



# APPLICANT FELLOWSHIP GUIDE

The Equal Justice Works Fellowship program serves a dual purpose: to jump-start the careers of aspiring public interest attorneys, and to build crucial capacity at legal nonprofit organizations nationwide. Fellows join a prestigious network of leaders empowered to pursue the issues they are passionate about, working with and expanding upon the mission of their host organization.

**EQUAL  
JUSTICE  
WORKS**®

# Your project Your community

Equal Justice Works provides a blueprint for new lawyers to turn their passions into public interest careers that are truly their own. With the support of their host organizations, sponsors, and Equal Justice Works, Fellows pursue projects of their own creation, allowing them to think beyond general staff attorney positions.

Candidates and prospective host organizations collaborate closely to design a project and apply for the Fellowship. This guide will show you how best to identify a host organization to support your vision, design an innovative legal project, and submit a competitive application.

## QUESTIONS?

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[Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#)

## ABOUT EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS

For more than three decades, Equal Justice Works has created opportunities for public interest lawyers committed to building a more just society. We believe that the most vulnerable among us deserve equal access to justice and quality legal representation.

To achieve this, Equal Justice Works offers a continuum of opportunities for law students and lawyers, which provide the training and experience that enable them to effectively represent the communities and causes they care most about.

# Plan your process

*Follow this suggested timeline for best results*



Post-submission: Each application is reviewed and scored by Fellowship alumni. High-scoring applicants interview and are selected for the Fellowship on a rolling basis between November 2018 and April 2019. Fellowships begin September 2019.

# Why become a Fellow?

## FORGE YOUR PATH

As a Fellow, you will engage directly with the issues and communities you care about the most. **Where would you like to work? What would you like to accomplish, and for whom?** With questions like these in mind, you can tailor your project to suit your interests, passions, and personal and professional goals. Equal Justice Works encourages applicants to consider the unique needs of their own communities when preparing their application, and places significant weight on projects to which a Fellow has a strong connection.

## EXPLORE NEW TERRITORY

Equal Justice Works does not fund general staff attorney positions. Instead, this Fellowship program creates positions at public interest organizations through which Fellows can spearhead new and innovative projects. By becoming a Fellow, you will have the opportunity to leverage your unique skills to further help address emerging and underserved legal issues.

## GROW YOUR NETWORK

The Fellowship program could not exist without the generous support of the law firms, corporations, private foundations, and individuals that fund each project. Beyond contributing financially, sponsors are also encouraged to participate in the selection process, often seeking out projects that align with their institutional values, philanthropic goals, and pro bono priorities. Nearly all Fellowship sponsors are interested in being involved in some manner and remain connected with the Fellow throughout their project. Sponsor involvement comes in many forms, such as litigation support or staffing a clinic with the sponsor's pro bono attorneys. Through collaboration with their sponsors, Fellows are able to forge valuable relationships with the legal community at large.



## Informational Webinars

Equal Justice Works encourages Fellowship candidates to attend an informational webinar session prior to completing their application. Register [here](#)—whether or not you are able to attend live, you will still receive a recording via email after the session ends. Toward the end of the application period, we will offer two sessions open to **host organizations, candidates, and law school professionals alike** that will explore the nuts and bolts of a high-scoring application, to help guide applicants as they work to fine-tune their materials.

