

# 2024 Law Student Summer Fellowship & John Meehan Summer Fellow Program



## Program Overview

May 27, 2024 – August 2, 2024

**APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED BEGINNING November 1, 2023**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 19, 2024**

Certified Summer Fellowship positions will be awarded through **The Lawyers' Fund** and the **John Meehan Citizenship Institute Fund** at the Allegheny County Bar Foundation to L2 students attending an accredited law school.

**The Lawyers' Fund & John Meehan Fund** will host students from the accredited law schools at the following organizations:

1. Christian Legal Aid
2. Community Justice Project
3. Disability Rights Pennsylvania
4. District Attorney's Office
5. Education Law Center
6. Jewish Family & Community Services
  - a. John Meehan Citizenship Institute Fellowship
7. Juvenile Court Project
8. KidsVoice
9. Office of Conflict Counsel
10. Office of Public Defender
11. Pro Bono Center
12. Women's Center & Shelter
13. Women's Law Project

## **Description of the Programs**

1. Each organization wrote a short description of their program. (See APPENDIX A for program descriptions).
2. Fellowship stipends in the amount of \$6,500 will be awarded for participating in the Law Student Summer Fellowship Program.
3. Program is limited to 2Ls only so that they can be certified and obtain the most comprehensive experience possible.
4. The summer program runs from May 27, 2024 – August 2, 2024, 35 hours per week.
5. An orientation program is mandatory for student Fellows of The Lawyers' Fund, John Meehan Fund and The John P. Gismondi Fund.

## **Eligibility and Application Process**

1. Law students must have completed their second year of Law School by the time the Summer Fellowship program begins.
2. Students must be eligible to appear in court pursuant to Pa. Bar Admission Rule 321. Please [review the details](#) to determine if you are eligible.
3. Application process will begin on November 1, 2023.
4. Law students must submit a resume and unofficial transcript with each application.
5. All applications must be submitted via the [online application](#). The form will be posted to PittLawWorks and DuqLawConnect.
6. Any questions should be directed to Stephanie Selya via email at [sselya@acba.org](mailto:sselya@acba.org)
7. Deadline to apply is January 19, 2024.
8. After preliminary review, applications will be sent to appropriate organizations.
9. Interviews will take place at each organization.
10. Awards will be made at the conclusion of the interview process in late February/early March.
11. Fellowship awards shall be based on objective and nondiscriminatory criteria.

## **Terms of Employment**

Each organization will have their own requirements regarding their program. However, we recommend the following minimum standards to be set for the students to be fully compensated by the ACBF Fellowship Program:

1. Program will run from May 27, 2024– August 2, 2024. Students should work at least 35 hours/week. If a student must be absent from the program, the student should make every effort to make-up for lost time.
2. Students must sign an agreement with the Allegheny County Bar Foundation regarding terms of the Fellowship.
3. Students will be evaluated at the end of the program by the organization. Students will also have an opportunity to evaluate the program at that time.
4. Students must attend an Allegheny County Bar Foundation orientation. The date, time and location are to be determined.
5. Students must dress accordingly for the program and should be in business attire when they are attending court and court-related proceedings.

## APPENDIX A

The following are short descriptions of Summer Law Student Fellowship programs:

1. **Christian Legal Aid:** <http://www.clapittsburgh.org>

Christian Legal Aid of Pittsburgh, Inc. (CLA) is a private, non-profit Pennsylvania corporation established in 2004 to provide free legal services in civil cases to low-income people. CLA holds clinics every Monday night where clients can receive 45-minute consultations with volunteer attorneys.

The Fellowship Program will provide students with an opportunity to both directly assist volunteer attorneys serving low-income clients in a wide range of civil legal issues, as well as to assist in developing resources for a small growing nonprofit organization. The student will be expected to attend all CLA clinics during the Fellowship period (every Monday night and the first and third Thursday night of each month) and assist CLA volunteer attorneys in the legal consultation sessions with clients. The student will then provide research and support to CLA volunteer attorneys in representation of clients beyond clinic night. If the student is a certified legal intern, the student will have the opportunity to represent CLA clients beyond clinic night as appropriate and possible under the supervision of the Executive Director.

