline project may visit the SMU Dedman School of Law giving page at smu.edu/law/giving.

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The School of Law at SMU was founded in 1925. It was named Dedman School of Law in 2001 in honor of Dallas benefactors Nancy and Robert H. Dedman, Sr., and their family. SMU Dedman Law enjoys a national and international reputation of distinction. It is among the most competitive law schools in the country for admission, as well as one of the most successful in the placement of its graduates.

In 1947, SMU Law was one of the first law schools in the country to sponsor a community legal clinic as part of a law school curriculum. Today, legal clinics are essential to Dedman School of Law's mission of preparing students to be leaders in the legal profession and in business while serving the needs of their community.