**JUNE 26, 2018**

4–5 pm EDT  
Fellowship Candidates

**AUGUST 15, 2018**

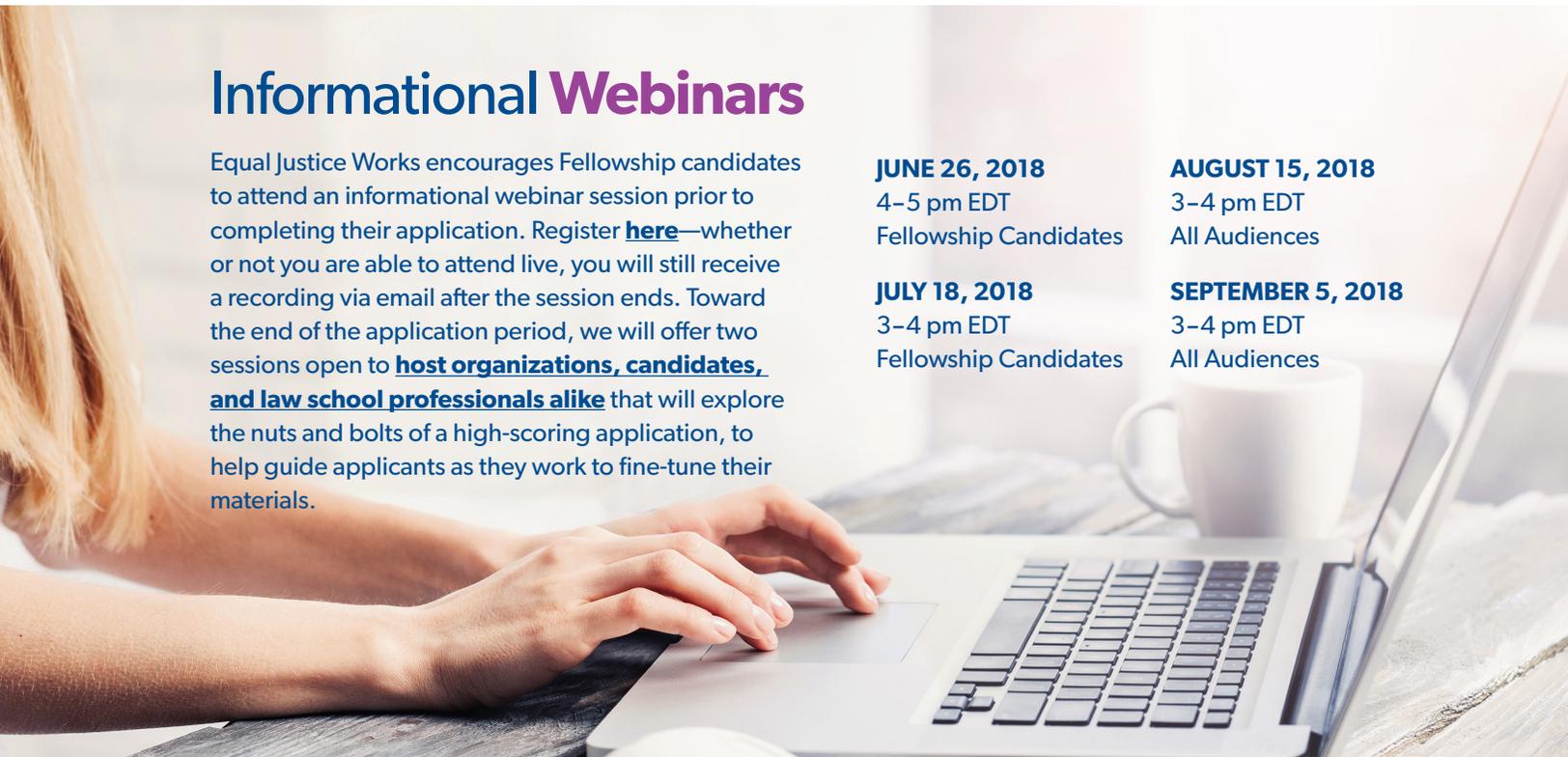
3–4 pm EDT  
All Audiences

**JULY 18, 2018**

3–4 pm EDT  
Fellowship Candidates

**SEPTEMBER 5, 2018**

3–4 pm EDT  
All Audiences



# Benefits

Equal Justice Works aims to break down the financial and structural barriers that prevent talented candidates from pursuing careers in the public sector. Throughout the two-year project term, Fellows receive the support they need to focus on their professional goals, including:



## 1. SALARY

As an employee of the host organization, each Fellow's salary is determined by their organization and will be equivalent to that of a similarly qualified and experienced attorney at the organization. Equal Justice Works provides each host organization with up to \$50,000 annually toward each Fellow's salary. If the Fellow's annual salary exceeds Equal Justice Works' contribution, the host organization must cover the difference.

