



PI/PS
*Office of Public Interest/
Public Service Law and Careers*

Enhanced LRAP Fellowships 2026

Columbia Law School is proud to offer one of the most supportive loan repayment assistance programs (LRAPs) of any law school. In addition, the Law School offers Enhanced LRAP Fellowships, which provide enhanced loan repayment support for selected Columbia Law School graduates who show exceptional dedication and potential for contribution to public interest law. The Law School is offering two Enhanced LRAP Fellowship programs in 2026: the Lowenstein Fellowship and the Berger Fellowship. Please read on for a description of the terms and application process for each fellowship, followed by application instructions. The application deadline for both fellowships is 11:59 p.m. EST on June 16, 2026.

Lowenstein Fellowship 2026

The Lowenstein Fellowship provides enhanced loan repayment support for selected Columbia Law School graduates who show exceptional dedication and potential for contribution to public interest law, including government service. In addition to the benefits of Columbia's standard Loan Repayment Assistance Program, the Lowenstein Fellowships provide enhanced loan repayment support for Columbia Law School students. The Law School will cover 100% of eligible debt service for loans borrowed up to the cost of Columbia Law School tuition¹ for Lowenstein Fellows whose annual income does not exceed \$100,000, as long as the fellow remains in public interest law work.² All LRAP loans Lowenstein Fellows receive are forgiven on an accelerated scale; upon completion of three years in qualifying employment, all LRAP loans received up to that point will be forgiven, and all new LRAP loans made after that time will be forgiven at the end of each six-month period. If the Lowenstein Fellow leaves qualifying employment before all LRAP loans have been forgiven, the fellow will be required to reimburse Columbia Law School for unforgiven LRAP loans. In the case of married graduates, spousal income will not be considered in the benefits calculation for Lowenstein Fellows, but one half of income generated from joint assets will be considered.

Eligibility

The Lowenstein Fellowship is available to 1) members of the Columbia Law School Class of 2026 (October 2025, February 2026, or May 2026) and 2) members of the Columbia Law School Classes of 2025, 2024, and 2023 who are currently clerking for a federal or state judge as their first postgraduate employment. To receive the fellowship, applicants must:

- Have demonstrated a serious commitment to work in public interest law.

¹ Indebtedness covered by the Lowenstein Fellowship is formal debt incurred by the fellow for payment of Columbia Law School tuition. This means, among other things, that: for joint degree programs, only the Columbia Law School tuition portion of the joint degree debt is covered; and educational debt from any other graduate education, including loans borrowed at another law school is not covered. Amounts borrowed above the cost of Law School tuition, but within the standard student budget are the responsibility of the fellow but may be covered by Columbia's standard LRAP. Please see the Loan Repayment Assistance Program policy for details.

² Lowenstein Fellows will be expected to contribute 34.5% of income above \$100,000 toward their annual debt service for loans borrowed to finance Law School tuition. The difference between the Law School tuition debt repayment obligation and the expected contribution provides the amount of the fellowship loan made to Lowenstein Fellows participating in the program.

The Lowenstein Fellowship is subject to rules and guidelines governing Columbia's Loan Repayment Assistance Program as set forth in the LRAP policy description in effect as of July 2008, as amended by the addition of a new program that combines traditional LRAP with the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and by additional changes in effect as of February 2023. This means, among other things, that the Law School will make LRAP loans to the Lowenstein Fellow to cover all payments on qualifying law school educational loans as long as the Lowenstein Fellow remains in qualifying public interest or public service law work. (If the Lowenstein Fellow leaves qualifying employment before all fellowship loans have been forgiven, the fellow will be required to reimburse Columbia Law School for the amounts of the outstanding debt.) The loans must be borrowed through institutionally approved and certified loan programs. Personal loans from banks or from family members and credit card and consumer debt are not covered by the fellowship, even when they are used to finance tuition costs. Other loans not covered are commercially available educational loans not certified by the Financial Aid Office, bar exam loans other than the Columbia Law School Public Service Bridge Loan, and loans taken out by parents or others to finance a student's education. Again, please see the Loan Repayment Assistance Program policy for details.

- Plan to work as a lawyer full-time in the public interest sector immediately following graduation or a clerkship.
- Have taken out educational loans to finance part of his or her Columbia Law School education.
- Be eligible for standard LRAP.

The committee will also consider the financial background of applicants, if shared, and the impact that Enhanced LRAP has on reducing financial burdens for graduates from low-income backgrounds.

