



## Public Interest Law Society (PILS)

### SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS FAQ

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#### 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) What does *not* qualify for fellowship funding?

PILS funds will not be awarded for judicial internships or in for-profit law firm settings.

#### 5) How do I secure a host site?

The common paths students take when successfully securing a host site include:

- **Wisconsin Public Interest Interview Program.** The Career Planning Center co-hosts the Wisconsin Public Interest Interview Program (WiPIIP) each January/February. This program involves law students from UW-Madison and Marquette. It brings together public interest employers and students for summer and post-graduate positions. Many future fellows secure a placement by participating in this event.
- **Review prior host sites and reach out.** 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. To request a copy of the catalogue, email the [assistant dean for public service](#).

- **Marquette's PILS SharePoint Group.** In addition to reviewing the list of sites that have hosted law students in the past, make sure you are a member of the PILS SharePoint Group. Summer opportunities are commonly shared with the group. To join the group, submit this request form: [Please add me to the PILS email group](#).
- **PSJD.org.** Another excellent resource that allows you to search for opportunities by location is [www.psjd.org](http://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.
- **Symplicity.** Review the postings on Symplicity. Public interest posts are included there, too.

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?

#### **6) 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](mailto: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.

#### **7) 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](#).

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

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

#### **9) How much is a PILS award?**

\$4,800.

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

Any work you do for the organization beyond 350 hours will meet the definition of pro bono if the work: 1) 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](#).

#### **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?**

- Early February: Read *Law News* for an announcement about a PILS fellowship informational meeting (generally scheduled for mid-February).
- Early March: Applications are due. The online application contains the deadline, typically set for the Friday before spring break.
- 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 to the organization. The service is organized in a points structure. 20 points are required of each fellow. Points are earned through a variety of activities including: submitting an end-of-summer reflection; attending a fall lunch with Dean Kearney; emailing past fellows encouraging donations during the PILS Giving Challenge Days; drafting an optional blog post for consideration of publication on the faculty blog. Many points are also earned through participation in planning and executing the annual PILS Giving Dinner event.

### **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.
- *Recommendation Forms.* Ask two professional contacts to submit an online form (link to form: [Professional Recommendation](#)) on your behalf. Select people who can verify your overall professionalism, your track record of completing projects, your commitment to public interest work, or any other strengths. The form should be submitted by your professional contacts by the application deadline.
- *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 PILS Giving Dinner. Attend the PILS Mixer and other events. Volunteer to be on the PILS executive board.