## 2. FRINGE BENEFITS

Fellows receive the same health insurance and fringe benefits provided to other attorneys at their host organization.

## 3. LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

Equal Justice Works provides loan repayment assistance to Fellows who qualify through a Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) for both years of the Fellowship. Fellows qualify for up to \$5,000 in LRAP assistance per Fellowship year. The amount of assistance a Fellow will receive is based upon the monthly Income Based Repayment (IBR) set forth by the Federal Direct Loan Program. The LRAP includes both federal undergraduate and graduate educational debt.

For more information on managing your student debt and taking advantage of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, click [here](#).

## 4. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Each fall, Equal Justice Works brings newly-selected Fellows and Fellows entering their second year of service to Washington, D.C. for three days of Leadership Development Training with experts in the field. The training equips Fellows with necessary practical leadership and management skills to help them succeed in their Fellowships. Additionally, the training offers a great opportunity to build long-term peer networks that will last throughout the Fellow's public interest career.

## 5. ONGOING GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FROM EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS

Equal Justice Works provides Fellows with program support and assistance through skills-based webinars, check-ins, and dedicated staff members who are ready to help you navigate your Fellowship. Equal Justice Works also facilitates and manages the relationship between a Fellow and their sponsor(s).

# Eligibility requirements

As part of the application process, each candidate must identify and collaborate with an eligible prospective host organization to propose a project that supports the mission of the organization and provides the candidate with the opportunity to exercise leadership.

## CANDIDATES

You must have graduated from an [Equal Justice Works member law school](#) before September 2019 with a JD or LLM. You may not have held a full-time (more than 30 hours/week), permanent, public interest attorney position previously, though applicants coming from bridge/gap Fellowships or clerkships are eligible. Experienced private sector attorneys who have demonstrated a commitment to public interest law and have the relevant skills and initiative to carry out the goals of the project are encouraged to apply. Candidates may not have participated previously in any major Fellowship program such as the Skadden Fellowship Program, Echoing Green Fellowship, Soros Justice Fellowship, etc.

**NOTE: Current and former Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Fellows are eligible to apply.**



## HOST ORGANIZATIONS

The host organization must be a nonprofit organization in the United States or its territories that will commit to serve as your employer during the entire term of the two-year Fellowship. The organization must provide supervision, a workspace, employee health and fringe benefits, and resources (computer, internet access, phone, etc.) needed to successfully complete your project. Host organizations must be able to provide legal supervision for your project. Finally, if the Fellow's salary will exceed the \$50,000 provided by Equal Justice Works annually, the host organization must commit to paying the difference.

## PROJECTS

Eligible projects are those that propose to serve disenfranchised individuals, groups, or issues not adequately represented in our legal system. Projects may include direct representation, legal education, legal training, community organizing, transactional work, policy work, litigation, administrative representation, or a combination of these strategies. Equal Justice Works will consider projects in any issue area except international work or standard criminal defense. Equal Justice Works Fellowships aim to create new public interest positions and therefore may not be used to fund general staff attorney positions within existing organizations. Instead, they should provide Fellows with the opportunity to exercise leadership on a distinct project. Individuals and host organizations work together to generate project proposals.



# Identify the issue

*What problem do you want to solve?*

Before seeking a host organization partner, identify the issues that resonate with your passions, your goals, and the needs of your community.

## Common Issue Areas of Interest:

Access to courts

Affordable housing/  
Microfinance

Aid to disadvantaged children  
and youth

Children and families

Civil rights

Community economic  
development

Consumer rights

Corporate and government  
accountability

Criminal justice reform

Disability rights

Domestic violence

Access to education/STEM

Education/  
Special education

Elder law

Disaster relief

Environmental justice

Farmworkers' /  
Migrant workers' rights

LGBT rights

Healthcare

Human rights

Immigration/Asylum

Immigrant communities

Medical-Legal Partnerships

Police accountability

Poverty/Economic  
opportunity

Prisoners' rights

Public benefits

Reproductive health

Technology/Privacy

Trafficking

Veterans' issues

Voting rights/  
Electoral participation

Women's issues

Workers' rights

**Don't forget!**

The application period  
begins June 20, 2018,  
and closes on

**September  
21, 2018.**

\* **NOTE:** Equal Justice Works does not support standard criminal defense or international projects at this time.



