

Legal Fellowship Sponsorship – Updated 5-29-2020

About the Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC)

The Legal Aid Justice Center is a nationally recognized, non-profit organization that partners with communities and clients to achieve justice by dismantling the systems that create and perpetuate poverty. Justice means racial justice, economic justice, and social justice.

From its offices in Charlottesville, Richmond, Petersburg, and Falls Church, LAJC is a fierce advocate for low-income clients and communities in Central and Northern Virginia, and its work broadly impacts the entire state. Just in the past year, our team of attorneys and organizers won a class-wide injunction ordering healthcare reforms in a women's prison, secured a national settlement providing new avenues for relief to over 400 traumatized asylum-seekers whose children were taken from them at the border, worked successfully in partnership with community leaders to demand police accountability, and won major legislative reforms regulating school policing.

Founded in 1967, LAJC provides services under four key program areas: Civil Rights & Racial Justice, Economic Justice, JustChildren, and Immigrant Advocacy. LAJC boldly tackles issues of systemic injustice and aims to raise public and policymaker awareness of some of the most pressing challenges facing low-income Virginia residents. For more information, visit www.justice4all.org.

About the Position

LAJC is seeking to host one or more recent law graduates as public service fellows in one of our three main offices in Virginia (Richmond, Falls Church, or Charlottesville.) Fellowship candidates must be rising third-year law students, third-year law students, or recent law school graduates, with a demonstrated record of public service and a willingness to apply for public interest legal fellowships. This position depends on the candidate obtaining fellowship funding from a private funding entity in partnership with LAJC.

The position also depends on the scope and requirements of the funding. In addition to serving clients with their legal needs, past fellows have had the opportunity to assist with clinical supervision, staff high impact cases with nationwide implications, engage in strategic community organizing, and participate in legislative and other policy advocacy.

Depending on individual interest and location preference, the fellow is encouraged to express interest in or submit a proposal that aligns with LAJC's current priorities within the following legal programs:

Civil Rights and Racial Justice:

- Working alongside community members to expand access to expungement through individual representation, monitoring implementation of any General Assembly 2021 legislation, and administrative and legislative advocacy for substantive expansion of expungement as well as long-term automation.
- Developing multi-pronged campaigns, using community lawyering, legislative and localized advocacy, as well as litigation, to pivot victories of jail and prison

population decreases during COVID-19 pandemic to long-term de-incarceration work.

Economic Justice:

- Using a community lawyering model to support housing work in the Charlottesville area, with a lens on monitoring redevelopment and holding city council accountable around committing greater resources to housing needs.
- Supporting Charlottesville's Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR) to creatively leverage partnerships with community members and local stakeholders.

Immigration Advocacy:

- Implementing the new worker-friendly state laws, particularly the quasi class-action mechanism under the Wage Payment Act.
- Working with community members to gather facts to develop cases that have precedential value under the Wage Payment Act.

JustChildren:

- Developing a youth justice project with a focus on juvenile detention and probation, utilizing a community lawyering and youth organizing approach.
- Planning an education project with a focus on restorative practices, alternative education, or COVID-19 response to various barriers to access to an adequate education, including services to students with disabilities and special education needs.

This position ultimately entails carrying out the work as proposed in the candidate's fellowship application according to the terms of the fellowship, along with meeting all of the other requirements of the fellowship.

Therefore, applicants should view this position as a three-part process. First, selected applicants will work with LAJC to develop their fellowship application materials, usually requiring the applicant to describe the work they aim to undertake at LAJC through the fellowship. This phase of the process is an ongoing conversation between the applicant and members of LAJC's leadership team wherein the applicant describes the structure and mechanics for their proposed work, and receives feedback from LAJC based on its needs and the dynamics of the issue(s) the work aims to address. Second, upon reaching consensus as to the project proposal, the applicant with LAJC support prepares and submits the required materials to one or more public interest law fellowship funding entities for review. LAJC and the applicant maintain their relationship throughout this second application phase so that LAJC can continue to support the applicant's candidacy for this outside funding. Finally, if the applicant receives funding then the applicant carries out the fellowship with LAJC for its duration.

**Required
Credentials**

- Rising third-year law student, third-year law student, or recent law graduate
- Strong commitment to public interest work
- Mission-aligned experience (work, volunteer, or lived) partnering with and advocating in low-wealth communities and communities of color
- Outstanding oral advocacy, research, writing, organizational, and leadership skills

- Ability to work effectively both independently and collaboratively
- Commitment to taking and passing the Virginia Bar Exam and fulfilling all of the other requirements for licensure as an attorney in Virginia
- Dedication to working in and sustaining an environment that enables staff members and clients to feel empowered, valued, respected and safe
- Willingness to partner with Legal Aid Justice Center to apply for public interest legal fellowship opportunities
- For applicants interested in working in Falls Church or within the Immigrant Advocacy Program, Spanish proficiency is highly preferred

Location

- Economic Justice Program: all offices
- Immigrant Advocacy Program: all offices
- JustChildren Program: Richmond or Charlottesville
- Civil Rights and Racial Justice Program: Richmond or Charlottesville

Start Date

Depends on the terms of the fellowship, but usually in Fall after the fellowship has been awarded. LAJC expects this class of fellowship sponsorship candidates to begin Fall 2021.

Benefits

Salary and benefits depend on the terms of the fellowship.

Application Instructions

The application has three components: (1) a cover letter, (2) a resume, and (3) a statement of interest. The statement of interest is a description of the work the applicant aims to undertake at LAJC through a fellowship. This description should be no more than one page in length, single spaced, and using 12-point font and 1-inch margins. LAJC appreciates detailed responses as to the scope and mechanics of your proposal but also values brevity and efficiency. To the degree possible, the applicant should please specify the LAJC legal program (Economic Justice, Immigrant Advocacy, Civil Rights and Racial Justice, or JustChildren) that best aligns with the proposal.

Applicants should please email these materials to fellowships@justice4all.org at fellowships@justice4all.org.

LAJC is accepting applications through **Tuesday, June 30, 2020**.

Applicants should please forward any questions to Sylvia Jones at sylvia@justice4all.org or (804) 521-7305.

The Legal Aid Justice Center is an equal opportunity employer, committed to inclusive hiring and dedicated to diversity in our work and staff. We strongly encourage candidates of all identities, experiences, and communities to apply. The Legal Aid Justice Center is committed to strengthening the voices of our low-income clients, working in collaboration with community partners, and rooting out the inequities that keep people in poverty. We strive to take on the issues that have broad impact on our client communities and to be responsive to client input. Recognizing the particular impact of racism on our clients and staff, we devote special attention to dismantling racial injustice. All applicants must be dedicated to working in and sustaining an environment that enables staff and clients to feel empowered, valued, respected, and safe. In reviewing applications, we look for evidence that applicants have experience and/or thoughtfulness in working with traditionally marginalized populations.