

Summer 2021

Deborah T. Poritz Public Interest Legal Fellowship



This summer, Legal Services of New Jersey will sponsor paid public interest legal fellowships to rising second- and third-year law students. The Poritz Fellowship program seeks to promote awareness of and commitment to careers in public interest law through rewarding summer experiences. It is open to students who will have completed their first or second year of law school as of June 2021.

Past fellows have become employed in New Jersey's Legal Services system as well as other nonprofit public interest organizations.

Selection Process

As the program sponsor, Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) screens all applicants to identify those with the greatest potential and commitment to public interest work. Promising applicants will receive a preliminary interview with LSNJ and, if qualified, will be referred to participating employers for a final interview and decision.



Placements are typically for a 10-week period. All interns will participate in a multi-day orientation in June and a closing gathering to recap the summer and discuss public interest opportunities.

The Fellowship Experience

Students placed in this summer program gain experience in a variety of public interest legal issues. While specific responsibilities vary with the participating employer, activities typically include client interviewing, legal and factual research, drafting legal documents, administrative agency appearances and—for students who have completed two years of law school—court appearances and more in-depth case involvement. Fellows interested in policy and research have participated in client needs assessment and other studies, helped draft pleadings on major litigation, and conducted research in education, civil rights, welfare policy, children's issues, housing, and other matters affecting the poor.

Qualifications

The competitive fellowship program seeks applicants who have demonstrated a commitment to helping the disadvantaged through prior work, extracurricular school activities, and volunteer efforts. Grades, honors, and personal achievements are also important. Rising third-year law students are given a measure of priority due to a special New Jersey court rule under which students employed by Legal Services offices or other legal aid programs may be certified to appear in some state courts. Outstanding rising second-year students will receive the same consideration.

Compensation

Summer 2020 fellows received a weekly salary: \$1,000 for rising third-year law students, and \$850 for rising second-year law students.

Sponsored by Legal Services of New Jersey

Since 1990, the fellowship program has been funded in major part by a grant from the IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey.

We seek applicants who demonstrate both academic achievement and commitment to public interest legal advocacy and representation.

"Working remotely this summer gave me a unique experience. I learned so much about different substantive areas of the law and how to refine my research skills. I am fortunate enough to have worked with many different units this summer exposing me to areas of the law that I would like to explore further. I have built a strong foundation through this program and will continue seeking out opportunities in public interest legal work. I appreciate efforts made to continue this program during the COVID pandemic."

Dounea Elbroji, Fellow 2020

"I had the privilege of serving as a Deborah Poritz Fellow for two summers. When I started law school I knew I wanted to pursue a public interest career in New Jersey and, so, the Poritz program was a natural fit. My time at Legal Services of New Jersey and Central Jersey Legal Services has been the most important of my law school career. All of the attorneys I worked with were not only experts in their respective fields, but also kind and patient mentors."

*Amy Travis, Fellow, 2014 and 2015
Staff Attorney
Central Jersey Legal Services*

"Whether it was preparing a domestic violence victim for a restraining order hearing, visiting immigrant detainees for know-your-rights presentations, or working on a New Jersey Supreme Court brief, my fellowship provided me with the opportunity to learn something new, interact with clients, and practice law with justice and compassion."

*Raquiba Huq, 2005 Fellow
LSNJ Vice President
and Assistant General Counsel*

How to Apply

The Summer Intern application is available through your law school's placement office or can be accessed from LSNJ's website, <http://bit.ly/LSNJ-PoritzApp>.

Applications will be considered in the order received, and hiring decisions will continue until all positions are filled. Interested students are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

For additional fellowship program information

Contact Patti Koncius
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To learn more about Legal Services in New Jersey and public interest law, visit LSNJ's websites:

- www.lsnj.org
- www.lsnjlaw.org
- www.njejla.org

