PUBLIC INTEREST JOBS, FUNDING, AND FELLOWSHIPS
Funding for Summer Public Interest Jobs in the United States

Boston College Law School encourages all its students to take advantage of the opportunity to develop their legal skills and contribute to their community by working in the public interest during the summer months. The Law School is aware that the vast majority of non-profit organizations and government agencies are unable to pay law students for summer work. In recognition of (a) the professional value of the experience, (b) the social value of the work, and (c) the reality that most students have to have some source of summer income, Boston College Law School offers a summer stipend program for students working in the public interest. In collaboration with student organizations, alumni contributors and the federal government, the Law School funds students each summer through several different funding programs.

The maximum summer stipend amount is set for all Boston College students by the University. At present, the maximum amount is $4,000, which must be earned working full-time, over ten to twelve weeks. As a mandatory prerequisite for applying for any of the summer stipend programs described below, you must apply by the announced deadline for federal work-study for the summer. You must apply, even if you believe you are not eligible. Many more students will qualify for summer funding than can qualify for term-time funding, so students who think they are not eligible are often surprised to find they do receive a summer work-study award. In order to stretch the summer funding as far as possible, it is critical that everyone who can qualify for work-study, do so. If you do not apply for summer federal work-study, and are turned down, you may still apply for a summer stipend. However, if you do not apply for summer federal work-study, you will not be considered for a summer stipend at all. The deadline for applying for summer federal work-study is announced and widely publicized at the end of the first semester, and the instructions are distributed to each student through e-mail.

Non-profit organizations and government agencies are eligible federal work-study employers. (Private firms, even if they primarily do public interest work, are not eligible.) In order to hire a work-study student, the federal government requires an eligible employer to pay approximately one-third of the total stipend (including FICA) for the student, and the federal work-study program then picks up the rest of the cost. As noted above, most of the eligible employers are unable to pay the required employer's portion of the work-study funding. This is where the various funding programs described below come into the picture. Students submit an application to the appropriate program or programs. For each student whose job is chosen for funding, the program provides the employer's portion (approximately $1,706) of the federal work-study money.

The application process and forms for each of the funding sources described below are explained and distributed at the program on Summer Funding held early in January. For further information, contact Career Services.

Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF) Summer Stipends

The Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF) is a student organization committed to supporting students who are interested in public interest work. The Summer Stipend Program provides students with financial assistance to pursue public interest work during the summer. All law students who are interested in public interest legal work are eligible to apply for a PILF grant. PILF construes the definition of public interest legal work as broadly as possible in order to give applicants the opportunity to demonstrate how their employers and their particular position will benefit the public interest. PILF has funded positions with government agencies, non-profit organizations, state and federal prosecutors, public defender offices and judicial internships.

Funding for PILF summer stipends comes from a variety of sources - PILF fundraising, The Law School Fund, and outside funding sources.

The student-run PILF is committed to raising funds to support students who are committed to public interest law. With its annual auction, its Work-a-Day campaign and other fundraising efforts, PILF raises a substantial amount of money each year. The majority of the money raised goes to provide summer stipends.

In addition to the money PILF raises and the Law School Fund contributes, PILF also
distributes funding from alumni donors who provide summer work-study stipends for students who work in particular areas of public interest.

Applications are due towards the middle of the second semester. To apply for PILF funding, an applicant does not have to have a job offer, but does have to have an interview for the position scheduled. Applicants may submit more than one application. Applicants who have applied for federal work-study but who did not qualify may, at PILF’s discretion, be considered for a grant up to an amount equivalent to the employer’s share of a work-study stipend.

Bingham Summer Fellows/Curtin Summer Fellows

John J. “Jack” Curtain, Class of ’54, a triple eagle and a retired partner at Bingham McCutchen, has donated the funding for summer work-study stipends. In honor of his tenure at the firm, Bingham McCutchen donated funding for additional stipends. Bingham/Curtin Summer Fellows are J1s who have been approved for PILF funding, are doing public interest work in Boston. They are matched with mentors at the law firm and are invited to social events during the summer. Bingham/Curtin Fellows are chosen in consultation with Bingham McCutchen and Jack Curtain as necessary.