# Find the partner

Identify a host organization

Equal Justice Works does not match Fellows with their host organizations; rather, Fellowship candidates and organizations must come together to design the project and complete the application. We encourage candidates to work closely with potential host organizations early in the process, so that both parties' objectives are aligned every step of the way. Candidates may find prospective host organizations in many ways:

## 1. UTILIZE YOUR NETWORKS

Talk to organizations where you have interned, especially if you are planning to further explore the legal issues you addressed in that role. Contact your former supervisor and discuss the possibility of applying for a Fellowship together. Even if you are looking to pursue a different direction, it can still be helpful to get in touch with former supervisors, who are likely to have connections within the larger public interest community.

## 2. KNOW WHERE TO LOOK

Organizations interested in hosting Fellows are encouraged to utilize online platforms such as their website, social media channels, online job boards, as well as the career services offices of local law schools, to search for candidates. These organizations may ask candidates to apply with a resume, project idea, or writing sample. Make sure that your materials match with their strategic vision for the Fellowship.

## 3. BREAK THE ICE

Know of an organization that would be perfect for the project you are envisioning, but don't have a connection with them yet? Or, are you still looking for the perfect home for your project? It doesn't hurt to get in touch! Over [145 organizations](#) are currently hosting Equal Justice Works Fellows. Reaching out to Fellows and alumni is a great way to get to know the organization and find out who you should contact regarding a Fellowship application. When approaching an organization about hosting your Fellowship project, it is important to have a vision in mind, and to also demonstrate a willingness to work closely with the organization to develop the specifics of the project, in order to ensure mutual expectations are clear. Some candidates find more success when they come prepared with brief project outlines and information about the host organization's role in the Fellowship.

## JOB BOARDS

### YOUR LAW SCHOOL

Your law school's Career Services or Public Interest Office will likely have connections with local, regional, and national nonprofits that may be interested in hosting Fellows. Speak with your law school counselor to help reach out to these organizations.



### PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS DIRECTORY (PSJD)

**PSJD** is an online job board that connects law students, lawyers, and employers interested in public service. Access to the site is free and because PSJD is widely used and accessible nationwide, it is the most popular place for organizations to solicit Fellowship candidates. Search for Fellowships by checking the "Legal: Project-Based (e.g., Skadden)" box under Job Type.



### NATIONAL LEGAL AID & DEFENDER ASSOCIATION (NLADA)

**NLADA's Job Board** is another free service that "connects organizations and professionals across the equal justice community."



### IDEALIST

**Idealist** is perhaps the most well-known job board for volunteer and nonprofit opportunities, though it is not limited to the legal field. Make sure to hone your search in order to find relevant job listings.



# Benefits of hosting a Fellow

When approaching a host organization, it is helpful to come prepared with a list of the benefits organizations will have access to by hosting a Fellow.

## 1. LEVERAGE NEW FUNDING

Equal Justice Works will provide up to \$50,000 annually towards a Fellow's salary during their two-year term. That's \$100,000 the host organization would not have otherwise! In the event that the regular salary of a comparable position exceeds this amount, the host organization will need to make up the difference; however, this potential cost pales in comparison to the value of an additional full-time staff member, particularly one dedicated to an exciting new project.

## 2. FOSTER NEW INITIATIVES

Because Equal Justice Works does not fund general staff attorney positions, potential host organizations can use this as an opportunity to consider new directions for their work. By hosting a Fellow, the organization can increase capacity or expand legal services in ways it wouldn't have been able to do otherwise. The goal of the program is to create solutions that are sustainable beyond each two-year project term, making the Fellowship the perfect opportunity to pilot new projects.

