



Columbia
Law School

PI/PS

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

Columbia Justice Fellowships 2027

Columbia Law School announces the fourth 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 18, 2026, 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 2027 (graduating in October 2026, February 2027, or May 2027).

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. Descriptions of each organization's scope of work are below.

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

- **The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Capital Punishment Project** is part of ACLU's national legal department, committed to challenging the unfairness and arbitrariness of the death penalty while working toward the ultimate goal of abolition. The project engages in strategic litigation and public advocacy, including direct representation of capital defendants and systemic challenges to the capital punishment system. Our fellow can expect to work on state- or county-wide systemic challenges, where the team joins a capital case for the limited purpose of conducting an evidentiary hearing to challenge the death penalty as applied in that jurisdiction. This work may include challenges to the death penalty under state constitutions as well under state statutes, like claims of racial inequalities in capital charging under Racial Justice Acts. The fellow may choose to work from the ACLU's New York, NY or Durham, NC office.
- **The Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (Lambda Legal)** seeks a fellow to support their mission of achieving full recognition of the civil rights for the LGBTQ+ community and everyone living with HIV through impact litigation, education, and public policy work. Since 1973, Lambda Legal has used impact litigation and other advocacy tools to decriminalize same-sex

relationships; challenge discrimination against LGBTQ+ people and people living with HIV in the workplace, home, schools, health care, and the military; and protect LGBTQ+ families, including by winning and defending marriage equality. The fellow will conduct legal research in support of litigation and client advocacy; draft documents and briefs for cases in state and federal courts and agencies; analyze and prepare responses to state and federal legislation, regulations, and other executive actions affecting LGBTQ+ people and people living with HIV; and research and draft policy and advocacy materials. The fellow will work in the New York office.

- **The NAACP Legal Defense Fund's (LDF's)** litigation, policy advocacy, organizing, and public education programs in the substantive areas of criminal justice, economic justice, education, and political participation seek to ensure the fundamental human rights of all people 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, or other forms of advocacy.

Application and Selection Procedure

The application opens on June 5, 2026, and the application deadline is October 18, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Please upload the following materials at cglink.me/2it/s81834.

- Your resume
- An unofficial copy of your transcript. **PLEASE DO NOT UPLOAD AN OFFICIAL 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 18 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.)
PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION ON EACH PAGE.

Note: if you are applying to more than one organization, the application will require you to rank them 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, 2026.

Fellowship Contacts

For questions about substantive issues such as fellowship criteria or your materials, please contact:
Emily Harris, Director of Public Interest Lawyering and Strategic Initiatives
eh3097@columbia.edu

For questions about submitting your materials, the application timeline, and payments, please contact:
Rebecca Hinde, Coordinator for Postgraduate Fellowships
rh2523@columbia.edu