Employment at the Law School

Each summer, there are a number of federal work-study opportunities to work as a research assistant to a professor. You must have applied for and been granted summer work-study to be paid for these positions. If you obtain one of these positions, you will not need a PILF summer stipend, as the Law School itself pays the employer portion of the stipend for these jobs.

FUNDING FOR SUMMER PUBLIC INTEREST JOBS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Federal summer work-study funding may not be used for employment outside the United States. The Law School has some limited funding available for students who want to work in public interest jobs located in foreign countries.

PILF Summer Stipend

Any student who is planning to apply for funding for a position in a country outside the United States should also apply to PILF. On a case-by-case basis, PILF may choose to provide funding for these positions. In the past, PILF has agreed to pay an equivalent amount to an employer’s share of a federal work-study stipend directly to a student doing public interest work outside the United States.

Owen Kupferschmid – Holocaust/Human Rights Project Funding

This family-endowed fund in honor of our distinguished alumnus funds 1L and 2L summer projects in support of human rights. Preference is given to international work, with a particular interest in work focused on legal accountability for individuals responsible for state-sponsored or state-supported human rights abuses. Grants from this fund vary in size and are intended to cover out-of-pocket travel and living expenses.

SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN ASSISTANCE

Thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends of the Law School, the Law School offers the following scholarships and loan repayment assistance to current students and graduates. Many of these programs are intended to assist those students and graduates pursuing a career in the public interest.

SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS

James A. and Lois Champy Fellowship Program. Thanks to the generous contribution of Lois and James Champy (BC Law ’68) the Champy Fellowship Program provides financial support to an outstanding second-year student who has demonstrated the intention and ability to work in the public interest and who is in need of financial assistance. Any second-year student pursuing a public interest career is eligible to apply. Preference will be given to students...
providing direct legal services to the disadvantaged and/or working in civil or human rights. The Champy Fellow receives a scholarship in two disbursements during the third year of law school, which is to be used to pay educational expenses.

THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS
The Drinan Family Fund in Support of Public Interest Law. Anonymous donors created the Drinan Family Fund in Support of Public Interest Law to encourage Boston College Law School students to pursue public interest careers. The fund provides an award to a graduating student who will pursue a public sector career. The award is to be applied solely to indebtedness incurred for legal education and may be renewed for one year if the recipient remains in public interest employment and fulfills the other conditions of the award. Any third year student who is pursuing a public sector career is eligible. Preference will be given to candidates whose employment is in one of the following areas: child advocacy, landlord/tenant issues, criminal defense or criminal prosecution. Consideration will also be given to the level of indebtedness of the students.

Edward T. Bigham, III, Scholarship. The Edward T. Bigham, III, Scholarship was established in memory of Edward T. Bigham, III, (BC ’75, BC Law ’78), who served as an Assistant District Attorney for Middlesex County in Massachusetts. The scholarship is awarded to an outstanding third-year student who intends to pursue a career as a district attorney.

The David H. and Mary Murphy Posner Law Scholarship; The Robert S. Pitcoff Memorial Scholarship; The Keefe Family Scholarship. These three scholarships are for current third-year students who have a demonstrated interest in pursuing a career in the public sector.

THE FRANCIS X. BELLOTTI LOAN REPAYMENT AND FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

The Francis X. Bellotti Loan Repayment and Forgiveness Program (Bellotti LRP) supports recent Boston College Law School graduates in law-related public interest careers by assisting them in the repayment of their educational debt. The awards are renewable annually. Recipients are determined by a Dean-appointed committee.

