



# FELLOWSHIP HOST ORGANIZATION GUIDE

Application Period

**May 21-September 17, 2026**

# We're Here to Help

Big or small, every organization has dream projects they would tackle, if only they had more hands on deck.

The Equal Justice Works Design-Your-Own Fellowship program serves a dual purpose: to jump-start the careers of aspiring public interest lawyers, and to build capacity at legal services organizations nationwide.

By hosting an Equal Justice Works Fellow, your organization will receive up to \$133,000 total (\$66,500 per year) toward their salary over the course of the two-year Fellowship term, allowing you to expand your reach to new communities, legal issues, and pro bono initiatives.

For best results, Equal Justice Works strongly encourages potential host organizations and Fellowship candidates to work closely throughout the application process. In this guide, we'll show you how best to identify and recruit an eligible candidate, then work collaboratively to design an innovative legal project.

Equal Justice Works is committed to building a community of staff, board members, Fellows, law students, and public service community whose behaviors align with our mission regarding diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice. We believe that harnessing the power of our differences and breaking down barriers to opportunities are critical in ensuring that these values remain at the forefront of our work.

## QUESTIONS?



[Fellowships@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:Fellowships@equaljusticeworks.org)



[equaljusticeworks.org](https://equaljusticeworks.org)

## ABOUT EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS /

Equal Justice Works is the nation's largest facilitator of opportunities in public interest law. We bring together an extensive network of law students, lawyers, legal services organizations, and supporters to promote public service and inspire a lifelong commitment to equal justice. Following their Fellowships, more than 85% of our Fellows remain in public service positions, continuing to pursue equal access to justice for underserved communities across the country.

# Become a Host Organization

This guide is intended as a reference for organizations seeking to host Design-Your-Own Fellows. For more information about hosting Fellows in our other programs, [visit our website](#).

1

## CHOOSE TO DESIGN A FELLOWSHIP

The Equal Justice Works Design-Your-Own Fellowship enables organizations to tackle new initiatives in partnership with a passionate public service leader. Consider your organization’s wants and needs—how could a Fellow support and expand your mission?



2



## PARTNER WITH A CANDIDATE

Equal Justice Works does not match Fellowship candidates and organizations. Identify a candidate whose vision aligns with your organization’s work, and collaborate to design a project.

3

## SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Submit your joint application with a candidate who has designed a Fellowship by 11:59 p.m. ET on September 17, 2026.





# Benefits of Hosting a Fellow

By hosting a Fellow, your organization will join a community of legal services organizations that are also on the frontlines of working toward equal justice.

## Utilize Available Funding

Equal Justice Works provides host organizations up to \$66,500 annually for use toward a Fellow's salary during their two-year term. In the event that the regular salary of a comparable position exceeds this amount, you will need to make up the difference; however, the potential cost pales in comparison to the value of an additional full-time staff member.

## Explore New Territory

Equal Justice Works does not fund general staff attorney positions—instead, the purpose of this program is to create positions for lawyers to spearhead new, innovative projects addressing an unmet legal need for an underserved population. By hosting a Fellow, your organization can increase capacity or expand legal services in ways it wouldn't have been able to do otherwise.

## Grow Your Network

The Fellowship program could not exist without the generous support of law firms, corporations, private foundations, and individuals that fund each project. Beyond contributing financially, sponsors are also encouraged to participate in the selection process, and remain connected with the Fellow throughout their project. This arrangement benefits organizations as well, by providing the opportunity to form pro bono relationships with sponsors and their legal teams. Such collaborations can lead to additional capacity through clinic volunteers, research assistance, legal drafting, and other services.



# Choose to Design a Fellowship

## WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?

Candidates and organizations can partner in any number of ways—a candidate may approach an organization with a proposed project idea, or an organization may recruit an applicant. When seeking and/or assessing candidates with whom to collaborate, it is helpful to identify the relevant issue areas of interest.