## 3. NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK

Participating in a Fellowship is a great networking opportunity for Fellows and host organizations alike. The prominent corporations, foundations, and individuals that select and sponsor Fellows are often eager to remain involved in some way, providing organizations the opportunity to form pro bono relationships with sponsors and their legal teams. Such collaborations can lead to additional capacity through clinic volunteers, research assistance, legal drafting, and other services.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

When considering a host organization for your project, be sure to ask yourself the following questions in order to determine whether or not they might be the best fit.

- What work, if any, has the organization done to address your proposed project issue?
- How large is the organization? Does it have the capacity to provide support and supervision for your project?
- What is the organization's mission? Are its values and culture aligned with your own?
- Does the organization have experience mentoring recent graduates and supporting emerging public interest leaders?





# Design the project

*Plan how best to accomplish your goals*

Once you have committed to partnering with an eligible host organization, you can begin to work on your application. Equal Justice Works encourages applicants to start the application as early as possible, as the process will require significant planning and preparation.

## WORK TOGETHER

Once the organization has agreed to host the project, work closely to develop the details of the proposal and identify specific strategies. Keep in mind that the proposed project must fit with, and ideally expand upon, the organization's mission and work. Parts of the proposal will be written by the host organization, and should reflect its full support of the project and willingness to work as your partner in implementing it. Whether or not you have previous work experience with the organization, your application must show that you have built a relationship, established a mutual understanding about the goals and parameters of the proposed project, and collaborated to develop the specifics.



## IDENTIFY SPECIFIC NEEDS FOR SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

The application will ask you to describe the need and community to be served by your project. A geographic area, particular population, or cause can be “needy” by virtue of the number of people affected, the size and nature of the geographic area, the dearth of legal assistance available to the population, and the timeliness or potential impact of the issue. The key is to paint a picture of the particular problem in the specific community you wish to serve. For example, general statistics stating that foster youth neglect is a nationwide problem are compelling, but may not be enough to sell the merits of a youth advocacy project specifically based in San Francisco. A stronger proposal would describe the particular crisis facing foster youth in San Francisco, use data to support that assertion, and weave in client stories to humanize the potential impact.

## OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN

A strong application will show that the candidate has a good understanding of the target community. Equal Justice Works places high value on personal ties to the community the proposed project will serve, for example, a formerly undocumented person who plans to work with undocumented immigrant communities. A direct personal connection is not essential, but everyone has a story that informs their passions—candidates are encouraged to dig deep to identify what motivates them. You can strengthen a proposal by showing

## See the difference for yourself

These Fellows built upon their host organizations' missions in innovative and meaningful ways.



2017

### Jordan Chisolm

LEGAL SERVICES OF GREATER MIAMI, INC.

Jordan provides free transactional legal services to minority and immigrant entrepreneurs in low-income Miami neighborhoods to strengthen business viability and community revitalization.



2016

### Jordan Aiken

BET TZEDEK

Jordan utilized her seven years of advocacy experience to create the nation's first transgender-specific Medical-Legal Partnership, allowing members of Los Angeles' sizeable LGBT community to receive the specialized support they may not find elsewhere.



2015

### Mindy Phillips

EAST BAY COMMUNITY LAW CENTER

In Oakland, where an estimated 30 percent of the population is foreign-born, Mindy was the only attorney to host regular, free immigration-focused legal clinics at local schools, allowing immigrant families to access help and resources in a safe, familiar environment.



2014

### Sabrina Talukder

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF NEW YORK CITY

Sabrina implemented an online tool throughout Legal Aid offices in New York, to identify domestic violence and human trafficking survivors trapped in our criminal justice system. She also created a secure hotline for survivors, enabling them to obtain legal services.

that you have used innovative ways to lay the groundwork for the project in the community. For instance, consider obtaining a commitment from local community groups to collaborate in a coalition, getting input from local leaders representing the target community, or drawing on a recent needs assessment to identify specific needs and particular strategies that the community wants employed.