Guidelines and Process
A. General Description of the Program
The goal of the Bellotti LRP Program is to encourage Boston College Law School graduates to pursue public interest careers. The fund does so by offering loans that are subject to cancellation if qualifying conditions are met. As a condition of the award, Bellotti LRP recipients must provide the law school with a commitment letter and promissory note affirming:

- The intent to remain in a law-related public interest position for the full year of the award;
- A promise to repay the award should they not remain in a law-related public interest position for a minimum of nine months of that year, or if they fail to meet any other conditions of the award for that year, and
- That the awards received from the Bellotti LRP program will be used solely for the repayment of law school educational debt and for no other purpose.

The Committee shall determine annually the award recipients and the amount of each award. These determinations are based on:

- The funds available to the Committee,
- The number of qualified Bellotti LRP applicants,
- The type of employment,
- The relationship of each applicant’s salary to educational debt, and
- All information contained on the application form.

In keeping with Bellotti LRP Program’s goal to support a variety of careers in public interest, the Committee may need to cap awards each year in order to assist as many candidates as possible. They may also decide to give awards of varying amounts. In recent years, annual awards ranged from $500 to $7,000.

B. Eligibility Guidelines
In order to be considered for the Bellotti Program, first-time applicants must have graduated with a J.D. from Boston College Law School within the past five years and be
employed on a full-time basis in a public interest job earning $60,500 or less. Part-time employment will be considered on a pro-rated basis, if funds allow. Applicants remain eligible in subsequent years until their earnings reach $65,000.

Graders employed in the following categories or sectors are not eligible to apply for the award:

- Graduates employed in judicial clerkships of any type, including but not limited to staff attorney positions and judicial fellowships.
- Graduates employed in academic teaching, research, or clinical fellowship positions.
- Graduates employed in short-term positions of less than one year.
- Graduates volunteering without pay.
- Graduates who have accepted an offer from a firm, regardless of start date.

Graduates who may be ineligible now will still be eligible to apply to the Bellotti program if they become employed in a qualified law-related public interest position within five years of graduation.

Applicants must also meet the following criteria:

1. **Employment must be in a Public Interest Organization**

   To be eligible for a Bellotti LRAP award, the applicant’s employment must be in a public interest organization. Three broad categories of employment meet this criterion and applicants will be considered in the following descending order of priority:

   - The first category is employment with organizations that provide direct legal services to clients who are indigent and/or members of traditionally underrepresented groups. These organizations may be private, non-profit entities or government entities. Examples of such organizations include, but are not limited to, legal services corporations and public defenders’ offices.
   - The second category is private, non-profit employers. Examples of such employers include, but are not limited to, private organizations with a “501(c)(3)” or “501(c)(4)” tax exempt status, such as the ACLU and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.
   - The third category is state, municipal or federal government agencies (other than those listed in the exclusion section). Examples of agencies that qualify as public interest employment include, but are not limited to, district attorney offices and attorney general offices.

2. **Employment Must be Law Related**

   Applicants must provide documentation that their employment duties are “law related.” At the time of application, candidates will be asked to submit a letter from their employer that describes the terms of the employment offer and description of the duties and salary.

3. **Financial Status**

   Candidates for the Bellotti LRAP Program must agree to:

   - Apply Bellotti LRAP financial awards directly to their educational loans, and
   - Provide the Committee with a completed Application Form together with copies of their annual tax forms and loan statements.

In addition, candidates are strongly encouraged to consolidate their eligible educational loans for the maximum period of time for which they are eligible, and to provide evidence of such consolidation where requested on the Bellotti LRAP loan repayment assistance application form. Awards may be reduced if candidates have not consolidated their eligible loans for the maximum period of time.

