

The Class of 2025 Equal Justice Works Design-Your-Own Fellowship Application

/ Frequently Asked Questions

When do applications close for the Class of 2025 Fellowship cycle?

Applications for the 2025 Design-Your-Own Fellowship are open until 11:59 pm Eastern Time on September 10, 2024. All components of the application must be completed in the application in the online platform, and the application officially submitted in the platform, by this time. [Visit here](#) to learn more about the Fellowship, and to access resources and information about the application process.

What is the Fellowship period for the Class of 2025?

Fellowship projects are designed to last 24 months (two years). Class of 2025 Fellows will start their Fellowships in September 2025 and conclude in September 2027.

Where do I submit my application?

Applications are completed entirely online on our application portal, [Submittable](#). Please create your profile and log in to familiarize yourself with the application questions and word/character limits for each question's response. This information is also contained in the Word document available in the Resources section of [our website](#). Please note that the Word document is for informational purposes only—only applications submitted via the online platform (Submittable) will be accepted.

What kind of projects are you looking for in the Class of 2025?

Eligible projects are those that propose to serve underserved, disenfranchised communities and/or populations and/or tackle issues not adequately addressed in our legal system. Projects may include components such as direct representation, legal education, legal training, advocacy, community organizing, transactional work, policy work, litigation, administrative representation, or a combination of these strategies...and more!

Equal Justice Works will consider projects in any issue area except international work or standard criminal defense. Equal Justice Works Fellowships aim to create new public interest positions and therefore may not be used to fund general staff attorney positions. Instead, they should provide Fellows with the opportunity to exercise leadership on a distinct project. Candidates and organizations work together to generate project proposals.

Projects should be innovative, discreet, distinctive from the work of a staff attorney at the Host Organization and have ambitious yet feasible SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound) goals for the 24-month duration of the Fellowship (September 2025-September 2027).

Please visit the [Meet Our Fellows page](#) to see an archive of current and past Fellows, host organizations and Fellowship projects for examples of successful projects that address an unmet legal need for an underserved population.

Do applicants or host organizations have to find or provide their own funding?

No. Equal Justice Works is responsible for finding sponsors to fund projects. Sponsor interest and preferences vary by issue area and geography. Please see the Resources section [here](#) for a regularly updated sponsor preference list. These are areas that sponsors are committed to funding. Sponsors select interviewees often based on their alignment with these preferences.

However, please note that projects outside these stated preferences are very often funded. Equal Justice Works encourages applications from across issue areas and geographies, including those not listed in the sponsor preference document.

Where can I get more information, and possibly speak with an Equal Justice Works Fellowships Team member?

Please register for Equal Justice Works Fellowships webinars [here](#). Recordings of past webinars, the Applicant Guide, and the Host Organization can all be found [on our website](#). Sign up [here](#) to receive emails related to the application process.

If your questions are not addressed in Equal Justice Works' publicly available resources, office hours sessions will be available for signup beginning in May. If none of the available office hour time slots work for you, you may reach out to the Equal Justice Works Fellowships Team at fellowships@equaljusticeworks.org. We will do our best to respond to you in a timely manner with the information requested.

Do you need my GPA and/or transcripts?

No. Transcripts and GPA are not required for the application. Please do not include this information in your application. Applicants will be asked to provide a resume and a personal statement describing the candidate's interest in the program.

Do I have to take the bar exam in order to be eligible for a Fellowship?

Yes. For students to be eligible for a Fellowship, they have to take the bar at the earliest possible sitting, generally in July, before the start of the Fellowship.

If I held a permanent, full-time public interest attorney position before can I apply for the EJW Design-Your-Own Fellowship?

No. Candidates are ineligible if they have previously held a full-time (30+ hours/week), permanent public interest attorney position. Experienced private sector lawyers who have demonstrated a commitment to public interest law and have the relevant skills and initiative to carry out the goals of the project are encouraged to apply.

What are the other eligibility requirements?

Besides not having held a full-time (30+ hours/week), permanent public interest attorney position, to be eligible to be an Equal Justice Works Fellow in the Class of 2025, you must have graduated from an Equal Justice Works [Member Law School](#) before September 2025 with a J.D. or LL.M.

