



Public Interest Law Society (PILS)

SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS FAQ

1) Who can apply for a PILS fellowship?

Any Marquette law student who will be a Marquette law student in the next academic year may apply. 3Ls graduating in May are not eligible, as they will no longer be a law student at the time work will be performed. Students planning to transfer are not eligible.

2) Where do I find application materials?

Everything you need is online: <https://law.marquette.edu/community/apply-pils-fellowship>

3) What qualifies as public interest work for a fellowship?

Public interest law includes working for individuals, groups, and social interests that are traditionally underserved or have barriers to equal access to justice. Public interest law seeks to promote social justice through the empowerment of people and communities. It encompasses both policy and direct representation legal work. It also includes prosecutor or public defender offices, military judge advocate general, and governmental offices that directly serve individuals with challenges to access to justice. The work must be primarily legal in nature and supervised by a licensed attorney. Participation in electoral campaigns or the like cannot be supported through a PILS fellowship. Fellowship applicants are expected to articulate in their application materials how the proposed work is in the public interest.

4) How do I secure a host site?

The Career Planning Center hosts the Public Interest Interview Program (PIIP) each February. This program brings together public interest employers and students for summer and post-graduate positions. Many future fellows secure a placement by participating in this event.

The Office of Public Service has a catalog of prior PILS fellows' placements, including a description of the work performed and supervising attorney contact information. The assistant dean for public service, Angela Schultz, can also email you a copy of the catalog.

If you plan to stay in Milwaukee, the website www.legalhelpmilwaukee.org is a good resource when browsing for agencies doing public interest legal work. Another excellent resource that allows you to search for opportunities by location is www.psjd.org. Don't hesitate to make an appointment with the assistant dean for public service to brainstorm sites in another city, state, or country.

Research organizations before you interview with them or approach one as a possible host. Are you enthused about the organization's mission? Have they hosted law students in the past? Do they have a legal project suitable to your skill set? Will they provide high quality supervision? What is their reputation?

5) What if I don't have a host site by the time the fellowship application is due?

Do your best to secure a site before you the application deadline. If you secure your host site soon after you submit the fellowship application, you should submit information about your host site immediately to publicservicelaw@marquette.edu. If you do not secure a host site in time and are awarded a fellowship, your award will be contingent on securing a site that can support public interest legal work in a timely manner.

6) What if I want to change host sites after I have been awarded a fellowship?

You must ask for approval of a host site change. Contact the assistant dean for public service, [Angela Schultz](#).

7) How many hours of public interest work does a fellow complete during the summer?

350 hours (generally 35 hours per week for ten weeks).

8) How much is a PILS award?

\$4,800. Applicants may request an additional \$1,000 to apply towards travel expenses including travel to out-of-state or out-of-country placements, daily long-distance commutes, or the need to maintain two apartments in two different cities during the summer months.

9) Do hours performed in excess of those required for the fellowship count as pro bono?

Yes. Any work you do for the organization beyond 350 hours will meet the definition of pro bono: 1) work that is primarily legal in nature, 2) not for pay or credit, 3) supervised by a licensed attorney, and 4) of service to underserved individuals or groups, those with barriers to equal access to justice, or for an organization whose mission is to serve the same. Record the excess hours in your [pro bono account](#) or submit a paper record to the bin on the front desk of the Eisenberg Suite and the time will be input to your pro bono account for you.

10) Can I earn academic credit for my work?

No.

11) What is the overall timeframe to apply and perform the work if I am awarded a fellowship?

- After the PILS Auction in February: Applications open online.
- Early February: Read *Law News* for an announcement about a PILS fellowship informational meeting (generally scheduled for the week following the Auction).
- Early March: Applications are due. The online application contains the deadline.
- Spring Break: The PILS Review Committee reads all applications and recommends recipients to Dean Kearney.

- Late March or Early April: Awards are announced. Fellows are provided an award letter, a contract, and a W9 for their signature.
- Awards are distributed 6-8 weeks after students submit the required paperwork to the assistant dean for public service.
- Fellows complete 350 hours: May-August
- Report of hours due to the assistant dean for public service by the first week of September.
- Lunch with Dean Kearney to reflect on the past summer is held in fall.

12) What do I need to contribute to the Public Interest Law Society in return for the fellowship?

All PILS fellows contribute a minimum of 20 hours of service to the organization. These are *not* pro bono hours because the service is not legal in nature. Instead, the service focuses on the continued success of PILS. The majority of PILS service hours are focused on soliciting donations for the annual Auction. Some fellows may also spend time on other organizational needs including the annual PILS Thanksgiving Dinner and other endeavors of the organization.

13) How can I put together the strongest fellowship application possible?

The application consists of your resume, two letters of recommendation, a description of the work you will perform, and your past involvement in public interest work.

- *Resume.* If you have not already, you are strongly encouraged to visit the Career Planning Center to have your current resume reviewed before including it with your PILS fellowship application.
- *Letters of recommendation.* Use two professional contacts who can speak to your overall professionalism, your track record of completing projects, your commitment to public interest work, or any other strengths. Letters should be emailed directly to publicservicelaw@marquette.edu.
- *Description of the work you intend to do.* Once you have a host organization, work with them to develop a description of the work you will do. Demonstrate in your materials that you have started to build a relationship with the organization and have a mutual understanding about the goals and parameters of the work you intend to perform. Do not simply cut and paste a description of the organization from their website. Make sure to state clearly how your proposal fits within the definition of public interest law.
- *Past involvement in public interest work.* Demonstrate your commitment to working for the common good by harkening back to prior experiences. Share a compelling story from your involvement in pro bono work or describe a public interest initiative you led as an undergraduate student. If necessary, offer an explanation of the factors that have prevented you from pursuing public service activities. Do not leave the reviewers wondering why you have chosen to pursue a PILS fellowship.
- *Involvement in PILS.* Attend PILS events and volunteer your time to create successful events. Donate a dish to the annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Attend the PILS Mixer. Consider making a small donation to the annual Auction (e.g.: a \$10 gift card to your favorite coffee spot).