**C. Application Deadline**

To be eligible for a Bellotti LRAP award for the next calendar year, the applicant must submit an application for receipt by the deadline, typically December 1st to:

Boston College Law School
Office of Admissions and Financial Aid
Attn: Loan Repayment Assistance Program
885 Centre Street
Newton, MA 02459

**Fellowships**

Post-graduate fellowships are a great way to begin a career in public interest and to develop your expertise as a new attorney. Post-graduate fellowships are positions with time-limited funding. They may be one year positions with a second year option. Depending on financing, it is not unusual for fellows to make the transition to permanent staff at the end of the fellowship.
Generally speaking, a fellowship will either be: (1) offered by a non-profit agency to fill a specific need, often for a project funded by a grant from a charitable foundation to the agency, or (2) created by a grant made by a foundation in response to an application from you in order to fund a project that you yourself have devised. Typically in the second case, you will have to have a host agency agree to supervise your project and act as the charitable recipient of your funding (although there are some funders which will support you in creating your own non-profit agency.)

In the case of the first category of fellowships, your main concern is to be aware of their existence, their requirements and their deadlines, and to apply appropriately. This information is available from a variety of sources on-line including PSJD.org, and Idealist.org.

The second type of fellowship is more labor-intensive for you. However it offers the possibility of work that is perfectly tailored to your interests. For someone with a clear idea of the work they are committed to doing, this type of fellowship is an extremely attractive. For this reason, they are also extremely competitive and are considered prestigious.

If this is of interest to you, you may find the following timeline helpful. It is not intended to be rigid – you can successfully compete for a fellowship without following these steps – but it is a suggestion on how to position yourself well for a fellowship application. Career Services is always happy to meet with you to assist in developing a plan for your law school career and to discuss each of the steps suggested below in more detail.

1L – Fall Semester
The beginning of your first year of law school is no time to worry about anything other than adjusting to a new environment, a new way of thinking, and a considerable amount of work. However, while you are acclimating yourself, check out the public interest organizations that are active at the law school. This will give you a good sense of the practice areas that are available to public interest lawyers. If there is an organization that is dedicated to the topic of your interest, it can become a good source of information for you in the future.

Towards the end of your first semester you will begin considering your first summer job. This job will be your first opportunity to work as a lawyer in the public interest. Make a commitment to yourself that you will spend this first summer working in your area of interest.

1L – Spring Semester
Spend some time researching appropriate summer job opportunities. You can do this by talking with counselors in the Career Services office, attending informational programs put on by Career Services and by the student-run public interest organizations, talking with 2Ls, talking with professors who work in areas of law that interest you, observing organizations that are doing good work in your area of interest, etc. Then apply for and get a job that will offer you good exposure both to the work and to the people doing the work in the field of your choice. (How to go about doing that is beyond the scope of this chapter. There are many other sources of information available in Career Services on this topic.)

Consider getting involved with the Pro Bono Program. This is an excellent way to volunteer in an area of interest and gain practical experience.

This is also the time to apply for 2L clinicals that can give you good hands-on experience, particularly if there is a clinical that relates directly to your area of interest.

1L – Summer
See “Making the Most of Your Summer Public Interest or Government Job” available in Career Services. In addition to the advice offered there, you should also be assessing your summer placement from a long-term point of view. Is this an agency that can be effective supervisor for a fellowship? Is this an agency to which you want to commit several years of work? If you start to suspect the answer may be “no,” then use this time to make contact with other nonprofits of interest to you. Then arrange visits and seek out informational interviews. When possible, attend conferences and trainings. Use these opportunities to connect with a national network of lawyers and to learn more about what is happening across the country in your public interest practice area. Your goal is to accumulate knowledge of, and develop contacts with, potential sponsors. You are also looking for an early lead on your own fellowship project. One of the best ways to devise a useful and interesting proposal is to ask people currently at
work in the field, “What isn’t getting done that you would do, if you only had the time and money?”