Applicants coming from bridge/gap fellowships, clerkships or AmeriCorps Legal Fellowships are eligible. Candidates, however, may not have participated previously in any major fellowship program such as the Skadden Fellowship Program, Echoing Green Fellowship, Soros Justice Fellowship, Justice Catalyst Fellowship and Immigrant Justice Corps Fellowship.

To be eligible to be a Fellow, one must have/state they will have US work authorization for the entire Fellowship period (September 2025-September 2027). There is no US citizenship requirement to be a Fellow. Fellows are employed by their Host Organizations. Equal Justice Works is not involved in the process of granting or obtaining US work authorization. Equal Justice Works encourages applicants and Host Organizations to talk about and plan for the obtention of work authorization as applicable.

Those currently or previously involved in other Equal Justice Works programs are eligible to apply for the Design-Your-Own Fellowship.

We strongly encourage you to read the [Applicant Guide](#).

How long should my résumé be?

Please limit your résumé to two pages (if printed, one page double-sided) in PDF format unless additional information is necessary.

Can I apply with more than one project in a cycle?

No. Applicants may submit only one application per Fellowship Cycle.

May my project application have more than one host organization?

No. All project applications must have one host organization. There is a section in the application on collaboration where you can explain how you will collaborate and work with other organizations/entities throughout your project.

Who should be my reference?

The reference must be a professional or academic reference and cannot be from your proposed host organization. It must be a different person than either of your letter of recommendation writers. You will be asked to provide the references' organization name, city and state of the organization, the time in which the work was performed and the name, phone number, and email address of the person serving as the reference.

Should the two letters of recommendation be from different people than the person listed as the reference?

Yes. The two letters of recommendation should be from different people than the person listed as the reference. Different individuals from the same organization may serve as letter recommenders and references, respectively.

Who should write the letters of recommendation, and how/where do they attach to the application?

Two letters of recommendation in PDF format are required. Letters of recommendation may come from people you know from your legal, volunteer, job, or academic experience, and should come from people who can speak to your work product. If you have previously worked at your Host Organization, it is acceptable for one letter to come from a person at the Host Organization.

Please address the letters to the “Fellowship Committee” and submit letters of recommendation on the recommenders’ organizational letterhead if possible. Each letter should include contact information (phone number and email) of the recommender.

Once logged into the application in Submittable, candidates may upload the letters. The applicant must ensure that the letters are uploaded in time to click to submit the application no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on September 10, 2024. Equal Justice Works does not accept letters by email. Applicants must upload both letters.

Can Host Organizations host more than one Equal Justice Works Fellow in the same Fellowship Class?

Yes. A Host Organization may host more than one Fellow in the same Fellowship class, and/or host Fellows in consecutive Fellowship classes. These applications must differ in scope/focus, as Design-Your-Own Fellowship projects are not designed to create a cohort or staff a department at a Host Organization.

What kind of organizations can serve as Host Organizations for Fellows?

Host organizations must be non-profit organizations legally registered in the United States of America, including all states and territories. This includes 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 organizations, as well as non-profit organizations that are fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 organization. Universities that meet these criteria are eligible to serve as Host Organizations. It is not necessary that Host Organizations provide direct legal services, although many do. Eligible organizations must have an attorney on-staff to supervise the Fellow.

Does a Host Organization have to have an existing relationship with Equal Justice Works to host a Design-Your-Own Fellow?

No. There is no distinction between new Host Organizations, Host Organizations that are currently hosting a Fellow, or Host Organizations that have previously hosted a Fellow in the application/selection process. The application does ask one to describe if an organization has hosted Equal Justice Works Fellows in the past.

Are there other opportunities to become an Equal Justice Works Fellow or to host an Equal Justice Works Fellow?

Yes!

The Equal Justice Works Crime Victims Advocacy Program (CVAP) is mobilizing lawyers (Attorney Fellows) and law students (Student Fellows) to increase access to legal aid for survivors of crime, especially in underserved black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities. More information [here](#).

The Disaster Resilience Program (DRP) mobilizes lawyers (Attorney Fellows) and law students (Student Fellows) to provide free civil legal aid in disaster-prone areas to ensure vital legal services are accessible, comprehensive, and responsive to the unique needs of individuals, families, and communities so lives can be stabilized and communities rebuilt to be more resilient. Learn more [here](#).