



Southwestern Summer Public Interest Law Grant – 2018

Southwestern's Summer Public Interest Law Grant was established in 1990 with the mission of providing a monetary award to students who seek a summer law clerkship with a nonprofit organization that provides free or low-cost legal assistance to low-income or marginalized individuals or underserved communities. Nonprofit organizations are agencies that qualify for tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3).

Students who seek a summer law clerkship with a local, state or federal government agency are also eligible to apply for a grant. This includes the Public Defender's Office and the District Attorney's Office. As part of the application, students must demonstrate that the summer clerkship is consistent with the mission of Southwestern's Public Interest Law Grant and merits funding as a public interest law position.

Application Process

To apply for a Southwestern Summer Public Interest Law Grant, you must **electronically** submit your application and resume through the following link:

<https://www.formstack.com/forms/southwesternlaw-grant>

Handwritten or paper applications will not be accepted.

Upon successfully submitting your application, you will receive an auto-generated email to confirm the receipt of your application. If you do not receive confirmation, please contact the Financial Aid Office.

The application deadline is **Monday, February 26, 2018 by 5 pm**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can I find a list of public interest organizations?

The **Career Services Office** posts opportunities on Symplicity. They also post flyers in the glass case next to their office. CSO is hosting an employer fair on October 19, 2017 where public interest organizations will share a range of opportunities with law students. The Career Services Office maintains a *Guide to Public Interest Organizations* year round. It is available in hard copy and on the Southwestern student portal.

The **Externship Office** posts public interest placement information on the Southwestern website and has information available in their office. They are hosting their annual Julia Mason Externship Open Forum on January 11, 2018 where both public interest and government organizations are invited to share opportunities with law students.

The **Public Service Program** lists volunteer opportunities at various public interest organizations on the "Southwestern Public Service Program" TWEN page, and information is available in the reception area of the **Legal Clinic Office**, W408 (4th Floor Westmoreland Building).

If in doubt, students are responsible for checking with the above offices or the Financial Aid Office to make sure that the organization is an eligible agency.

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in the Southern California Public Interest & Government/Public Sector Career Day at UCLA. The event is on February 10, 2018.

2. Do I need to apply for a summer law clerkship with an agency or organization before submitting my Southwestern grant application?

Yes. You must have applied to at least one agency or organization for a summer law clerkship before submitting a grant application.

3. Must I have an offer for a summer law clerkship from the agency or organization to be eligible for a grant?

No. You are not required to have an offer from the agency or organization, but it is an **important factor** in the selection process. If you receive an offer after you submitted your application, you must promptly notify the Financial Aid Office at finaid@swlaw.edu and request that this information be added to your application so the committee can be aware of your offer and acceptance.

4. What can I do to increase my chances of being awarded a Public Interest Law Grant?

The Public Interest Law Committee takes into account: whether an applicant participated in **fundraising activities for the Summer Public Interest Law Grant**; the applicant's public interest **experience**; the applicant's demonstrated **commitment** to public service; whether the applicant has **interviewed** for a qualifying public interest summer clerkship and whether the applicant has received a **placement offer**; and **whether the position is consistent with the mission of Southwestern's Public Interest Law Grant and merits funding as a public interest law position.**

5. How much is the Public Interest Law Grant?

If you are eligible for Federal Work Study funds, the Public Interest Law Grant will likely be approximately \$5,000. Please note your award will be considered taxable income and you will receive a W2 at the end of the year.

If you are not eligible for Federal Work Study funds, the Public Interest Law Grant will likely be approximately \$5,000. Please note your award will be considered taxable income and you will receive a Form 1099 at the end of the year.

If you are eligible to apply and are selected to participate in the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorpsJD program, please notify Financial Aid so your grant amount can be reduced to enable you to be eligible to receive funds through both opportunities.

6. How many hours and weeks must I work?

You must work **full-time**. The specific number of hours and weeks depends on the agency. Most agencies require that you work **35-40 hours** a week for a period of **10 weeks**. In addition, you must comply with your financial aid contract.

7. When will I be notified if I am awarded a Public Interest Law Grant?

Applicants will be notified of a decision by **the end of March**. Students selected must accept the Public Interest Law Grant award offer within 14 calendar days of notification. Students must communicate their acceptance in writing by sending an e-mail to the Financial Aid Office at finaid@swlaw.edu. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the award.

If you accept the grant but later decide to decline it, you must immediately notify the Financial Aid office. Failure to act will negatively impact your future grant applications.

The Financial Aid Office will notify students who are placed on a wait list if they are able to receive the award.

8. How will this grant affect my prospects for a post-graduate public interest fellowship?

Receiving a Summer Public Interest Law Grant may be an ideal opportunity to develop a project idea in collaboration with your agency or organization, and to request that your agency or organization serve as your host organization, for a post-graduate fellowship. The **Career Services Office** is available to meet with you to discuss fellowship opportunities and planning.

9. If I am awarded a Summer Public Interest Law Grant, what else do I have to do?

Students who are awarded a Summer Public Interest Law Grant are expected to support Public Interest Law Committee events during the summer and during the upcoming academic year. This includes helping with fundraising efforts.

Student recipients represent Southwestern Law School. Students should act as professionals starting with the application process and through their summer placement.

If a student rescinds his/her acceptance of an offer, the student must meet with a PILC faculty member, Career Services Office and/or the Financial Aid office.

10. Can I also receive school credit?

Students may receive externship school credit for public interest and public sector externships for which the student also receives a Public Interest Law Grant (and other grants) or scholarship.

For details, please see the Externship Policies and Guidelines, specifically section C. (<https://swlawportal.swlaw.edu/explearnng/externships/Documents/Externship%20Policies%20Guidelines,%20March%202017.pdf>). Please note you will need to be approved for the externship course and register for the course through the Externship Office.

Sample list of Southern California nonprofit organizations and agencies*

*This is not an exhaustive list, but rather, a guide to help you with your search.

- Alliance for Children's Rights
- American Civil Liberties Union
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
- Bet Tzedek Legal Services
- California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.
- California Women's Law Center
- Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc.
- Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
- Children's Law Center of California
- Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking
- Disability Rights California
- Disability Rights Legal Center
- El Rescate
- Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law
- Human Rights Watch
- Immigration Center for Women and Children
- Inland Empire Latino Lawyers Association, Inc.
- Inner City Law Center
- Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice
- Learning Rights Law Center
- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
- Levitt & Quinn Family Law Center
- Los Angeles County Bar Association Counsel for Justice Projects
- Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers, Inc.
- Mental Health Advocacy Services
- National Health Law Program
- National Lawyers Guild
- Neighborhood Legal Services
- Public Counsel