

THE PENN STATE LAW PUBLIC INTEREST LAW FUND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

2021 Fellowship Information Packet & Application

PILF OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Student members established the Public Interest Law Fund's summer fellowship program in 1990. The organization's annual student fundraising efforts underwrite each fellowship. The objective of the Penn State Law Public Interest Fellowship program (hereinafter "PILF") is to enable non-transferring first, second, and non-graduating third-year students at Penn State Law to work in an unpaid, public interest position for the summer. This includes non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status along with government agencies and private firms engaged in public interest practice.

Every year, PILF receives more applications than it is able to fund. The selection of PILF fellows is based on a variety of factors, including the type of internship, commitment to public interest, and time spent volunteering for PILF throughout the year. The number of fellowships awarded as well as the amount of each fellowship is also dependent on a number of factors, including the number of qualified applicants, the amount of funding available, and a student's expected summer expenses (i.e. moving expenses, rent, general living costs, and commuting). The PILF Fellowship Committee intends to award as many fellowships as funding allows for the summer of 2021.

Please note that both public interest and public service positions *are* eligible for fellowships, but that there is a distinction between public interest and public service recognized for this fellowship. Public service positions are traditionally governmental jobs (i.e. District Attorney, State Attorneys General, Judicial Internships) benefiting the community as a whole. Public interest positions relate to law-related work on behalf of individuals who would otherwise lack effective representation within the legal system. As PILF is a public interest fund, public interest applicants will receive more points in the employer classification portion of their application than public service applicants. However, public service applicants may ably compensate for this points difference in the other areas of their application. Volunteering in various capacities throughout the year for PILF is strongly preferred. PILF fellowships will not be awarded or denied based on any perceived political preferences of the organization for whom the student wishes to work.

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IMPORTANT NOTE

Please note that if IOLTA funds are available for the position for which you are applying, you should apply for funding through IOLTA before applying for funding through PILF. Information about IOLTA funding and eligibility can be found at www.paiolta.org. Students are **NOT** permitted to be double funded (i.e. receiving both PILF and IOLTA funds).

IF YOU ARE CHOSEN FOR A FELLOWSHIP AND THEN LEARN THAT YOU WERE CHOSEN FOR IOLTA FUNDING, PLEASE EMAIL PHOEBE GILMORE IMMEDIATELY.

FELLOWSHIP CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION	
NAME	Phoebe Gilmore
EMAIL	pxg283@psu.edu
PHONE NUMBER	(724) 961-8408

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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Monday, March 8, 2021**
 - Fellowship application opens and will be emailed to students.
- **Friday, March 26, 2021**
 - Fellowship applications are **DUE BY 5:00 PM** to Phoebe Gilmore. They must be submitted via email (pxg283@psu.edu). We are unable to accommodate late or incomplete applications, **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- **Week of April 12, 2021**
 - All applicants will be notified as to the status of their application. Please be advised that all decisions by the selection committee are final. Neither the selection committee members nor PILF officers will be required to reveal evaluation criteria, scores, or ranking.

FELLOWSHIP ELIGIBILITY

First-year students who will have completed at least 21 credits before summer 2021 and second- and third-year students who are not graduating in May 2021 are eligible for funding. Students must submit a completed application and be in good standing to be considered. Additionally, students planning to transfer are not eligible to apply.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION, OFFERS, AND OBLIGATIONS

Submission: The completed application packet must be submitted by 5:00 PM on Friday, March 26, 2021 to Phoebe Gilmore via email at pxg283@psu.edu. Employer forms may be either typed or handwritten. Please note that applicants may type their answers to application questions in a separate Word Document as necessary. **No late applications will be accepted.**

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Offers: Applicants will be notified by the end of the week of April 12, 2021 as to the status of their application. Upon notice of the fellowship offer, the applicant must accept or decline the offer in writing through the provided contract. The fellow may not accept and then later decline the fellowship, unless extraordinary circumstances arise, which does not include other summer job offers. However, if a fellow learns of available IOLTA funding after accepting PILF funding, the fellow **MUST** notify Phoebe Gilmore via email immediately.

Obligations: Acceptance of a fellowship signifies that the Fellow agrees to comply with the fellowship contractual obligations, which include:

1. No intent to transfer from Penn State Law;
2. Returning any unearned portions of the fellowship to PILF;
3. Volunteering a minimum of 15 hours to PILF before graduation during the academic years following receipt of the fellowship;
4. Submitting a three-page reflection paper to PILF regarding their PILF-funded summer position following the end of the summer experience; and
5. Submitting an employer-signed time-log documenting the hours worked during the summer following the end of the summer experience.

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FELLOWSHIP WITHHOLDINGS

Two amounts will be withheld from fellowships pending satisfaction of certain criteria.

1. A portion of the final installment of payment will be withheld until the Fellow submits their employer-signed timesheet and three-page reflection paper as described in the above “Obligations” section.
2. Ten percent of the total award will be withheld until the Fellow gives back 15 hours to PILF, before graduation, during the academic years following receipt of the fellowship.

These withheld amounts will be disbursed to students upon satisfaction of these criteria as determined by PILF. Fellowship recipients who fail to comply with the aforementioned criteria will **NOT** receive the withheld funds, and such funds will be returned to PILF’s fellowship fund.

FELLOWSHIP SELECTION CRITERIA & PROCEDURE

Fellowship awards will be decided by a committee comprised of two members of the law school faculty and two PILF executive board members. The committee considers whether the fellowship proposals espouse PILF’s commitment to enabling students to work with individuals who might not otherwise be able to procure legal representation. The committee’s main focus is therefore on the individual(s) served by the applicant’s proposals, but other factors are considered as discussed in the above “PILF Overview and Background” section.