What is the mission of your organization? How might a full-time Fellow expand your impact? Consider the needs (and wants) of your organization, and pursue eligible candidates who align with your goals.



## Common Issue Areas of Interest:

**Access to Healthcare**

**Immigration & Trafficking**

**Children & Youth**

**LGBTQ+ Rights**

**Civil Rights**

**Medical-Legal Partnerships**

**Community Economic  
Development**

**Racial Justice**

**Criminal Justice Reform**

**Reproductive Rights**

**Domestic Violence & Family Law**

**Veterans**

**Education & Special Education**

**Workers' Rights**

**Housing & Homelessness**

\* Note: Equal Justice Works does not support international projects or standard criminal defense at this time.

# Is Your Organization Eligible?

Our three requirements for organizations:

## Nonprofit Status

Host organizations must be nonprofit 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.

## Adequate Supervision

The Fellow must have a designated legal supervisor in place throughout their two-year project term. The plan for supervision, mentorship, and training of the Fellow is taken into consideration when evaluating the application. Fully remote, in-person and hybrid work arrangements are acceptable.

## Employee Salary & Benefits

Host Organizations are the Fellow's employer. Equal Justice Works provides up to \$66,500 per year to your organization to use toward the Fellow's salary for the duration of the project. If similarly experienced lawyers on your staff earn greater, your organization must supplement the difference. Additionally, your organization must provide the Fellow with health insurance and all other benefits available to full-time staff members.

*\*Note: Organizations may submit applications for multiple candidates with unique projects, but must have the capacity to support each applicant in the case that multiple projects are funded.*

## INFORMATIONAL WEBINARS

Throughout the application period, our Fellowship experts will lead informational webinars tailored to applicants, prospective host organizations, and more. Registrants will receive a recording via email after the session ends, whether or not they are able to attend live.

Visit [equaljusticeworks.org/events](https://equaljusticeworks.org/events) to register, and for the most up-to-date information on webinars for all audiences. Webinar recordings will be available to registrants after the session ends.



## Partner with a Candidate

### FIND YOUR IDEAL CANDIDATE

An effective way to find a candidate is to reach out to individuals you know with relevant experience and education. Even if you don't have a specific individual in mind, it's easy to leverage your existing networks and social platforms to get the word out.

Organizations seeking a candidate to partner with on an Equal Justice Works Design-Your-Own Fellowship application have several options for finding and selecting a candidate. Many organizations approach their interns, volunteers, or other law students and recent graduates with whom they have a previous relationship. Organizations may also run an internal solicitation process to find the best candidates before applying to Equal Justice Works.



# Candidate Requirements & Benefits

Hosting an Equal Justice Works Fellow offers numerous benefits for the host organization and the Fellow.

## Requirements

- Candidates must be graduates of **Equal Justice Works Member Law School** by the start of their Fellowships in September 2027.
- Candidates must not have previously held a full-time, permanent public interest attorney position. Candidates with previous law school or other bridge fellowships are eligible, as these are not permanently funded positions. Those currently or previously involved in other Equal Justice Works programs are eligible to apply for the Design-Your-Own Fellowship. Candidates transitioning from the private sector are encouraged to apply, as are those in the midst of finishing clerkships.
- With the exception of the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Fellowship program, candidates may not have participated in any other major fellowship program. These include the Skadden Fellowship, Soros Justice Fellowship, Echoing Green Fellowship, Justice Catalyst Fellowship, and Immigrant Justice Corps Fellowship.

## Benefits

- Equal Justice Works Fellows gain firsthand experience working in their chosen issue areas—perfect for recent law school graduates, or others with public interest backgrounds who have yet to practice.
- Fellows work full time as employees of their host organization during their fellowship term, and receive the same salary, health insurance, and benefits as a similarly qualified lawyer at their host organization.
- Equal Justice Works offers a Loan Repayment Assistance Program to Fellows, up to \$5,000 per year based on program qualification.
- Fellows participate in the annual Leadership Development Training each fall, and engage in learning and peer-to-peer networking throughout the course of their Fellowship.

