

## **Frequently Asked Questions – Law Day Job Shadowing for Fifth Graders**

### **What is Law Day Job Shadowing for Fifth Graders?**

It is a cooperative project of the Nebraska State Bar Foundation, its State Center for Law-Related Education for the Public, and the Nebraska Supreme Court, conducted annually on or near Law Day, May 1. Piloted in Lincoln Public Schools in 2002, the program went statewide in 2003, with up to 12 communities participating. More than 2,000 students have participated since that date.

Groups of fifth graders spend one hour with lawyers, judges, or other professionals such as police or sheriff officers, court clerks, or court reporters. They experience some of the day-to-day activity of these professionals and observe their relationship to both criminal and civil laws.

The fifth graders may go in small groups to various offices around their city, or they may go as a group to a courthouse. All groups of students are chaperoned by adults. Legal professionals may wish to carry out a mock trial demonstration or engage the students in some other type of experiential activity such as writing a simple contract or a will.

### **Why was this program created?**

The message of this program is to stay in school and work hard. Law Day Job Shadowing also meets a state social studies standard by allowing students the opportunity to analyze skills necessary for career opportunities.

### **What are other benefits of the program?**

Law-Related Education has been shown to help prevent juvenile delinquency. On the national level the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has been a sponsor of this type of activity.

### **Who may participate in this Law Day activity?**

Any community with willing teachers, school administrators, parents, and legal professionals are encouraged to contact the Bar Foundation to indicate their interest in participating in the program. Such interest should be indicated no later than February 15 for each year's activities.

Contact Doris or Cindy at 402/475-1042 or via email: [doris@nebarfnd.org](mailto:doris@nebarfnd.org) or [cindy@nebarfnd.org](mailto:cindy@nebarfnd.org).

## **How is the activity organized?**

If the initial request for the activity comes from a school, the sponsors will make every effort to match at least one classroom of fifth graders from the community with local legal professionals. If the school is located in or near the county seat, the first contact will be with court personnel to ask them to serve as coordinators for the local Job Shadowing experience.

If the request comes from a member of the legal profession, the sponsors will contact a local school administrator to describe the program and invite the school's participation in the program.

The sponsors provide step-by-step guidelines for classroom teachers, local coordinators, and legal professionals acting as hosts. The sponsors also create suggested activities that are related to the annual Law Day theme. The 2015 theme is "American Ingenuity—Innovation and Imagination."

## **What have been some outcomes of the program?**

At the conclusion of the activity, local coordinators, teachers, students, parents, and lawyer or judge hosts are asked to evaluate the experience. Here are some of the comments that have been received:

"I liked all of the jobs, but I really like the judge's job. You get to do a lot of reading, and the judge's decision makes a huge impact on everyone's lives. I think it would be a really neat job."

-Student

"The actual cases were very interesting and brought home a feeling of real to the students who watch crime shows on TV."

-Teacher

"I recall that I entered law school without ever having met a lawyer or been in a lawyer's office (I don't know why I decided the law was for me at that time.). This is an excellent program and I think it helps give kids a different perspective about what the profession of law is all about."

-Attorney