



**The Chicago Bar Foundation
Sun-Times Public Interest Law Fellowship
2015 Application Guidelines**

Through a generous *cy pres* award from a case involving the Sun-Times, The Chicago Bar Foundation (“CBF”) awards public interest law fellowships to provide loan repayment assistance for outstanding recent law school graduates who are either presently working or who have accepted an offer to work for CBF-funded or other qualifying legal aid and public interest law organizations. Beginning in 2007, the CBF each year awards five fellowships to individual legal aid or public interest law attorneys who meet the eligibility criteria set forth below and demonstrate the following: (1) a commitment to public interest work, (2) academic achievement in law school, and (3) outstanding character and integrity. This year’s fellowship recipients will receive \$20,000 each (payable over five years).

Fellowship funds will be awarded in ten (10) installments over five years, contingent upon continued compliance with the terms of the fellowship. Recipients will receive installment funds according to the following schedule: year 1 (\$4,000), year 2 (\$4,000), year 3 (\$4,000), year 4 (\$4,000), and year 5 (\$4,000). The award is a forgivable loan that the CBF will forgive upon continued compliance with the terms of the fellowship. Under current tax laws, the CBF believes fellowship funds should be tax-free income for the recipient to the maximum extent permitted by law.*

Criteria for Eligibility

Fellowship applicants must have educational debt of at least \$40,000 and must have graduated from law school on or after May 2002. In order to be eligible to apply for the fellowship, an attorney must work for a CBF-funded legal aid organization serving Cook County that is in good standing with the CBF and has received a CBF organizational support grant for at least three years (see the attached list). One fellowship each year may be awarded to a legal aid attorney who serves Illinois residents outside of Cook County. Applicants must currently work for a CBF-funded or other qualifying organization or have accepted an offer to work for a CBF-funded or other qualifying organization. Award recipients must make a five-year commitment to work full-time at a CBF-funded or other qualifying legal aid or public interest law organization beginning with the date of the fellowship award.

Please note that a recipient of the CBF Anderson Public Interest Law Fellowship is not eligible to receive the CBF Sun-Times Public Interest Law Fellowship.

Application Method

Applicants should submit for consideration by the selection committee the completed application form and the required attachments (see the list at end of the application form).

Complete applications are due by Thursday, July 16, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. to: The CBF Sun-Times Fellowship Selection Committee, attention: Ryanne Easley, Director of Grants, The Chicago Bar Foundation, 321 S. Plymouth Court, Suite 3B, Chicago, IL 60604.

**The CBF intends that the loans issued pursuant to the Fellowship are tax-free to recipients upon their forgiveness by the CBF. We believe in good faith that our forgiveness of loans issued as part of the Fellowship Program will not create taxable income to loan recipients under the Internal Revenue Code based on the exemption in 26 U.S.C. 108(f). However, each recipient ultimately is responsible for determining his or her own federal tax income liability and to make any required disclosures to the IRS and other taxing bodies.*

Selection Method

A selection committee made up of representatives of the Chicago legal community and representatives from the Chicago Sun-Times will review complete applications. Applicants should be aware of factors the committee likely will consider when reviewing application materials.

- (1) Commitment to public interest work:
 - Public interest work experience including employment and internships
 - Participation in groups that support public interest activities
 - Pro bono activities and other volunteer experience
- (2) Academic achievement in law school, which may include:
 - Grades and class rank
 - Participation in law review or moot court
 - Academic honors and awards
 - Academic based scholarship awards
- (3) Outstanding character and integrity
 - Qualities observed and noted in letters of reference
 - Special awards or recognition for such qualities

The Selection Committee may choose to grant a limited number of personal interviews.

Recipient Obligations

Each fellowship recipient is honored for his/her dedication to public interest law, academic achievement, and outstanding character and integrity. Each recipient of the fellowship should continue to demonstrate the positive qualities that led to his or her selection from a field of qualified applicants.

Recipients are a part of the Chicago legal aid and public interest law community and should seek ways to contribute to that community. At a minimum, recipients from CBF grantee organizations should 1) be members of The Chicago Bar Association (recipients will receive complimentary CBA memberships), 2) participate in the CBA's Legal Aid Committee, and 3) register and regularly use www.IllinoisLegalAdvocate.org. Recipients also should consider mentoring a public interest-minded law student. Recipients working at a legal aid organization located outside of Cook County should 1) register and regularly use www.IllinoisLegalAdvocate.org, and 2) participate in the local and/or state bar association.

Fellowship recipients may be asked to submit proof to the CBF of financial circumstances or payment of loans to lenders. Recipients must responsibly manage their loan repayment and, when appropriate, seek options such as consolidation of loans to maintain a lower interest rate on outstanding debt.

Fellowship recipients are expected to work for a CBF-funded or other qualifying organization for the entire time that they receive fellowship funds. Recipients who leave their CBF-funded or other qualifying organization are subject to forfeiture of their award unless they move on to another CBF-funded or other qualifying legal aid or public interest law organization within a reasonable time. Absent exceptional circumstances, recipients who do not remain employed by a CBF-funded or other qualifying organization are expected to repay the CBF their outstanding loan balance, as it will not be forgiven. If changes in the employment circumstances of the fellowship recipient arise (such as temporary or permanent leave from the organization), the recipient must immediately inform the CBF (Ryenne Easley at 312-554-1247 or reasley@chicagobar.org) of the change in circumstances.

Additionally, if a fellowship recipient's loans are forgiven in their entirety through the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and the recipient therefore has no remaining qualifying federal or private educational loans, the recipient is no longer eligible to receive fellowship funds. Any outstanding loan balance with the CBF as of the date of the federal loan forgiveness will be forgiven, but the remainder of the fellowship award will be forfeited. Recipients are required to immediately notify the CBF (Ryenne Easley at 312-554-1247 or reasley@chicagobar.org) of the receipt of any federal loan forgiveness.

The CBF may ask fellowship recipients to offer feedback about the application process and participation in the fellowship award program. Fellowship recipients must agree to the terms of the fellowship when they are selected for the award.

Questions/Additional Information

For additional information, contact Ryanne Easley at 312-554-1247 or reasley@chicagobar.org.

Qualifying CBF Grantee Organizations - 2015

Access Living – *Legal Services Department*
AIDS Legal Council of Chicago
Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA)
CARPLS (Coordinated Advice & Referral Program for Legal Services)
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago – *Legal Assistance*
Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR)
Center for Disability & Elder Law (CDEL)
Center for Economic Progress – *Tax Clinic*
Centro Romero - *Latin American Legal Assistance Services*
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE)
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless – *Law Project*
Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and The Law Project
Chicago Legal Clinic (CLC)
Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS)
Domestic Violence Legal Clinic (DVLC)
Equip for Equality
Family Defense Center
First Defense Legal Aid
Illinois Legal Aid Online (ILAO)
Indo-American Center – *Citizenship & Immigration Services*
James B. Moran Center
Latinos Progresando – *Immigration Legal Services*
Lawndale Christian Legal Center
Lawyers’ Committee for Better Housing (LCBH)
Lawyers for the Creative Arts (LCA)
Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Family Services (LAS)
LAF
Life Span – *Center for Legal Services & Advocacy*
National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)
The Roger Baldwin Foundation of the ACLU – *Children’s Initiative*
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Uptown People’s Law Center
World Relief Chicago – *Immigrant Legal Services*

Qualifying Legal Aid Organizations Outside of Cook County

DuPage Bar Legal Aid Service
Equip for Equality
Immigration Project (Bloomington)
Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation
Prairie State Legal Services