

LEGAL FELLOWSHIP SPONSORSHIP

Legal Aid Justice Center

About the Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC)

The Legal Aid Justice Center is a nationally recognized nonprofit 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 Virginia. Just in the past year, we permanently repealed Virginia's driver's license suspension for court debt scheme, secured an injunction slashing the number of immigrants detained by ICE at the largest detention center in the Mid-Atlantic and passed a law giving Virginia oversight authority, won the nation's first COVID-specific, statewide, and enforceable workplace safety standards, passed legislation enabling communities to set up civilian oversight for law enforcement, and decriminalized school-based disorderly conduct, which was a leading contributor to the school-to-prison pipeline, especially for Black students.

Founded in 1967, LAJC provides services under four key program areas: Civil Rights & Racial Justice, Economic Justice, Youth Justice, 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 may work on one or several of various poverty law issues, such as: access to public benefits; housing access and affordability; consumer protection; workers' rights; healthcare and rights of people with disabilities; immigrants' rights; access to education and civil rights enforcement in schools; children's mental health rights; juvenile legal system involvement and the rights of incarcerated children; and the criminalization of poverty through policies and practices that

target people because of poverty and race. However, the 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 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 Qualifications

- 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 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 or other high demand language proficiency is highly preferred

Location

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

Application Deadline

We will review applications on a rolling basis through **June 1, 2022**.

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 2023.

Benefits

Starting salary and benefits are aligned with LAJC's salary scale starting at \$55,000 for fellows who are employees at LAJC. Our mission is compelling, and our team members are passionate about their work, and so we recognize the need to provide generous benefits and encourage rest and a healthy work environment. For example, we provide:

- Generous paid time off every year, including 3 to 6 weeks of vacation, 12 days of health leave, 6 weeks parental leave, and 14 holidays (not including bonus holidays/rest days allocated as needed)
- 100% employer paid health, dental, and vision insurance, plus excellent family insurance with annual max of \$2,400 premium contribution to LAJC-sponsored health plan
- 403(b) retirement plan with 4% employer contribution (no required match)
- Strong commitment to professional development
- Law school loan repayment assistance and full reimbursement for VA bar and CLE expenses
- Relocation package

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 Youth Justice) that best aligns with the proposal.

Please email these materials to nady@justice4all.org.

Applicants should please forward any questions to Nady Peralta at nady@justice4all.org or (703) 720-5603.

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.