# Step-by-Step Guide to Finding a Candidate

## 1. Create a Solicitation Notice

Like any other job notice, solicitations often begin with an introduction to the program, details about the types of projects the organization is seeking to host, necessary qualifications, and instructions on how to submit an application. In addition to the qualifications outlined by Equal Justice Works, it is helpful to provide information up front about your organization's expectations, particularly if you have a specific project in mind. Below is an excerpt from a sample solicitation notice.

### "Legal Aid of USA"

In this example, the organization provides a short description of the issue they would like to tackle, and uses discrete sections to outline exactly what they are looking for in a candidate:

#### OPPORTUNITY

Legal Aid of USA is seeking to host recent graduates for Equal Justice Works Fellowships beginning in September 2027. This is an exciting opportunity for individuals interested in refugee and human rights to make a difference in the lives of those at-risk. Candidates should submit with their application materials a brief outline of the project they are proposing in this area of law.

#### QUALIFICATIONS

- JD anticipated by May 2026, recent law graduate, or experienced attorney seeking to make a career change to public interest work
- Experience working with refugees or other vulnerable individuals, including LGBTQ+ individuals, victims of sexual and/or gender based violence, and victims of torture and serious trauma
- Knowledge of refugee law and/or processing, human rights, and international law, including former employment and/or internships, is a plus
- Fluency in oral and written English; other languages preferable, especially Arabic, Somali, Farsi, Dari, Pashto, and Kurdish

Equal Justice Work Fellows have greatly expanded our knowledge base in critical areas of need and have been able to reach under-served communities where we do not have the resources to do targeted outreach. The Fellows' work has enabled us to continue in these high need areas by laying the foundation for gained institutional knowledge and expanded community relationships.

Olga Pribyl  
Vice President, Special Education Clinic  
Equip for Equality

## 2. Share it Far and Wide!

Once you know what you're looking for in a candidate, there are plenty of platforms upon which to solicit. For best results, take advantage of these well-known platforms for engagement:



### PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS DIRECTORY (PSJD)

PSJD is an online job board connecting law students, lawyers, and employers interested in public service. Access to the site is free for law students and alumni of over 200 American and Canadian law schools, making it the perfect place to find qualified candidates.



### NATIONAL LEGAL AID & DEFENDER ASSOCIATION (NLADA)

NLADA's Job Board is another free service that "connects organizations and professionals across the equal justice community."



### IDEALIST

Idealist is perhaps the most well-known job board for volunteer and nonprofit opportunities, though it is not limited to the legal field. Make sure to properly tag your post in order to reach legal professionals.



### LOCAL LAW SCHOOLS

In addition to creating online job listings, don't forget to reach out to local law schools directly! Many law school career services offices have private listservs of their own, as well as the ability to post physical notices around campus. You should also consider reaching out to law school clinics.



### SOCIAL MEDIA

If your organization is active on Facebook, Twitter, and/or LinkedIn, you can boost your visibility even more by capitalizing on this existing audience—after all, you already know your followers are interested in your mission. Use the tips and examples on the following pages to craft a high-impact post.