The student will also assist and support the Executive Director in responding to client inquiries and developing resources for CLA volunteer attorneys in representation of our clients. This may include legal research for our Desk Reference Manual, developing legal resource materials for our volunteer website, and other related research and projects. At all times the Summer Fellow will be trained and supervised by the Executive Director.

2. **Community Justice Project:** <https://www.communityjusticeproject.org/>

The Community Justice Project is a non-profit, public interest law firm that specializes in impact litigation and policy advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged groups and communities throughout Pennsylvania. Our downtown Pittsburgh office is seeking up to four law students to serve as full-time volunteer interns this coming summer. Interns will work closely with experienced counsel and generally will conduct research, write memoranda, interview clients and participate in litigation tasks. Spanish proficiency is a plus but is not necessary. Visit our website for more details on the type of cases our firm handles.

3. **Disability Rights Pennsylvania:** [www.disabilityrightspa.org](http://www.disabilityrightspa.org)

Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP) is the statewide, non-profit, federally mandated Protection and Advocacy organization for Pennsylvania. As such, DRP is responsible to protect and advocate for the civil, legal, and human rights of individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. DRP works with people with disabilities, their families, and allies to ensure their rights to live in their communities with the services they need, to receive full and inclusive education, to live free of discrimination, abuse, and neglect, and to have control and self-determination over their services.

Student experiences and participation will vary based on the student's interests as well as DRP's current case load, litigation schedule, and need for broader advocacy support. Students can expect to engage in a variety of potential activities, including: conducting legal research, preparing draft court documents, reviewing discovery, attending client meetings, observing administrative hearings and other court proceedings, developing new publications for DRP's website, attending and helping to prepare materials for presentations, outreach events, and legislative visits, and participating in bi-weekly staff meetings in which a variety of legal issues and strategies are discussed.

4. **District Attorney's Office:** <http://www.da.allegheny.pa.us>

First, Second- and Third-year law students who work for the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office are exposed to a wide variety of opportunities and experiences in the field of criminal prosecution. All law students are involved in various and all aspects of trial, to include:

1. Legal research and writing (briefs, memoranda, pre- and post-trial motions, etc.)
2. Some clerical duties, copying, redacting, etc.
3. Assist attorneys in every aspect of trial and hearing preparation
4. Accompany attorneys to conduct plea negotiations, jury selections, pre-trial motions, and trials (jury and non-jury.)
5. Appear in court on behalf of the Commonwealth under the direct supervision of an Assistant District Attorney; this may include guilty pleas, suppression motions, and non-jury trials

In addition to the above, duly enrolled law students who have completed at least three (3) semesters of legal studies or the equivalent thereof and have been approved and certified under Pa.B.A.R. 321 and 322, are permitted, under the supervision of a licensed Attorney, to prosecute and litigate pre-trial motions and bench trials.

5. **Education Law Center (ELC):** <http://www.elc-pa.org>

The Education Law Center is dedicated to ensuring that all children in Pennsylvania have access to a quality public education. We pursue this mission on behalf of the most underserved students—children living in poverty, children of color, children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, children with disabilities, multilingual learners, LGBTQ+ students, and children experiencing homelessness. ELC has three priority program areas which often intersect: ensuring equal access to school, advocating for fair school funding, and dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline. ELC engages an array of strategies to fulfill our mission including policy advocacy, impact litigation, community engagement, and direct representation.

