

Post-Graduate Fellowships



Today's Reality

Today more than ever, many people whose lives could be most helped by access to legal services cannot afford them, creating a “justice gap.”

Fortunately, many of today's graduates hope to pursue public interest careers, and law school has provided them with the critical skills and tools needed to truly make a difference. But with nonprofit agencies facing increasingly reduced budgets, most cannot afford to add new attorneys, particularly entry-level attorneys with limited experience. State, local, and federal government agencies are experiencing similar budget constraints and workforce reductions.

Those who need help the most are not being served, and those who want to help are not being given the opportunity.

Northwestern Law is a leader in preparing students for public interest careers and pro bono work, with an unparalleled focus on the advancement of social justice. To help talented

Northwestern Law graduates launch public interest careers, the Law School awards fellowships in the amount of \$50,000, plus medical insurance coverage, to support one year of full-time service as a lawyer at a nonprofit or government agency. Our post-graduate fellows have worked for public defenders, legal aid clinics, district attorneys' offices, and nonprofit organizations like the ACLU and the Environmental Law and Policy Center.

In 2013, the post-graduate public interest fellowship program received a generous \$1,000,000 gift from Dan Pritzker (JD '86) and the Jay Pritzker Foundation, along with numerous matching gifts from loyal alumni. Securing philanthropic support to sustain the fellowship program is one of the Law School's top priorities.



Christina Law (JD '15)
Lawndale Christian Legal Center, Chicago

“Without a post-graduate fellowship, my life would be totally different. It did exactly what I think it was meant for, to get young lawyers, fresh graduates, in the door, and then spend a year learning and proving that they're indispensable to an organization, with the goal that the organization figures out a way to hire them. That's exactly what happened to me. And I would love for more people like me to be given that opportunity, because nonprofits like this one are so strapped for cash, we are only grant-based and private donation-based. We are always fundraising and always looking for ways to hire more staff. And so really this fellowship, for me and for the whole organization, provided a great opportunity. **It was really the only way that I could continue doing what I wanted to do here.**”

How It Works

Donors contribute a one-time gift of \$50,000 and the fellowship is named in honor of the donor, or a person of the donor's choosing. The Law School provides a \$10,000 match to fund fringe benefits. Third-year students identify host organizations in the government or nonprofit sector and participate in a competitive application process. Recipients are chosen, then donors and fellows are matched and given an opportunity to meet and stay connected.

In addition to helping graduating students and the underserved communities they'll represent, these fellowships demonstrate the Law School's commitment to public service and attract top service-minded talent.

Please consider a \$50,000 donation to support a one-year post-graduate fellowship. Make a difference in the life of one student so he or she can make a difference in the lives of many.

IMPACT OF POST-GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS: 2014-2017



1000s
of Clients Served



Jon DeLozano (JD '15)
Immigrants and Workers' Rights Practice Group at the
Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago

“**I grew up low income and by a series of lucky turns, I ended up fortunate enough to go to a good college and then to a good law school. And I wanted to be able to give something back.** LAF did not have any sort of entry level positions open when I started. You know, very few public interest law firms do. Receiving a fellowship definitely allowed me to put my foot in the door and get the position here. I will forever be grateful for that.”

LAF's mission is to fill in the gaps where the justice system has failed people. Our clients are always on the verge of financial ruin or collapse in some way. It makes every decision you make much more important. The consequences of suffering some sort of legal wrong are huge. Without a lawyer to help you through that process, you're out of luck. I think of legal services as an engine of self-improvement. It's a way for people to get themselves on their feet. If they've lost something because of a legal wrong, it gets them back to where they were. It gives them a way to get a leg up on moving forward. **It helps people feel empowered and like they're a part of society.**”

For more information, please contact
Alan Paberzs, Director of Development, Bluhm Legal Clinic, 312.503.0707 or a-paberzs@law.northwestern.edu.