## PROPOSE REALISTIC STRATEGIES

The project proposal should strike a balance between being distinct and realistic without being too narrow or unremarkable. Consider whether the project will make a real difference in the issue area. **Do the proposed strategies make sense? Do the goals and timetable reflect good judgment and realistic assessment of how the project will be accomplished?** Additionally, keep in mind that strategies must make sense in light of your chosen host organization. For instance, if you propose to file a class action lawsuit on behalf of migrant farmworkers, the proposal should demonstrate that your host organization has the resources to litigate class actions, the experience to provide adequate supervision, and a history of or interest in working on farmworker rights. Finally, your strategies must make sense for the community you propose to serve. Research which strategies have already been employed, and determine which successful models have been used elsewhere.

## DEMONSTRATE SUSTAINABILITY

Equal Justice Works seeks projects designed to impact a large number of people through the implementation of an innovative program, or the replication of a model that has been used successfully in another community. It is very important to show that the proposed project will have a lasting impact, and that you and your host organization are committed to preserving the impact of the project beyond the two-year Fellowship term. Sustainability can take many forms, such as partner organizations continuing a clinic or coalition that was established, the host organization refilling the Fellow's position as a staff attorney who will continue the work, or the Fellow staying on after the Fellowship to continue to lead the project.

# Use the **application** as your guide

Striking a balance between your own passions and the organization's strategic goals is paramount to success. Pay particular attention to opportunities for pro bono involvement from sponsors, ongoing sustainability of the project, connections to the community, and the needs of the community being served. A well-designed proposal addresses each of these considerations and many more.

The application, to be completed online, is divided into three distinct expository sections, with required answers ranging from 200 to 2,500 characters. As you and your prospective host organization develop the project proposal, it can be helpful to use the descriptions below as your guide.

You can also view PDFs of last year's application [on our website](#).

## Part I. Project Description

*Part I should be a collaborative effort between the prospective host organization and the candidate.*

Work together with your host organization and start getting your plans down on paper. You should be prepared to provide:

- A **one-sentence description** of the project and the population it seeks to help
- A **statement of need** describing the issues to be addressed and the reasons the project is timely
- The **goals of the project**, including strategies, anticipated outcomes, and plans for sustainability beyond the two-year term
- A **timeline of the Fellowship project**, broken down into six-month increments, through the entire two years of the Fellowship
- A **description of potential sponsor involvement**—How can the sponsor be involved in your project?
- An **acknowledgment of similar services** within the community, with a description of what distinguishes your project, and ways in which collaboration may be possible
- An **example of prior collaboration** with pro bono attorneys, if any

## Part II. Candidate Background

*Part II should be completed by the candidate and reviewed by the prospective host organization.*

In this section, you will describe the ways in which your personal background and experiences make you uniquely qualified to serve the identified community. As you prepare this section, be mindful of how these materials connect with your chosen host organization's stated mission. Your potential host organization should review this section prior to submission. Be prepared to provide:



- A **personal statement** detailing your connection to the community with which you will work
- A PDF version of your **résumé**. Don't forget to tailor your resume to your application.
- A **list of three (3) professional references** from your internship supervisors, professors, etc. other than those writing your recommendation letters. Be prepared to provide the name and location of each organization, the length of your time there, and the contact information of someone who can speak about your work history.
- PDF versions of **two (2) letters of recommendation** from supervisors, professors, etc. If you interned at your proposed host organization previously, you may use them as a reference or recommendation letter writer.

## Part III. Host Organization Background

*Part III should be completed by the prospective host organization with input from the candidate.*

In the final section of the application, the host organization will describe how a Fellow will make a unique and significant difference to the operation of their organization. Additionally, the host organization will be asked to provide details about the supervision that will be offered to the Fellow. The organization should be prepared to provide:

- A **description of how the project will be distinct** from the work of general staff attorneys or previous Fellows, if any
- The **candidate's history at the organization**, if any
- **Information about previous Fellows** hosted by the organization, if any
- Details about the organization's **pro bono activities**
- Details about the **proposed supervisor**, including:
  - Relevant issue area experience
  - Supervision and management experience
  - The proposed level of interaction between Fellow and supervisor
- A **description of the technology and resources** that will be available to the Fellow
- **Information about the Fellow's salary and benefits** to be provided by the organization

