

Finding & Funding Public Interest Work

Finding a Public Interest Law Clerk Job

Although many public interest employers post in our student job postings, most do not and prefer that interested students contact them about potential opportunities. Here are some ideas for locating a public interest position:

- Pick up a copy of our *Green Book*, which contains listings and descriptions of non-profit and governmental legal employers in Oregon and Washington.
- Check out PSJD, a national database of public service employers: www.psjd.org.
- Discuss your interests with a career counselor; they may be able to suggest organizations or alums.
- Volunteer; often, volunteering can lead to an ongoing law clerk position. Contact the Director of Public Interest Law for more information: wepenn@lclark.edu
- Apply through the NW Public Service Career Fairs held in February. Portland, Seattle, and national public service offices recruit here and in Seattle. Applications due in January. www.nwpifair.org
- Review state or local Bar Association websites. The Oregon State Bar website (www.osbar.org) lists pro bono opportunities for attorneys; many of those organizations accept law student volunteers or clerks.
- Ask other students what public interest organizations they have clerked for.
- Visit the Pro Bono Windows of Opportunity outside our office.
- Help PILP. The Public Interest Law Project fundraises for stipends given to students with summer public interest work. PILP has a list of prior hosts: law.lclark.edu/student_groups/public_interest_law_project/.
- Review the Externship page: law.lclark.edu/offices/career_services/externships/ Employers who have taken unpaid externs may be willing to employ a law clerk
- Attend panels and programs that include public interest attorneys. Introduce yourself and ask about any clerking opportunities with their organization or with other employers in the same field.
- Go to the Equal Justice Works Career Fair. In October, Equal Justice Works holds a career fair in the DC area. Nonprofits and governmental offices search for school-year and summer externs and clerks. Applications due in September. www.equaljusticeworks.org

Funding a Public Interest Law Clerk Job

Although many public interest employers welcome law student involvement, but many cannot afford to pay a law clerk and will expect you to “bring your own funding”.* There are several funding options to explore, including:

- Work Study – Provides partial funding for eligible government and non-profit legal employers to hire paid law clerks. To receive Work Study funding, students must financially qualify, and the employers must be awarded a contracts. See Chapter 8 in our Handbook.
- PILP Stipends – Funds students to do summer work at public interest organizations. PILP hosts an annual auction to raise funds and award 15-20 summer stipends. The application deadline is usually in March. law.lclark.edu/student_groups/public_interest_law_project
- Equal Justice Works Summer Corps – Awards \$1,000+ education awards for students working in the public interest. A Summer Corps award can be in addition to other sources of funding like work study or a stipend. www.equaljusticeworks.org
- PSJD – Provides a web page listing various funders across the US. www.psjd.org
- Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) – Provides summer funding for law students working at Chicago public interest organizations. www.pili-law.org.

- Haywood Burns Memorial Fellowships for Social Justice – The National Lawyer’s Guild awards \$2,000 stipends for ten weeks work at over 20 organizations across the country www.nlg.org
- Peggy Browning Fund – Provides summer funding for students interested in working on workers’ rights issues. (Lewis & Clark is a member school). www.peggybrowningfund.org/.
- Summer Externships – Provides school credit for full-time work unlocking summer financial aid. Available to students the summer after their 1L or 2L year or during their 2L and 3L year.
- Law Firm Split Summer – Allows clerks to split their summer between firm work and public interest work. Some firms have formal programs with specific organizations and others allow students to develop their own plan. Students should confirm with their firm employer that they allow for split summers.

**Although many of the listed stipends and fellowships are not awarded until late spring, they may have late fall or early spring deadlines. Check resources early (and often) to make sure you do not miss a good opportunity!*