Summer Fellow responsibilities may include handling intake calls with clients, engaging in research and writing projects to support our policy advocacy, supporting case development and providing assistance with administrative complaints, participating in coalition building with other public interest

organizations and advocates, and supporting our rights-based trainings and outreach to students and families. Opportunities for court appearances are dependent on the cases that we have open or file during the summer. Summer Fellows may have the opportunity to participate in hearings, mediations, or settlement conferences on pending state court, federal court, or administrative complaints.

6. **Jewish Family & Community Services:** <http://www.jfcspgh.org/>

This program will provide an intensive, hands-on experience which will allow law students to work on many kinds of family-based, humanitarian and removal immigration cases. The students' tasks will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Refugee Green Cards & Citizenship applications: Assist individuals with applications for permanent residence or citizenship – requires working with the client or gathering documentation, drafting correspondence to USCIS or clients.
- Relative Petitions: These cases require attention to detail, research into marriage and divorce records, preparation of evidence to prove the bona fides of a relationship, sometimes research into types of DNA testing and deciding for testing in several countries.
- Victim's cases Including U visas T visas and VAWA: When non-citizens are victims of domestic violence or crimes there are protections and immigration remedies available for them. Work on these cases would be interviewing clients to determine circumstances and fact pattern, working on gathering documentation of abuse or crime, communication with prosecutors to establish cooperation and/or a law enforcement certification.
- Removal/Hardship Cases: These cases require a larger amount of time and resources. Work on these cases could include assisting a client with establishing proof of residency in the US for an extended period, or extreme hardship to a US Citizen or permanent resident family member. These cases often require research into country conditions, financial histories, and lots of brainstorming.
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status: when Unaccompanied minors are identified locally whether in detention or released from ORR Custody, we work with them to help identify relief available to prevent removal. The work on these cases often requires family court filings, asylum filings, removal proceedings representation and evidence gathering.

Educational aspects of the program:

- One-two week orientation and training, during which students/fellows are introduced to the fundamentals of Immigration Law, the software programs used daily, an in-depth cultural orientation training and client interviewing skills
- Weekly department staff meetings to discuss progress of different cases, brainstorm legal strategy issues and review goals on complicated cases

- Free attendance at many online CLEs and trainings as well as live CLEs sponsored by JFCS on various immigration topics
- Opportunity to attend USCIS interviews and Immigration Court hearings and dependency/confirmation of custody hearings on a semi-regular basis

At all times, interns/fellows will be supervised and trained by staff attorneys and accredited representatives at JFCS.

**a. John Meehan Citizenship Institute at Jewish Family & Community Services**

This fellowship will work both with applications for naturalization and issues involving unaccompanied immigrant children.

The fellow will assist individuals to file Form N-400, Application for Naturalization before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. This work would include assisting the clients to complete the application, obtain required supporting documentation and assist with fee waivers application when appropriate. Depending on the length of the process, the fellow could also assist the applicants to study for the test, attend the interviews with the clients at USCIS and the Naturalization Oath ceremonies.

The fellow will also assist with family court issues involving unaccompanied immigrant children after their release to a relative sponsor or foster family in Western Pennsylvania. The fellow would work with the child or guardian and the legal team to assist with the drafting of either a Confirmation of custody or Dependency petition. This petition would be filed in family or juvenile court (depending on the county) with a request for a hearing, and a request for an interpreter for the hearing. The fellow would oversee the translation of the document into the best language for the parents or other parties involved, oversee service on the defendants in the home country and potentially represent the child or guardian in family court through the process.

Educational aspects of the program include all opportunities offered to JFCS Summer Fellows.

7. **Juvenile Court Project**      <http://www.acbparentadvocates.org/>

The Juvenile Court Project (JCP) is a law office that provides legal representation of indigent parents in dependency and termination of parental rights cases in Allegheny County. The JCP is a charitable non-profit organization housed under the Allegheny County Bar Foundation and is funded by Allegheny County DHS.

