

“Postgraduate Legal Fellowships: Setting Students Up for Success”

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Different Types of Postgraduate Legal Fellowships

The term “fellowship” is used by different programs and organizations to describe opportunities, but generally, legal fellowships: (1) are short-term opportunities; (2) provide fellows the opportunity to help underrepresented populations and/or work on specific legal issues within a community; (3) focus on helping the individual grow professionally; and (4) are funded by a specific association or organization.

According to the [NALP PSJD “Postgraduate Fellowship Primer,”](#) the types of fellowships that exist are:

- **Project-Based and Entrepreneurial**
 - This fellowship requires applicants to create a fellowship project in collaboration with a legal aid organization to help address an unmet legal need in the area/region where the organization serves.
- **Organizational**
 - This fellowship is created by an organization and does not require applicants to design a project. Students typically apply to these opportunities as they would for other positions there.
- **Teaching**
 - This fellowship allows individuals the opportunity to gain experience teaching in a law clinic or working on legal research projects.
- **International**
 - This fellowship provides students the opportunity to work on international issues in the United States and abroad.
- **Firm-Sponsored Public Interest/Pro Bono**
 - This fellowship is a position within a law firm that can either be fully at the law firm or split between the firm and a designated non-profit organization.

Examples of fellowship opportunities, and more resources related to them, can be found on PSJD here: https://www.psjd.org/Postgraduate_Fellowship_Primer

Fellowship Advising Checklist

Task	Things to Consider
Educating students on different types of postgraduate legal fellowship opportunities	• Start as early as possible – it's never too soon to get legal fellowships on students' radars • Are there organizations in your area that typically host fellows or have fellowship programs that you can highlight?
Helping a student find the right fellowship(s) for them	• What research have they done before coming to you? What follow-up work do they need to do after meeting with you (this could vary depending on which year of law school they're in when they reach out to you)? • What are their career goals and how can this fellowship help them get there? • If they need to reach out to an organization for their fellowship, what information do they need? When should they begin that process to ensure they'll be ready before the application deadline?
Creating a planning and application timeline with a student	• What materials are needed for the fellowship(s) the student would like to apply to? Do they know the application requirements for each fellowship they're considering? • When should the student send you a draft of their application materials so that you have the proper time to review it before the deadline? • What other deadlines should be taken into consideration (e.g. finals, other job applications) to make sure the student is on track to submit everything by the deadline?
Checking in on a student during the application process	• Are regular check-ins necessary? If so, what would be the preferred format (email correspondence, scheduling an advising appointment, etc.)? • Do they have all the required documents or are they in the process of getting the documents (e.g. if they need a letter of recommendation, have they reached out to someone)?

	• If applying for a project-based fellowship, has the student asked their host organization to review it?
Reviewing a student's application	• Do they have a review team in place to help them make edits along the way? • Have they asked a friend to take a look at it with "fresh eyes" (i.e. have they had someone read their application who hasn't been involved in the application process the whole time)? • Are there any grammatical errors? Does their writing make sense to someone who is seeing it for the first time?
Advising/Supporting the student after the application has been submitted	• What other opportunities are they looking to apply to outside of a postgraduate fellowship? What support do they need for those other applications?
Preparing a student for a fellowship interview	• What will the interview format be? Panel or individual? Virtual or in-person? • If it's a panel interview, who could be brought in to help fill out the mock panel? Other CSO/CDO team members? Faculty? Alumni (either law school alumni or alumni from that fellowship)? • Can the student explain why they want to participate in this fellowship? If applying to a project-based fellowship, can they describe their project in a clear way?

Please Note: This resource is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all the things to consider as you support a student who is applying for a postgraduate legal fellowship. It is meant to be used as a starting point for those who are building out or reviewing their advising process and timeline.