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The factors that will be considered by the PILF selection committee, in order of importance, are:

- **Employer Classification:** Preference is given in this application component to applicants who have been offered unpaid summer employment in the legal public interest sector, although public service applications are also considered. The applicant must include in their application a firm, written offer letter from the organization with which they plan to work. Public interest organizations include non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, some government agencies, and private firms engaged in public interest practice. Although all of the above organizations will be considered, preference will be given to students obtaining employment in the traditional public interest sector.
- **Demonstrated Commitment to Public Interest:** The committee will consider past internship/externship experience, clinical experiences, pro bono work, and any other relevant public interest volunteer work prior to and during law school.
- **Involvement with PILF:** Involvement with PILF is not mandatory; however, it is strongly preferred and will be considered during the selection process. The applicant should understand the goals and objectives of PILF and should work to support PILF in its fundraising efforts, as fundraising is the sole source of funding for the fellowship program.
- **Other Factors:** Fellowship selection will be based on certain factors, including the number of applications received and the amount of money available for fellowships. Also, students who were eligible for IOLTA funding but failed to apply or failed to apply on time will be considered only on a secondary basis. Additionally, students who have already received a PILF Fellowship in a previous year will be considered only on a secondary basis.

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REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS

1. Application Form, Employer Identification Form, and Signed Certification
 - a. See attached Employer Identification Form.
2. Student Statement of Interest
 - a. This statement should demonstrate the applicant's commitment to public interest in general and to the proposed internship/project in particular. The statement should indicate previous volunteer work, pro bono work, community service, and any other relevant projects. This includes any specific involvement in PILF (relating to exam baskets, the auction, or other work).
3. Student Resume
 - a. Please note that grades are not a relevant factor in our consideration, so please feel free to remove any class ranking or GPA indication as you see fit.
4. Proposal
 - a. The proposal should be written in the applicant's own words and must include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Description of the prospective employer, including background information on the organization
 - ii. Description of the applicant's prospective responsibilities
 - iii. Description of the clientele to be served by the applicant's work
 - iv. Description of the types of work the applicant will be doing
 - v. The approximate number of hours the applicant will be working
 - vi. Description of what the applicant hopes to gain from the project/internship experience

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5. Employer's Offer Letter

- a. The applicant must have an existing offer from the employer at the time of application. The application must include a letter¹ from the prospective employer, which contains the following information:
 - i. Confirmation of the nature of the offer or position
 - ii. Verification of the classification of the employer (501(c)(3), government agency, or other)
 - iii. Indication of the work completed by the organization and how this work ties into public interest

6. Letters of Recommendation

- a. The applicant must submit two (2) letters of recommendation in support of the application.
 - i. One (1) of these letters of recommendation should come from a supervisor, employer, mentor, etc., who is familiar with the applicant's commitment to the public interest and can verify and substantiate the applicant's commitment.
 - ii. One (1) of the letters of recommendation must be from a law school professor.
- b. Both recommendations should attest to the applicant's ability to serve in the proposed position and commitment to public interest.

¹ In the event you do not receive an official offer letter from your summer employer, a screenshot of your offer via email is sufficient to satisfy this requirement.

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7. Letter of Good Standing

- a. The application must include a verification of good standing from the Office of the Registrar. You should NOT need to pay a fee for this letter because it is not being used to transfer or study in another law school. Only applicants who are in good standing are eligible for PILF funding.

8. Breakdown of Anticipated Expenses

- a. Description of expected living arrangements, a summary of expected expenses, including moving expenses, living expenses, and commuting expenses (see attached template).

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APPLICATION FORM

Name:

Year:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What public interest law activities, if any, have you participated in while a student at Penn State Law? You may indicate the approximate number of hours you have devoted to each activity.
2. What PILF activities, if any, have you participated in and/or attended? You may indicate the approximate number of hours you have devoted to each activity.
3. Please specify your involvement, if any, with the PILF Auction.
4. Are you considering other summer employment offers, paid or unpaid, this summer? If so, please describe.

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Please provide your estimated costs for your summer 2021 position by providing estimates for the below budget items. A sample expense form is provided for your reference.

EXPENSE	ESTIMATED AMOUNT
Moving expenses	\$
Total rent for summer housing	\$
Any rent being paid simultaneously for housing for the academic year during the summer internship period	\$
Utilities for summer housing	\$
Total summer insurance costs (medical, auto, etc.)	\$
Total summer cell phone bill costs	\$
Total summer grocery costs	\$
Total summer commuting costs (subway, bus, gas, etc.)	\$
Other (please describe below)	\$
TOTAL OF ALL ABOVE ESTIMATED EXPENSES	\$

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1. Do you have any dependents?

Y [] / N []

2. Do you have a supplemental source of income for your summer, such as from family?

Y [] / N []

3. If your position is located in Pennsylvania, were IOLTA funds available for you?

Y [] / N []

4. If yes, did you apply for IOLTA funding?

Y [] / N []

5. If yes, what was the conclusion of your application (e.g. denied, waiting to hear back)?

6. Please initial each applicable statement.

_____ I have discussed with my employer whether or not my acceptance of their offer for summer employment is contingent on my receipt of funding.

_____ I am considering transferring to another law school after this year.

_____ I have received PILF funding in the past.

CERTIFICATION

I, _____, certify that all statements contained in my Penn State Law Public Interest Law Fund 2021 Summer Fellowship Application are true and accurate representations. I acknowledge that if I provide any false information in my application, I will be subject to disciplinary actions, including but not limited to, reporting your actions to the Dean of Students and the Bar Examiners.

Signature of Applicant