



Connecting Pro Bono Clients and Coaches toolkit

IACC SPCC Certification

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PART 1: HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Experienced Coaches: If you are already working as a career coach and have a clear process to identify and onboard pro bono clients, then we recommend you review this toolkit, compare it to your process, and take parts that would enhance your existing process.

New or Prospective Career Coaches: Some new career coaches may already have a clear process to identify and onboard pro bono clients, especially those who have worked in adjacent industries, such as consulting, training, or another coaching methodology. Other new or prospective career coaches may have only a vague idea or no idea how to identify and onboard pro bono clients.

- If you have a clear process in mind already, we still recommend reviewing the toolkit, as it may give you even more insight and clarity.
- If you only have a vague idea of your niche, then this workbook is for you! Keep going and complete all of the exercises.

PART 2: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START LOOKING

Because you will be offering your services for free, it is important to find a pro-bono client who—despite zero financial investment—will invest as much energy in the process as you will. To ensure a productive partnership, it's advisable to collaborate with someone who can commit to timely responses and active engagement. While working with acquaintances or family members can be convenient, we've found that partnering with someone outside your immediate circle can foster a more objective and consultative dynamic.

Before working with your pro bono client, it is also important to have a sense of what you can and would like to work on with them. This way, you can set clear expectations with your client before embarking on your journey together, which will ensure their motivation and commitment because they'll understand the benefits and demands of the coaching process.

Here at the IACC, our SPCC, or Senior Professional Career Coach certification, students work with a pro bono client throughout the program. SPCC students have the opportunity to meet with their client by week 2 of the course, guiding them in identifying their career direction (if needed) and crafting a compelling dossier, including a resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile.

It is a significant benefit to their pro bono client! And for students, continuing to coach their pro bono client through the end of the curriculum greatly enriches their experience, allowing them to make a meaningful impact on someone's professional life.

PART 3: WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO FINDING A PRO BONO CLIENT

We will want to know your niche to make the best match (Week 1 SPCC homework).

We recommend that you post online on your social media profiles, like LinkedIn and Facebook.

If you're already engaged with the IACC, reach out to your instructors in the community. We may have pro bono clients who have reached out to us at the IACC, waiting for a pro bono engagement.

Here is a sample of what the post could look like for a career coach with a niche in the public sector:

Calling All Public Sector Professionals: Pro Bono Career Coaching Opportunity

As part of my certification journey with the @International Association of Career Coaches (IACC), I'm seeking a pro bono client from the public sector who would be willing to embark on a transformative career coaching experience.

If you're interested, please send me a direct message on LinkedIn, and let's explore this opportunity together.

****Requirements:****

- Availability to start immediately
- Commitment to weekly meetings
- Dedication to completing assignments on time
- Willingness to provide an honest review on LinkedIn

Here are tips to amplify your post:

Ensure you tag the IACC in your post. Also, tag all of your instructors as well. Come back to the community, post the URL to your post, and ask us to repost it to our communities.

Cara Heilmann has 30,000 1st-degree connections on LinkedIn.

Once you've selected your client:

After selecting a pro bono client, post their name and their relationship to you (if a friend/family or not a friend/family) in the community. We'll add the information to our tracking sheet.

PART 4: HOW TO WORK WITH PRO BONO CLIENTS

As a new career coach, your first call with a pro bono client sets the tone for a productive and rewarding partnership. Remember, your time is as valuable as your client's, so it's crucial to ensure their commitment to the agreed-upon timeline from the outset.

First call agenda:

1. **Overview the Process:** Provide a clear outline of the steps involved in your career coaching program. This transparency will help manage expectations and ensure everyone is on the same page.
2. **Understand the Client's Goals:** Actively listen to your client's aspirations, challenges, and desired outcomes. This understanding will shape the direction of your coaching and ensure a tailored approach.
3. **Define the Scope:** Explain the areas a career coach can assist with, such as resume development, interview preparation, job search strategies, and career transition planning. Simultaneously, set boundaries by clarifying that your role does not extend to life coaching or therapy.
4. **Encourage Open Communication:** Emphasize the importance of honesty and open communication throughout the coaching relationship. Encourage your client to voice any concerns or discomfort promptly, and assure them that you will do the same.
5. **Set Reasonable Boundaries:** Be aware of your personal limitations and establish reasonable boundaries for yourself. This could include setting specific working hours, response times, or scheduling guidelines to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

By addressing these key points during your initial call, you'll establish a solid foundation for a successful coaching partnership. Remember, clear communication, mutual understanding, and respect for each other's time and boundaries are essential for a rewarding experience for both you and your pro bono client.