Dependency petitions are filed primarily by Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families (CYF) but can also be filed by private parties. A dependency petition can include allegations against parents and/or allegations against children. Typically, the allegations against parents involve parental neglect and/or abuse while the allegations against children involve incorrigibility and/or truancy. The Juvenile Act provides a right to counsel for parents in dependency proceedings. Good quality legal representation for parents is critical to ensuring that families are reunited whenever possible and to otherwise ensuring the best possible outcomes for parents, children and families.

The Summer Fellows intern will be assigned to work with a JCP staff attorney and will be able to participate in the legal representation of clients. They will be able to observe and engage in all aspects of preparing for a hearing, conducting a hearing and recording the results of a hearing. They will get the opportunity to review pleadings, expert reports and other documents, as well as, interview clients and witnesses, prepare subpoenas, draft motions, write letters and document the client case files. Additionally, they will get the opportunity to attend different types of hearings and case meetings. There may also be the potential to do some legal research or otherwise assist in the preparation of a client appeal.

8. **KidsVoice:** <http://www.kidsvoice.org>

KidsVoice, a 501(c)(3) organization, provides legal representation to 3,000 abused, neglected, and at-risk children each year. Law students in our summer internship program learn to holistically advocate for the safety and well-being of children in the community and in court. The core of the internship program is the successful training and supervision of our student interns, each of whom is mentored by one of our staff attorneys. Student interns will draw from our staff's wealth of experience to gain insight about the work and careers of child advocacy attorneys.

The KidsVoice Summer Internship Program begins with a training program designed to ensure that interns have the tools, knowledge, and resources to successfully advocate on behalf of our clients. Upon completion of the training program, each intern will be paired with an experienced mentor attorney. This attorney will guide the intern through case preparation and shadowing opportunities and supervise the intern's presentations in court.

The overall goal of the program is to provide a comprehensive and hands-on experience, with potential to be considered for future employment opportunities at KidsVoice. Some of our most successful interns have been hired as KidsVoice staff attorneys.

Pitt and Duquesne law students interested in KidsVoice as their selection for the Lawyers' Fund Fellowship Program must also commit to a one semester internship during the school year. (Please note that the Lawyers' Fund Fellowship only provides a stipend for the summer program. Students may receive internship class credit from their school for the additional semester commitment.)

9. **The Office of Conflict Counsel:**

The Allegheny County Office of Conflict Counsel is tasked by the Fifth Judicial District with handling court-appointments in criminal, delinquency, and dependency cases. The Criminal Division is assigned cases that constitute a conflict of interest for the Office of the Public Defender for preliminary hearings at Pittsburgh Municipal Court, cases listed for trial at the Court of Common Pleas, and cases that are pending an appeal before the Superior Court of Pennsylvania. The Delinquency Division is assigned cases that constitute a conflict of interest for the Office of the Public Defender where children are charged with crimes in delinquency petitions as well as Petitions for Transfer to Juvenile Court where children are charged as adults under Act 33. The Office also represents children that are the subject of an



involuntary commitment petition for drug and alcohol treatment under Act 53. The Dependency Division is assigned cases that constitute a conflict of interest for KidsVoice in representing children that have been adjudicated dependent as either guardians ad litem or counsel. The Office also handles Shelter proceedings as well as representing children during Termination of Parental Rights proceedings. Prospective interns could work in any of the divisions representing indigent clients.

10. **Office of Public Defender:** <http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/opd/about.aspx>

Summer Interns will be responsible for a variety of tasks in the Office of the Public Defender including filing court documents, making copies as needed, reviewing discovery materials and police reports, conducting research, preparing memos, assisting in drafting motions, as well as gaining some court room observation. Additionally, students who have completed their second year may be eligible to serve as a Certified Legal Intern. These students would then be able to assist at Preliminary Hearings in City Court with the advice of attorneys and the consent of the client. Once students are comfortable, we permit them to conduct the actual hearings (again, with client consent and an attorney standing by). We also engage our interns with formalized sit-down sessions in which we discuss the matters they are working on, as well as detail the various stages of the criminal justice system and our office's role at each stage. Interns will have mentors to assist with questions and facilitate assignments. Additionally, all interns will be supervised to ensure that assignments are appropriate for their skill set and knowledge base and to ensure that work is evenly divided.

