

WASHULAW'S SUMMER PUBLIC INTEREST FUNDING PROGRAM

Overview

Washington University School of Law is strongly committed to supporting our students who pursue careers in government and public interest law. The goal of the Summer Public Interest Funding Program (SPIP) is to provide financial support to students who would otherwise be unable to work in an unpaid government or public interest summer internship.

If your financial circumstances allow you to work without payment or financial support, please consider opting out of the Summer Public Interest Funding Program so that available funding can be allocated to students with the greatest need.

▪ **First-Year Students**

WashULaw offers funding of up to \$3,000 (less taxes) for 1L law students who work full-time in eligible non-profit or government law positions for a minimum of six weeks (roughly 200 hours) and who complete an SPIP application.

SPIP is a modest award intended to help cover modest living expenses. SPIP is not comparable to the pay at firm jobs and is not free money. You must fulfill the SPIP requirements outlined below, including completing an application. It will never be to your disadvantage to apply for outside funding, and doing so is encouraged.

▪ **Second-Year Students**

Second-year students in need who work full-time in eligible non-profit or government law positions for a minimum of six weeks (roughly 200 hours) during their second-year summer are eligible to apply for summer funding through a competitive application process. The majority of awards are \$3,500, although there are a few larger awards. The funds come from multiple sources, so the number of awards varies annually. SPIP is a modest award intended to help cover modest living expenses. SPIP is not comparable to the pay at firm jobs and is not free money. You must fulfill the SPIP requirements outlined below. It will never be to your disadvantage to apply for outside funding, and doing so is encouraged.

Because 2L funding is competitive, students are encouraged to ensure their applications are strong and demonstrate a commitment to a career in public interest. Applications for 2Ls are evaluated by an external committee. The committee makes its funding determinations based on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to: (1) the applicant's commitment to public interest; (2) the applicant's intended future career plans; (3) the substantive nature of the applicant's summer employment; and (4) the applicant's circumstances, including financial need. The Career Center is available to help you draft the strongest application possible.

Students must typically accept summer employment before being awarded the summer funding, which is usually announced in mid-April. We are always happy to help you look for external funding sources as well.

ACCESS THE [2L APPLICATION HERE](#). The application opens on January 2, 2024, at 8:00 AM.

Eligible Public Interest Positions

An eligible position is one in which the student is:

- Working for the public interest in a legal, policy, legislative, or advocacy setting under legal supervision and in a position where at least one year of law school is required; and
 - Working for a non-profit organization;
 - Working for a government office; or
 - Working in a judicial externship/internship program; and
- Working in a position where you are not receiving payment **intended to compensate you for work performed during the internship**, whether from your place of employment or another outside source.

Positions at law firms, private corporations, political campaigns, or in paid positions at a university (including Law School Research Assistants) are not eligible. Additionally, spending any portion of your summer in a paid law firm or private employer typically results in ineligibility for the SPIP program. You may, however, count all hours in an unpaid public interest or government position towards your Pro Bono Pledge, assuming it meets the Pro Bono Pledge criteria and requirements. If you have any questions about your specific situation, please schedule a meeting with the Career Center to discuss.

Funding

WashU Law's Summer Public Interest Funding Program is meant to fill in gaps when other funding is not available to you. If your public interest-eligible employer offers payment or a stipend, or you receive payment or a stipend from another fellowship source, such as Equal Justice America, you should accept the payment or stipend. It will never be to your disadvantage to apply for or accept outside funding. WashU Law's stipend is intended to bridge any gaps and/or supplement any additional income you might otherwise receive. The goal of the program is to provide financial support to students who would otherwise be unable to work in an unpaid government or public interest summer internship. If your financial circumstances allow you to work without payment or financial support, please consider opting out of the Summer Public Interest Funding Program so that available funding can be allocated to students with the greatest need.

You are required to report and disclose all known sources of funding for any summer legal work on the application. If you do not know of funding sources at the time you apply, you are required to supplement your application to disclose this information. Failure to report and/or disclose additional funding sources may result in a requirement to pay back any funding received.