Do not apply if you are 1) a member of the Class of 2026 who will be serving a clerkship in 2026-2027 or 2) a current clerk who has committed to serving another clerkship at the end of your present position. Rather, graduates who meet either criterion may apply in the spring before the end of their clerkships.

Application and Selection

Lowenstein Fellows are selected by a committee of faculty, administrators, and graduates committed to assisting Columbia Law students build careers as public interest lawyers. Please see the last page of this notice for application instructions. Applications must be received no later than June 14, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Candidates will be informed of the selection committee's decision by the end of July 2026.

Recipients of the fellowships should be aware that Columbia Law School may celebrate their fellowship by writing and/or sharing articles with the Law School community and the public.

Fellowship Contacts

Please direct questions about fellowship and its requirements to Dean Smock. If you have technical questions about the application instructions, please contact Rebecca Hinde.

Erica Smock

Dean for Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers

els13@columbia.edu

Rebecca Hinde

Coordinator for Postgraduate Fellowships

rh2523@columbia.edu

Berger Fellowship 2026

The Berger Fellowship provides enhanced loan repayment support for a Columbia Law School graduate who shows exceptional dedication and potential for making a substantial contribution to public interest law and whose career and first postgraduate job (other than a judicial clerkship) will be substantially devoted to using the law to fight racial, gender, and/or other discrimination. The fellowship is awarded to one graduate per year. In addition to the benefits of Columbia's standard Loan Repayment Assistance Program, the Berger Fellowships provide enhanced loan repayment support for Columbia Law School students. The Berger Fellowship is awarded for a five-year period. During that time, the Law School will cover 100% of eligible debt service for loans borrowed up to the cost of Columbia Law School tuition³ for Berger Fellows whose annual income does not exceed \$100,000⁴, as long as the Berger Fellow remains in public interest law work covered by the Berger Fellowship. All Berger Fellowship loans the fellows receive are forgiven on an accelerated scale; upon completion of three years in qualifying employment covered by the Berger Fellowship, Berger Fellowship loans received up to that point will be forgiven, and all new Berger Fellowship loans made after that time will be forgiven at the end of each six-month period. At the end of the five-year Berger Fellowship period, the graduate may apply for the standard LRAP program, if eligible to do so. If the Berger Fellow leaves qualifying employment before all Berger Fellowship loans have been forgiven, the fellow may apply to the standard LRAP if eligible to do so, and otherwise will be required to reimburse Columbia Law School for unforgiven Berger loans. In the case of married graduates, spousal income will not be considered in the benefits calculation for Berger Fellows, but one half of income generated from joint assets will be considered.

Eligibility

The Berger Fellowship is available to 1) members of the Columbia Law School Class of 2026 (October 2025, February 2026, or May 2026) and 2) members of the Columbia Law School Classes of 2025, 2024,

³ Indebtedness covered by the Berger Fellowship formal debt incurred by the fellow for payment of Columbia Law School tuition. This means, among other things, that: for joint degree programs, only the Columbia Law School tuition portion of the joint degree debt is covered; and educational debt from any other graduate education, including loans borrowed at another law school is not covered. Amounts borrowed above the cost of Law School tuition, but within the standard student budget are the responsibility of the Berger Fellow but may be covered by Columbia's standard LRAP. Please see the Loan Repayment Assistance Program policy for details.

⁴ Berger Fellows will be expected to contribute 34.5% of income above \$100,000 toward their annual debt service for loans borrowed to finance Law School tuition. The difference between the Law School tuition debt repayment obligation and the expected contribution provides the amount of the fellowship loan made to Berger Fellows participating in the program.

The Berger Fellowship is subject to rules and guidelines governing Columbia's Loan Repayment Assistance Program as set forth in the LRAP policy description. This means, among other things: The Law School will make LRAP loans to the fellow to cover all payments on qualifying law school educational loans as long as the fellow remains in qualifying public interest or public service law work. (If the fellow leaves qualifying employment before all fellowship loans have been forgiven, the fellow will be required to reimburse Columbia Law School for the amounts of the outstanding debt.) The loans must be borrowed through institutionally approved and certified loan programs. Personal loans from banks or from family members, and credit card and consumer debt are not covered by the fellowship, even when they are used to finance tuition costs. Other loans not covered are commercially available educational loans not certified by the Financial Aid Office, bar exam loans other than the Columbia Law School Public Service Bridge Loan, and loans taken out by parents or others to finance a student's education. Again, please see the Loan Repayment Assistance Program policy for details.

and 2023 who are currently clerking for a federal or state judge as their first postgraduate employment. To receive the fellowship, applicants must:

- Have demonstrated a serious commitment to work in public interest law.
- Plan to work as a lawyer full-time in the public interest sector immediately following graduation or clerkship.
- Have taken out educational loans to finance part of his or her Columbia Law School education.
- Will devote a substantial amount of her or his time to using the law to fight racial, gender, and/or other discrimination.