PART 5: DO YOU NEED A WRITTEN AGREEMENT OR STATED GOALS

Not all career coaches have written agreements with clients. Having a **written agreement** with a pro bono client can help set clear expectations and boundaries for the representation. The pros include defining the scope of services to be provided, specifying any requirements the pro bono client is responsible for, and protecting your obligations.

However, the cons are that it may make the pro bono client feel like they are being treated differently from paying clients, and an overly formal agreement could discourage those in need from seeking pro bono assistance. Some career coaches prefer an outline of the **stated goals** rather than a written agreement.

Ultimately, it is your decision and here are two examples of a written agreement or an outline of stated goals.

Here is a sample written agreement:

Pro Bono Career Coaching Service Level Agreement

Objective: Outline the terms and expectations for pro bono career coaching services provided to clients.

1. Scope of Services:

- The career coach will provide up to [X] hours of pro bono career coaching services to the client between the dates of mm/dd/yyyy – mm/dd/yyyy.
- The services may include resume review, interview preparation, career exploration, and skill development guidance.
- Resume review: advice on refining the client's resume, tailoring it to the client's ideal job, skills, and career goals
- Interview preparation: guidance on interview techniques, and feedback to help the client feel confident and prepared

- Career exploration: guidance in exploring different career paths, industries and opportunities based on the client's interests, skills and values
- Skill development guidance: Recommendations for skill development opportunities

2. Expectations and Responsibilities:

- The client agrees to actively participate in coaching sessions, complete assigned tasks, and provide honest feedback.
- The career coach will provide guidance, support, and resources to help the client achieve their career goals.

3. Confidentiality:

- All information shared during coaching sessions will be kept confidential unless the client gives explicit consent to disclose specific information.
- The career coach will not share any personal information or details about the client without their permission.

4. Communication:

- Communication between the coach and the client may be conducted via email, phone calls, or video conferencing, as agreed upon by both parties.
- The coach will respond to client inquiries in a timely manner and provide necessary support between coaching sessions.

5. Cancellation and Rescheduling Policy:

- The client agrees to provide at least 24 hours' notice for any cancellations or rescheduling of coaching sessions.

- The coach will make reasonable efforts to accommodate changes in the schedule, subject to availability.

6. Feedback and Evaluation:

- The client agrees to provide feedback on the coaching sessions to help improve the coaching process.
- The coach will periodically evaluate the progress of the client and adjust the coaching approach as needed.

7. Conflict Resolution:

- In the event of any conflicts or disagreements, both parties agree to address the issue openly and seek resolution through effective communication.
- Both parties have the right to cancel the engagement at any time.

Here is a sample of stated goals:

Goals: <Put Client's Ultimate Why Statement here>

Tips to share:

- *Share tricks on how to job search and what is needed to land their dream job*
- *Gather as much information as possible from the pro bono client to build out their ideal resume, so don't hold back on sharing all the info!*
- *Have the client be prepared each session to ensure we can maximize the full session and focus on each job applied for, interview prep, etc.*

Strategy to achieve goals:

- *List Client expectations and SLAs*
- *List Coach's expectations and SLAs*
- *Communication timelines/expectations/SLAs*
- *End of service review session and write up*
- *Mediums for Communication*

Advice to provide:

- *How to know your personal limitations*
- *How to communicate when you're uncomfortable and/or need something different*
- *Conflict resolution expectations and guidelines*
- *How to cancel if/when necessary*
- *Confidentiality Guidelines*
- *Job timeline expectations*
 - *Planned: actively interviewing, looking for resume help*
 - *Unplanned: unplanned unemployment and/or opportunities. Scope Creep*

CONCLUSION

Finding a pro bono client quickly is crucial for your development as a career coach. This hands-on experience allows you to apply your skills and gain invaluable insights. Securing a client early ensures you can fully immerse yourself in the coaching process.

If you face difficulties finding a suitable pro bono client, don't hesitate to reach out to your instructors. They have experience and can provide guidance, suggestions, or potential leads. Embracing this opportunity and seeking assistance when needed will ensure you make the most of this invaluable learning experience.

GRATITUDE

The IACC would like to thank all of the Senior Professional Career Coach certification participants and facilitators who contributed to creating this Toolkit. We are grateful for the collective expertise, insights, and dedication that went into developing this comprehensive resource. Your valuable contributions have made this Toolkit a powerful tool for empowering career coaches and enhancing the professional journeys of countless individuals.

Veronica Tolliver, Melissa Poirier, Elizabeth Karger, MK Hicks, Nuha Elmaghrabi, Bob Gardner, Kristina Martin, Niko Hazel, Patti Bussow, and Olesia Iakivchyk (IACC Trainer).

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Your first pro bono client can be the start of a real coaching career. If you're ready to build the skills, confidence, and credibility to grow a sustainable practice, join the Senior Professional Career Coach program: <https://www.iacareercoaches.org/senior-professional-career-coach>