Taxes

SPIP funding is taxable. Funding through the Federal Work-Study program will be subject to usual payroll taxes and withholdings. Funding provided outside of the Federal Work-Study program is also taxable and will be reported to you on a 1099-MISC.

If you have any questions about taxes, please contact Lisa Bradley (lsbradley@wustl.edu) in the School of Law business office.

Program Requirements

To obtain funding, in addition to completing the 1L application or 2L application, students must be willing to work with the Career Center on programming. This may include preparing a blog entry, hosting a Career Conversation regarding their place of employment and summer experience, or serving as a student ambassador for a related discussion.

Additionally, students may be required to participate in the following during the summer:

- **Periodic Virtual Meetings** with the Career Center to discuss your summer employment and future job search; and
- **A Mock Interview** with an alum to help develop and refine your interviewing skills and to broaden your network. The Career Center will handle all logistics.

Please note that as part of the program, the Career Center will request feedback from your host organization to assist with future placements and partnerships, which may include a performance evaluation for your organization to complete.

In addition to the Career Center's requirements enumerated above, HR and/or WashU's business office may impose additional requirements, including but not limited to an in-person appointment to complete required paperwork.

FAQS

▪ **How do I apply?**

ACCESS THE APPLICATIONS HERE:

- [1L APPLICATION](#): The 1L application opens Feb. 26, 2024, and is due Apr. 19, 2024, at 11:59 PM CST.
- [2L APPLICATION](#): The 2L application opens Jan. 2, 2024, and is due Mar. 20, 2024, at 5:00 PM CST.

▪ **What if I don't have an offer by the deadline?**

Students are not required to have accepted an offer at the time of application. All students who anticipate that they may want to participate in the summer funding program must apply. You may withdraw if your plans change. You may supplement your application at any point with your internship placement or relevant information. Please note that funds cannot be disbursed until all the required documents are received.

▪ **Can I still participate if my employer or another program offers funding?**

WashULaw's Summer Public Interest Funding Program is meant to fill in gaps when other funding is not available to you. Additionally, Federal Work Study rules govern whether you are eligible to receive Federal Work Study monies and additional outside funding. **Generally, if you receive payment intended to compensate you for work performed during the internship, whether from your place of employment or another outside source, you might not be eligible for Federal Work Study money also intended to compensate you for work performed during the internship.** If you receive a grant or fellowship from your employer or an outside source that is *not* meant to compensate you for work performed during the internship

(i.e., if it is intended to compensate you for living expenses, housing, supplemental income, etc.), you may be eligible to receive both.

These situations will be unique to each individual and program, and you should speak with a member of the Career Center about your specific circumstance. Please note you will not be in a worse position by accepting outside funding.

▪ **Are international positions eligible?**

Yes, international positions are eligible for funding under the same eligibility guidelines. Students in international placements will receive their awards before leaving the country in the form of a single, lump-sum check, to assist with costs such as airfare and immunizations.

▪ **Can I earn more money if I work in excess of six weeks?**

Unfortunately, you cannot receive more than your maximum award (\$3,000 for 1Ls). Please note that this should not deter you from working for your organization in an unpaid capacity. The more time you spend with your organization, the more hands-on experience you will gain, and the more time you will have to develop a relationship and rapport for a reference or return offer down the road.

You may apply any excess hours toward your Pro Bono Pledge to earn a Pro Bono distinction at graduation. Any hours worked in excess of the hour minimum outlined in the Pro Bono Pledge guidelines maintained by PSAB may be applied toward the pledge.

▪ **How do I get paid?**

You will be paid once during the summer, typically at the end of June. HR will explain the payment structure when you schedule the mandatory appointment to complete your paperwork.

▪ **What if I cannot work a minimum of six weeks?**

Our goal is to support you in obtaining the best possible work experience. Please contact the Career Center staff to discuss any opportunities that are less than six weeks. Prorated funding may be available.

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