## X (formerly Twitter)

### Pique Interest with Short-Form Job Notices

#### Use Relevant Hashtags

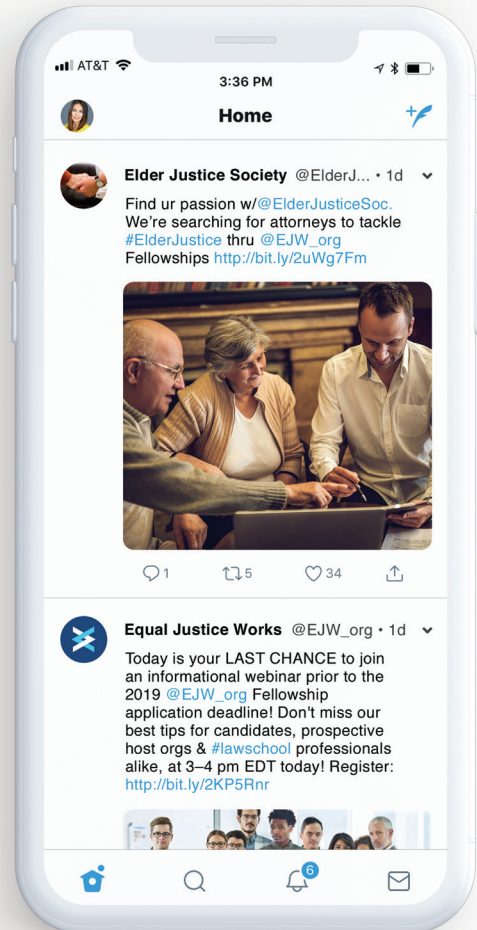
Search to see what's been trending. Where appropriate, include hashtags for topics such as #veterans, #probono, and #lawschool to broaden the reach of your tweet.

#### Always Include a Link

Whether or not you use a URL-shortening service like [bit.ly](http://bit.ly), X automatically deducts 23 characters per link. When you plan your post, make sure to account for that decrease in space. But always include a link to the job posting so that interested candidates know exactly how and where to apply. Share the link in all tweets related to the application opportunity.

#### Abbreviate

For non-premium users, posts are capped at 280 characters. Depending on your message, however, abbreviations may still be necessary to get your point across. This isn't a legal brief, so don't feel pressured to maintain a formal writing style.





## LinkedIn Reach Eligible Candidates Quickly

Unlike more traditional social media platforms, LinkedIn puts you directly in touch with active job seekers. Official LinkedIn job listings are costly to post and often not the first choice for public interest job seekers, therefore, we recommend organizations post solicitations using their “Company Updates” newsfeed instead.

### Share More Content

According to LinkedIn, “companies that post 20 times per month reach at least 60 percent of their audience.” This volume of content is almost certainly overkill, but the point stands that organizations that post regularly tend to garner more engagements overall. By beefing up your presence with other articles, blogs, and images, your followers are more likely to see your organization’s page as a source of relevant information.

### Find Your Audience

Find LinkedIn Groups related to public service, pro bono law, and significant issue areas, and join the conversation. Sharing your post within established groups will allow you to reach interested parties who don’t yet follow you.

### Engage Your Staff

Promote your organization’s work by encouraging employees to add their current positions to their profiles. This will automatically feature your Company Page on each of their profiles, helping to drive more traffic your way, as well as providing interested candidates with more tangible points of contact.

### Broaden Your Reach

Sponsoring your post is one of the simplest ways to ramp up traffic. With LinkedIn Ads, you can use targeting criteria such as industry, seniority, and location to make sure you’re reaching the right people.



# How to Design Your Project

Striking a balance between your organization's strategic goals and the candidate's passions significantly enhances an application.



## 1. Project Description

This section should be a collaborative effort between the organization and the candidate. Working together, start getting your plans down on paper. With your help, the candidate should be prepared to provide:

- A one-sentence description of the project and the population it seeks to help
- A statement of need, describing the issues to be addressed and the reasons the project is timely
- The goals of the project overall, including strategies, anticipated outcomes, and plans for sustainability beyond the two-year term
- A timeline of the Fellowship project, broken down into six-month increments, through the entire two years of the Fellowship
- A description of potential sponsor involvement—what opportunities does this project offer for sponsor involvement?
- An acknowledgment of similar services within the community, with a description of what distinguishes your project, and ways in which collaboration may be possible
- An example of prior experience coordinating pro bono activities and/or working with pro bono attorneys, if any

### POTENTIAL SPONSOR INVOLVEMENT

Nearly all Fellowship sponsors are interested in being involved in the Fellowships they fund. Some sponsors select projects of interest based on potential involvement, i.e., pro bono attorney involvement in cases or research, helping staff a clinic, media for sponsors, etc. This can be a very important factor in a sponsor's decision to support a particular project, so we urge candidates and organizations to spend significant time discussing potential opportunities for pro bono and other volunteer involvement.

