

Columbia Justice Fellowships 2025

Columbia Law School announces the second annual Columbia Justice Fellowship, which will help launch the public interest career of up to three Columbia Law graduates by placing each with one of a select group of participating impact litigation organizations focused on promoting justice. During the fellowship's two-year term, fellows will have the unique opportunity to work on cutting-edge impact litigation for prominent organizations and to participate in effecting social change through legal advocacy. Applicants may choose to apply to any of the below organizations. Successful applicants must demonstrate substantial commitment, ability, and preparation for making a difference as a public interest lawyer. Fellows will receive a stipend of \$70,000 per year, and benefits will be covered by the participating organizations. **Applications for the fellowship are due on October 15, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.**

Terms of the Fellowship

Up to three fellowships will be awarded, each for a two-year term. Fellows must be graduating members of the Columbia Law School J.D. Class of 2025 (graduating in October 2024, February 2025, or May 2025).

The fellowship will be awarded to applicants who demonstrate a deep commitment to public interest legal work and an ability to make a substantial contribution to their field. Fellows will join an organization committed to significant justice-oriented work, engaging in impact litigation and related legal work. The fellowship does not require development of an independent project; fellows instead will do work similar to that of staff attorneys at each organization.

The fellowship carries a stipend of \$70,000. The participating organization will provide all fringe benefits to which an entry-level lawyer at the host organization is entitled. At the organization's discretion, they may also supplement the stipend. The fellow must begin work within five months of graduation.

Participating Organizations

- As part of the **ACLU's National Security Project**, the fellow will conduct impact litigation and advocacy to advance civil rights and civil liberties for people and communities harmed by the government in the name of national security. Their work will support the National Security Project's efforts to ensure that people can participate fully in civic life, free from discrimination, unwarranted suspicion and surveillance, unlawful force and detention, and the injustices and stigma that result from abuses of national security policy—especially people of color and other marginalized communities disproportionately subjected to unjust scrutiny and violence. Given the dangers of expansive claims of state power, the fellow will help advocate for a robust system of checks and balances and policies that comply with the Constitution, civil liberties, and human rights. Among other projects, the fellow will litigate and advocate on issues at the intersection of national security and privacy; government uses of AI for surveillance, watchlisting, border screening, and other national security purposes; racial, religious, and national origin discrimination; and the freedoms of speech and association.
- Founded in 1974, the **Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)** is a New York-based national organization that protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans. By combining litigation, advocacy, education, and organizing, AALDEF uses a movement lawyering model to work with

Asian American communities across the country to secure human rights for all and to support Asian Americans organizing for social change. For 2025-2027, fellows will be based in New York City and will work in several of the following program areas: Anti-Asian Violence, Economic Justice, Immigrant Rights, and Voting Rights and Democracy.

- **NAACP LDF** is the country's first and foremost civil and human rights law organization. Founded in 1940 under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall, who subsequently became the first Black U.S. Supreme Court Justice, LDF was launched at a time when the nation's aspirations for equality and due process of law were stifled by widespread state-sponsored racial inequality. From that era to the present, LDF's mission has been transformative—to achieve racial justice, equality, and an inclusive society. LDF's litigation, policy advocacy, organizing, and public education programs in criminal justice, economic justice, education, and political participation seek to ensure the fundamental and basic human rights to quality education, economic opportunity, the right to vote and fully participate in democracy, and the right to a fair and just judicial system. We seek a fellow to address systemic obstacles and policies that underlie continuing racial disparities and discrimination. The fellow will work with LDF attorneys and other staff on litigation in state and federal courts, policymaking, and other forms of advocacy.

Application and Selection Procedure

The application deadline is October 15, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. Please upload the following materials at cglink.me/2it/s81834.

- Your resume
- An *unofficial* copy of your transcript
- Two letters of recommendation, preferably one from a Columbia Law School faculty member and one from a supervisor at a relevant organization. If the recommenders prefer, they can email their letters to rh2523@columbia.edu by the October 15 deadline.
- One statement of interest (one page, single-spaced) for each organization you are applying to. (For example, if you are interested in two organizations, submit two separate statements.) **INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION ON EACH PAGE.**
- Note: if you are applying to more than one organization, the online application will require you to rank the organizations by preference. This will be for internal use by the Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers only.

A committee consisting of faculty members, staff from the Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers, and representatives of the participating organizations will select the fellowship recipients. As part of the selection process, applicants will be invited to participate in interview(s) with the selection committee after submitting their applications. Fellowships will be awarded by December 1, 2024.

Fellowship Contacts

For questions about substantive issues such as fellowship criteria or your materials, please contact:

Erica Smock, Dean for Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers
els13@columbia.edu

For questions about submitting your materials, the application timeline, and payments, please contact:

Rebecca Hinde, Coordinator for Postgraduate Fellowships
rh2523@columbia.edu