2L – Fall Semester
Now is the time to incorporate your personal mission into your law school life. Take on a pro bono project, be active in a student-led organization, focus your course selection, and apply for a second semester clinical if appropriate. Your goals are to make a real contribution to your personal mission and to build your skills and résumé. Also, watch for and attend relevant programs offered by the Law School and the student organizations. Network whenever you can; particularly get to know people who have held the fellowships, if you can. Think about your second summer and agencies that might make a good host organization. Apply for summer positions.

2L – Spring Semester
Begin a systematic review of the fellowships that are available and of interest to you. Determine deadlines, and collect application information. Continue to incorporate your mission into your work. Try, if you can, to attend a professional conference in your area of interest – a great way to meet people and get ideas.

2L – Summer
This is the time for serious consideration of your fellowship proposal, and some rough drafting. It takes a lot of time to polish an effective application. If you are working for the agency you hope to have as a sponsor, get as much input as you can into your ideas. If not, this is the time to reach out to potential sponsors and develop their interest in you and your project. For some fellowships, this is also a good time to get some initial, informal reaction to your ideas directly from the grantor.

3L – Late Summer/ Early Fall
Prepare and submit your fellowship applications. Prepare for interviews.

3L – Spring Semester
Celebrate your success!

Obviously, applying for a fellowship is a major commitment of time and energy. However, it is one of the rare opportunities available to pursue an individual interest in a job tailored to the work that you think is important. If you have questions or would like more information about this, contact the Career Services office.

SOME FAQS
(1) How do I find out about possible fellowships?

A good place to start is the Postgraduate Fellowship Guide, published by PSJD and available on-line at www.PSJD.org.

(2) Some of the fellowships require me to design my own project — where do I start?
Before you start, you may wish to review summaries of projects that have been funded or proposed in the past. These are available at the web-sites of the grant organizations. Then, think about the subject areas that interest you. Spend some time researching the cutting edge issues in the field. Remember that research can include library research (e.g., law review articles), but should also include speaking with faculty members and practicing lawyers in the field. You should also research each funding organization as each fellowship has its own funding preferences and history.

You must then identify some organizations that may be interested in having you work with them if you obtain a fellowship. A good place to start is with an organization where you have previous contacts, perhaps through an internship or summer job. Another approach is to use alumni or faculty contacts. The sponsoring agency does not have to be a big name; however, make sure that it is respected, because the funders do take into account the reputation of your proposed sponsor when evaluating your application. Funders also consider the strength of your relationship with the sponsoring agency and how significant your proposed project is to the work that agency does. Remember to work with the sponsoring organization in developing your fellowship proposal.

(3) What are some of the best-known Fellowships?
The best-known fellowships, discussed below are: The Equal Justice Works Fellowship, The Skadden Foundation Fellowship, The Soros Criminal Justice Fellowship, and the Public Defender Corps. For more information on other fellowships, go to www.PSJD.org and click on the “Postgraduate Fellowships” link on the homepage.
Skadden Fellowship

The Skadden Fellowships are funded by a charitable foundation of the international law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. The program awards approximately twenty-five fellowships to graduating law students and outgoing judicial law clerks. The duration of a Skadden Fellowship is one year, with an option for a second year. Each Skadden Fellow's salary is $46,000. The program also pays all fringe benefits as well as all debt service on law school loans for the duration of the Fellowship.

Applicants must secure a potential position with a sponsoring public interest organization before applying for the Fellowship. The sponsor must be a 501(c)(3) organization which provides civil legal services to the poor, including the working poor, the elderly, the disabled or those deprived of their civil or human rights. Skadden does not fund fellowships in the area of immigration, environmental or criminal.

BC Law School Skadden Fellows:

2011 Margaretta Homsey- Greater Boston Legal Services Organization, Boston, MA

1999 Tara Twomey at Legal Services Center - Community Enterprise Project, Jamaica Plain, MA.

1993 Christine Griffin, at the Disability Law Center.

Equal Justice Works Fellowships

The Equal Justice Works Fellowships are two-year fellowships which provide a salary and loan repayment assistance to lawyers who advocate on behalf of individuals, groups, or interests that are not adequately represented by the civil legal system. The Fellowship accepts applications from experienced as well as recent law school graduates. Their primary interest is to "launch public interest careers." The individual applies along with a proposed non-profit host organization.