## 2. Candidate Background

This section should be completed by the candidate and reviewed by the organization. In this section, the candidate will describe the ways in which their personal background and experiences make them uniquely qualified to serve the identified community. As you review this section—which also includes the candidate’s résumé, reference, and two letters of recommendation—be mindful of how these materials connect with your organization’s stated mission.

## 3. Organization Background

This part should be completed by the organization with input from the candidate. In the final section, the responsibility is on the organization to describe how a Fellow will make a unique and significant difference to the operation of the organization. Additionally, the organization is asked to provide technical details about the supervision that will be offered to the Fellow. Be prepared to provide:

- A description of how the project will be distinct from the work of general staff attorneys or previous Fellows, if any
- The candidate’s history at the organization, if any
- Information about previous Fellows hosted by the organization, if any
- Details about the organization’s pro bono initiatives
- Details about the proposed supervisor, including:
  - Relevant issue area experience
  - Supervision and management experience
  - The proposed level of interaction with the supervisor
- A description of the technology and resources that will be available, and whether the Fellow will be working in-person, remotely or in a hybrid manner

“ It has been a pleasure to work with Renee’s sponsor, Fenwick & West LLP to make this Fellowship project possible. The Fellowship project has provided the organization a unique opportunity to roll out new values highlighted in our new strategic plan, including a careful implementation of the values of the human-centered design process and a new full-scope pro bono project that we otherwise would not have been able to develop.

Julia R. Wilson  
ONEJUSTICE





# Submit Your Application

**DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!**

The application is available to complete online between May 21 and September 17, 2026. We strongly encourage applicants to begin the process well before the deadline, and not to wait until the last minute to submit online.

## Tips for a Smooth Submission

- Create an online profile as early in the process as possible, to ensure that you are gathering the necessary information as you work with your candidate to plan the project.
- Talk to your candidate(s) about salary and benefits early in the process to avoid awkward conversations close to the deadline. The application requires all parties to agree to and certify the salary and benefits that will be provided.
- Applicants have the ability to save their progress as they go—take advantage of this feature and break the application down into manageable parts.
- Host organizations can be added to the online application system as collaborators and are then able to add and review content.
- Don't jeopardize your hard work by forgetting to proofread! As you plan the application process at the beginning of the summer, build in ample time for final review and editing.
- We encourage applicants to have their application reviewed by at least three different people prior to submission—because of its length, it requires far more than just a quick read to ensure high-quality work.
- If you are pasting content into the online application from a different program, such as Microsoft Word, make sure to give the document a final once-over in case of formatting errors.

### **DON'T FORGET!**

The application period begins **May 21** and closes on **September 17, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET.**

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 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. A regularly updated sponsor preference list is linked **on our website**. 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.

## Is it okay if my organization has never hosted a Fellow before?

Yes! Though the application asks if an organization has previously hosted a Fellow, there is no distinction between new host organizations, current host organizations, or organizations that have previously hosted a Fellow.

## Can host organizations host more than one 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.

## How are applications submitted?

Applications are completed entirely online in Submittable, our application platform, and submitted by the prospective Fellow.

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

Yes! **Visit our website** to learn more about other available opportunities to host Student, Attorney, and Organizer Fellows.

### POST-APPLICATION TIMELINE

#### SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

Applications due by 11:59 p.m. ET

#### OCTOBER 2026

Fellow alumni review & score applications

#### NOVEMBER 2026 - APRIL 2027

Select candidates interviewed by sponsors

#### NOVEMBER 2026 - APRIL 2027

Candidates selected for Fellowships on a rolling basis

#### SEPTEMBER 2027

Fellowships begin

**GET ANSWERS**

 [Fellowships@equaljusticeworks.org](mailto:Fellowships@equaljusticeworks.org)

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION**

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**LEARN MORE**

 [equaljusticeworks.org](http://equaljusticeworks.org)