11. **Pro Bono Center of Allegheny County Bar Foundation:** <http://www.pittsburghprobono.org>

The Pro Bono Center provides free legal services to individuals with low incomes seeking help with a variety of civil legal issues. The summer fellow will have the opportunity to work directly with clients and have regular court appearances in an intensive program focuses on areas of law typically faced by people with low incomes, including family law, housing, criminal records clearing, wills and other advanced planning documents, and more. Following training and under the supervision of Pro Bono Center staff attorneys, the summer fellow will work on divorce cases from intake to completion; represent victims of domestic violence at final protection from abuse hearings; and prepare pardon applications to clear criminal records, among other things. The summer fellow will hone writing skills through legal research, drafting correspondence, and submitting an article for publication in the ACBA Lawyers Journal. In addition to assisting clients, the summer fellow will also perform work typical to a non-profit legal services organization such as volunteer recognition and support, community outreach, and the annual ACBA Golf and Bocce Tournament. Because we are located within the offices of the Allegheny County Bar Association, the summer fellow will have numerous networking opportunities at ACBA committee meetings and events.

12. **Women's Center & Shelter:** <https://wcpittsburgh.org/what-we-do/programs-services/legal-advocacy/>

The Civil Law Project (“CLP”) of the Women’s Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh (“WC&S”) is one of several statewide civil legal aid programs that was established in 2001 and today is funded primarily through grants from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, VOCA, Pennsylvania IOLTA and the Allegheny County Bar Foundation. CLP advises and represents income eligible victims of domestic violence in their civil legal matters with priority given to a client’s safety, autonomy and restoration. CLP exists within a larger domestic violence agency, WC&S. CLP presently consists of a Chief Legal Officer, who oversees the entire legal department of WC&S; a Legal Director, who manages CLP and her own individual case load; three staff attorneys who provide extended representation in protection from abuse and complex family law matters, with one of the attorneys also providing specific advice and referrals for survivors of intimate partner violence who are refugees, immigrants and limited English-speaking persons; and two paralegals. Victims of domestic violence are referred to CLP from within WC&S as well as from the Court, private counsel and other community resources. To date, CLP has represented victims of intimate partner violence in over 8,000 civil legal cases with representation focused primarily in the area of family law.

A significant part of the fellowship work shall include review and drafting of pleadings, client and witness interviewing, case preparation, observation of court negotiations and hearings in family law cases, and legal representation to plaintiffs in Protection from Abuse proceedings. Additionally, a fellowship with CLP may include legal research, memo writing and protocol development on topics of federal, state or local domestic violence laws, policies and procedures.

CLP is seeking a second-year law student with a Supreme Court Certification and preferably completion of one legal research course. The student fellow will work directly under the supervising attorney who will offer constant guidance and who will provide on-going feedback and support to the student, which will include a formal evaluation and review at the end of the fellowship. The law student should be sensitive to issues of domestic violence and interested in improving the justice system’s response to domestic violence.

13. **Women’s Law Project:**     [www.womenslawproject.org](http://www.womenslawproject.org)

The Women’s Law Project is a small non-profit legal organization focusing on the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQ+ people in Pennsylvania. We are a leading voice in the fight for access to reproductive health care including abortion and contraception, improving institutional responses to all forms of violence against women including sexual assault and harassment, challenging sex and gender discrimination, and advocating for workplace equality and economic justice. In order to achieve these goals, we engage in high-impact litigation, free legal representation, policy advocacy, and community education. Our interns will do important legal work over the course of their tenure with us, providing them a solid foundation in public interest law. Interns will conduct legal research, draft briefs and memos, represent WLP at community meetings, speak with clients or potential clients, and develop public education materials.