## SHOW COMMITMENT TO THE WORK

The application will ask for detailed candidate information. In developing this section, you should show how you have developed the experience that makes you the right person to carry out the project you propose. Do you have the substantive knowledge necessary to pursue the project goals or can you explain how it will be obtained? Do you have experience with the target community, whether by working on the specific issue or in the geographic or cultural community? Do you have a personal relationship with the community to be served? Equal Justice Works also seeks candidates with a demonstrated commitment to public service—whether before, during, or after law school—or an explanation of the factors that prevented the candidate from pursuing public service activities (e.g., the candidate supported a family throughout school), as well as an indication that the candidate now has a long-term commitment to the public interest.



# Complete the application

*Submit your application and prepare to serve*

## Tips for a smooth submission

- Create an online profile beginning on **June 20**, to ensure that you are gathering the necessary information to plan the project.
- Don't jeopardize your hard work by forgetting to proofread! As you plan the application process at the beginning of the summer, build in ample time for final review and editing.
  - We encourage applicants to have their application reviewed by at least three different people prior to submission—because of its length, it requires far more than just a quick read to ensure high quality work.
  - In addition to working closely with your host organization, consider seeking feedback from law school professors, public interest career counselors at your school, practitioners, employers, organizations, and especially past and current Fellows. Ask them to pose tough questions to help you identify potential ways to strengthen your proposal.
- If you are pasting content into the online application from a different program, such as Microsoft Word, make sure to give the application a final review in case of formatting errors.

### Don't forget!

The application period begins June 20, 2018, and closes on

**September 21, 2018.**

## After you apply

After you submit your application, it will be reviewed by Equal Justice Works staff and alumni. High-scoring applications are selected to interview with sponsors between December and April. Fellowships are awarded on a rolling basis throughout this period.

### POST-APPLICATION TIMELINE

<b>September 21, 2018</b>	Applications Due by 11:59 pm EDT
<b>October 2018</b>	Alumni Review and Score Applications
<b>December 2018 – April 2019</b>	Top-scoring Candidates Interviewed by Sponsors
<b>December 2018 – April 2019</b>	Candidates Selected for Fellowships on Rolling Basis
<b>September 2019</b>	Fellowships Begin

## Interviews and Offers

### EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS FELLOWSHIPS INTERVIEWS

You will be notified if you are selected as a semifinalist to interview for a Fellowship. Equal Justice Works provides guidance to semifinalists on how best to prepare for interviews and what to expect in the interviews. Equal Justice Works recommends that each candidate invited to interview practice in a mock interview. Sponsors participate in the interviews along with Equal Justice Works staff. In an effort to provide candidates with maximum opportunities to be selected for funding, candidates may have several interviews over the course of the winter and spring.

### EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS FELLOWSHIPS OFFERS

Equal Justice Works recognizes that Fellowship candidates may receive offers for other employment opportunities during the course of the selection process. We also realize that there are multiple stakeholders involved in this process, including the host organization. In an effort to accommodate these realities, Equal Justice Works:

- Requires that candidates accept or reject Fellowship offers within 48 hours of receiving the offer. Those accepting offers must sign an offer letter, and immediately withdraw any outstanding applications for clerkships or other opportunities.
- Conducts Equal Justice Works Fellowship interviews and selection after all Skadden Fellows have been selected. Therefore, candidates who apply to both the Fellowship Programs will know the result of their Skadden Fellowship Program application before Equal Justice Works interviews begin.
- Requests candidates to notify Equal Justice Works immediately if they intend to accept or have accepted another position. Candidates should also notify their law schools and prospective Fellowship host organizations if they intend accept another opportunity.
- Equal Justice Works does not defer Fellowship offers. Candidates may reapply again the following year.

Application period  
**JUNE 20 – SEPTEMBER 21, 2018**

[WWW.EQUALJUSTICEWORKS.ORG](http://WWW.EQUALJUSTICEWORKS.ORG)

[FACEBOOK](#) • [TWITTER](#)

QUESTIONS?

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