The fellow's salary is set by the host organization at a level comparable with that of an entry-level attorney. Equal Justice Works will contribute up to $39,000 toward that salary, with the sponsoring agency responsible for the costs of standard fringe benefits.

www.equaljusticeworks.org

BC Law School Equal Justice Works Fellows:

2011 Sarah Sherman-Stokes, PAIR Project Boston, MA

2011 Sarah Olesiuk, Public Defender Corps

2011 Yliana Johansen, KIND Los Angeles, CA

2010 Erin Cox at Lutheran Social Services, Wellesley, MA

2010 Jason Langberg at Advocates for Children’s Services, Raleigh, NC

2008 Amy Reichbach at ACLU, Boston, MA

2006 Rebecca Brink at Health Law Advocates, Boston, MA

2006 Ritu Goswamy at Homeboy Industries, Los Angeles, CA

2003 Mary Holper at PAIR, Washington, DC

2002 Kathleen Devlin at Refugee Immigration Services of Greater Boston Catholic Charities, Somerville, MA

2001 James Eldridge at Merrimack Valley Legal Services, Lowell, MA

2000 Beth Werlin at the Legal Action Center of the American Immigration Law Foundation, Washington, DC

2000 Gretchen Hunt at Center for Women and Families, Louisville, KY

1999 Patricia Mejia at the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Florence, AZ

1998 Jennifer Nye at Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Tucson, AZ

1993 Manuel Duran at Health Law Advocates, Boston, MA

Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowships - Postgraduate Fellowships

The Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowships “support outstanding individuals working in law, organizing, public health, public policy, and other disciplines to initiate innovative projects that will have a measurable impact on issues underlying the U.S. Justice System.” The program seeks to identify and nurture new voices and agents-for-change at either the local or
national level. Advocacy Fellowships are two years in duration and support projects designed by the individual to be implemented in conjunction with large or small not-for-profit organizations or government agencies. Fellows are expected to work full-time on their projects during the term of the fellowship.

Applicants must have substantive first-hand knowledge of and/or up to three years' experience with the issues and communities with which they propose to work. Applicants can but are not required to have an undergraduate or graduate degree in law, public policy, social work or other fields related to criminal justice. If the applicant is currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program, he or she must have completed the degree at the start of the fellowship (either March or August), as the fellowship is full-time. Applicants may not currently be employed by their proposed host organization and must demonstrate that the project does not duplicate the host organization's existing efforts. Fellowship awards cannot be used to supplement funding for activities or projects that are already being carried out by the host organization or another group. Prospective applicants who are currently receiving compensation for the proposed project from an organization are not eligible to apply.

Details can be found at www.soros.org.

BC Law School Soros Fellows:

2001  Rebecca Young at MA Correctional Legal Services, Boston, MA

1998  Barbara Kahan at the Children’s Law Center, Lynn, MA

(4) What do the fellowship applications include?

Most programs require personal statements and essays by the applicant, recommendations from professors and/or former employers and transcripts. Some require a statement from a sponsoring organization; others require a legal writing sample.

(5) How do I prepare my application?

By the time you sit down to write, you should have a pretty good idea of what you want to say.

Make sure that you leave yourself plenty of time to prepare your application. Most fellowships will require you to write one or more essays describing your project and your background. Edit and edit again! Ask others to give you feedback on the essays. In some cases, such as the Skadden Fellowships, you can actually get some early feedback directly from the program when you are at the preliminary stages.

Fellowship funders look at your application to see how well you convey the goals of your project, how concrete and specific your strategies are, and how well you display the particular skills and experience you bring to the work. Demonstrating your commitment to the public interest and your enthusiasm is essential.