The committee will also consider the financial background of applicants, if shared, and the impact that Enhanced LRAP has on reducing financial burdens for graduates from low-income backgrounds.

Do not apply if you are 1) a member of the Class of 2026 who will be serving a clerkship in 2026-2027 or 2) a current clerk who has committed to serving another clerkship at the end of your present position. Rather, graduates who meet either criterion may apply in the spring before the end of their clerkships.

Application and Selection

Berger Fellows are selected by a committee composed of faculty, administrators, and graduates committed to assisting Columbia Law students build careers as public interest lawyers working to fight racial, gender, and/or other discrimination. Please see the last page of this notice for application instructions. Applications must be received no later than June 14, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Candidates will be informed of the selection committee's decision by the end of July 2026.

Recipients of the fellowships should be aware that Columbia Law School may celebrate their fellowship by writing and/or sharing articles with the Law School community and the public.

Fellowship Contacts

Please direct questions about fellowship and its requirements to Dean Smock. If you have technical questions about the application instructions, please contact Rebecca Hinde.

Erica Smock

Dean for Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers

els13@columbia.edu

Rebecca Hinde

Coordinator for Postgraduate Fellowships

rh2523@columbia.edu

Application Instructions

Please visit <http://cglink.me/2it/s66209> to submit the following materials by 11:59 p.m. EST on June 14, 2026.

- Your resume
- A personal statement in which you respond to the requests below. Indicate the request to which you are responding by repeating its title and number. The text may be single- or double-spaced. If you are applying for both fellowships, include two statements, even if content repeats. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND THE FELLOWSHIP NAME ON EACH PAGE OF THE DOCUMENT.
- Unofficial copy of your Law School transcript. PLEASE DO NOT UPLOAD AN OFFICIAL COPY.
- Two letters of recommendation, one from a Columbia Law School faculty member and one from a current or past public interest employer who is not a Columbia Law School professor. If recommenders prefer, they may email their letters to Rebecca Hinde at rh2523@columbia.edu. If you are applying to both fellowships, each recommender may write a single letter that applies to both.

Lowenstein Fellowship Personal Statement

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND THE FELLOWSHIP NAME ON EACH PAGE OF THE DOCUMENT.

- Demonstration of serious interest in public interest law work: Describe your interest in the practice of public interest law, what you have done that demonstrates your commitment, and the relationship of the postgraduate/post-clerkship employment you seek or have obtained to this interest. Be as specific as possible. Indicia of interest include but are not limited to past summer or other employment (law or non-law related), volunteer positions, courses taken, papers written, student activities in college or at the Law School. (1-2 pgs.)
- Long-term goals: What are your long-range career goals? How does the postgraduate/post-clerkship work you seek or have obtained further these goals? How long do you expect to remain in this position? (1 pg. max.)
- Additional information (optional): Briefly provide any additional information you would like to be considered in the selection process. We encourage applicants to include relevant information about their background and/or time spent on unrelated responsibilities if relevant. (Half-pg. max.)

Berger Fellowship Personal Statement

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND THE FELLOWSHIP NAME ON EACH PAGE OF THE DOCUMENT.

- Demonstration of serious interest in public interest law work devoted to fighting racial, gender, and other discrimination: Discuss your interest in the practice of law to advance racial, gender, or other equality and the relationship of the postgraduate/post-clerkship employment you seek or have obtained to this interest, specifically including a statement regarding the proportion of your work time that will be allocated to antidiscrimination work. Be as specific as possible. Indicia of interest include but are not limited to past summer or other employment (law or non-law related), volunteer positions, courses taken, papers written, student activities in college or at the Law School. (1-2 pgs.)
- Long-term goals: What are your long-range career goals? How does the postgraduate/post-clerkship work you seek or have obtained further these goals? (1 pg. max.)
- Additional information (optional): Briefly provide any additional information you would like to be considered in the selection process. We encourage applicants to include relevant information about their background.