

Frequently Asked Questions

Public Interest and Social Justice Law Board Summer Grants

Q1: Who is eligible to apply for the Public Interest and Social Justice Law Board Summer Grants (grants)?

A1: Any 1L, 2L, or 3L (part time), and returning LLM's can apply for the grants.

Q2: How does the Law Board prioritize allocation of summer grant funds?

A2: In general, first tier priority will be given in funding summer grants to legal work at civil non-profit agencies with a social justice mission.

In general, second tier priority will be given to students working in civil government offices with a social justice mission.

In general, when funds are available after fulfilling the above priorities, grants will be given to students seeking public defender, district attorney, U.S. Attorney or federal defender placements.

When SCU accepts gifts of designated funds, that is funds where the donor specified the organization where the funds should be spent in summer grants, those funds will be so distributed regardless of the priorities stated above.

Q3: What types of positions do the grants fund?

A3: Each applicant must have arranged a summer legal position with a public interest and social justice organization. Qualifying organizations include legal service agencies or other not-for profit providers of legal services. Government offices that focus on civil public interest work will qualify, but judicial externships will not. Because of limited funding, the grants usually do not fund work in a district attorney or public defender office or other criminal law related work. (see also Q2 and A2).

Q4: How much are the grants worth?

A4: The amount varies each year based on available funds. Past years have ranged from \$3000 to \$4500. The Board seeks funding, hoping to fund each grant at a \$5000 level.

Q5: Are the funds received from the grants taxable?

A5: Yes. Public Interest and Social Justice Law Board Summer Grants are considered fellowship income by the IRS. It is therefore not subject to tax withholding and is paid in full to recipients. Santa Clara University does not issue a form 1099-MISC for the tax year to report your Summer Grant as income, you should consider your award notification as your official documentation of the receipt of this funding.

Your stipend must be reported on your federal and state tax forms if you are required to file taxes. If you have questions, please consult a tax advisor about the taxability of Summer Grant funding and refer to IRS Topic 421 regarding scholarships and fellowship stipends.

Q6: How are the grants funded?

A6: The funding comes from the Public Interest and Social Justice Endowment and yearly fundraising efforts.

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Q7: How many grants are available?

A7: The number of grants available depends on the amount of money raised each year through efforts of the Public Interest and Social Justice Law Board and the Public Interest and Social Justice Coalition, as well as funds available in the Public Interest and Social Justice Endowment. Typically the Law Board awards 20-25 grants each year.

Q8: How do I find a job that will qualify?

A8: Public Interest Law Career Services (PILCS) can help you get started. Each fall, PILCS holds a Public Interest Career Fair on campus. Each February Public Interest Public Sector (PIPS) Day features several hundred public interests employers who look for law students for summer work (as well as after graduation). Check with your professors as well as with the Office of Career Management about public interest work. See www.pic.org and www.pslawnet.org for additional opportunities.

Q9: Can I get credit for the work experience or get paid by the non-profit while I'm also getting a grant?

A9: No, if receiving a grant, you cannot be otherwise paid or receiving credit for the work.

Q10: Can I receive this grant and a grant from another organization in the same summer?

A10: Yes, as long as the combined grants do not exceed \$5,000. Speak with someone from the Center for Social Justice and Public Service if you are awarded more than one grant.

Q11: Can I receive a grant for more than one summer?

A11: Yes, students can apply and receive the grant more than once.

Q12: Can students from other law schools apply for the grants?

A12: No, the grants are limited to Santa Clara Law students.

Q13: Can I apply for a part-time grant?

A13: Yes, the grant is prorated based on the percentage full-time equivalent worked.

Q14: What should I do if I am not sure if my job "fits" into the guidelines for the grant?

A14: Speak with someone from the Center for Social Justice and Public Service about whether you should apply. The application is fairly straightforward; most students apply and let the grant review committee determine if the job "fits" the guidelines.

Q15: Can I do my work for the grant at the Katherine and George Alexander Community Law Clinic or the Northern California Innocence Project?

A15: No. The grants fund work outside of Santa Clara Law.

Q16: How many hours or weeks are required for the full-time fellowship?

A16: Thirty- five to forty hours per week (depending on what is considered full-time at the placement) for ten weeks.

Q17: Do I have to write a follow-up paper upon completion of my summer work?

A17: Yes. Please prepare a 1-2 page write-up upon completion of your summer work, reflecting on the experience, due the first week of classes.

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Q18: Do the hours I work for the grant count toward the Pro-Bono awards hours or the Public Interest and Social Justice Law Certificate hours?

A18: The hours do not count towards the Pro Bono Award or the Certificate's public service hours. The hours worked will count toward the practicum requirement for the Public Interest and Social Justice Law Certificate.

Q19: Do I have to stay in the Bay Area or can I go elsewhere to do the grant work?

A19: You can go anywhere in the world!

Q20: What other resources do we have at the University to help me find a job, research my interests, and figure out how this fits into my graduation plans?

A20: Public Interest Law Career Services, Center for Social Justice and Public Service, the Social Justice Law Certificate advisor program, law faculty and staff.

Q21: I have interviewed with a potential placement and anticipate an offer for a summer internship soon. The grant deadline is today. What should I do?

A21: You may submit a summer grant application and note on the application that the offer for summer placement is not yet confirmed. You must provide complete information about the organization in the application. The Law Board will first consider grant applications with secured placements. Thereafter, and only if sufficient funds are available, the Law Board will consider applications with unconfirmed placements.

Q22: I have interviewed with a potential placement and was advised that they might have a position if I can obtain funding. What should I do?

A22: You may submit a summer grant application and note on the application that the offer for summer placement is not yet confirmed due to funding contingencies. Discuss with the hiring manager the potential money that is available to you through this grant and that your internship can be contingent upon receiving these grant funds. You must provide complete information about the organization in the application. The Law Board will first consider grant applications with secured placements. Thereafter, and only if sufficient funds are available, the Law Board will consider applications with unconfirmed contingent placements.

Q23: When are the applications due? How do I apply?

A23: Applications are due in March of each year and may be obtained on the Center's website or from the Center for Social Justice and Public Service, 3rd floor Bannan Hall. Check the website for exact dates – late applications will not be funded.