



The
Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland
Since 1905

Extern Program

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland provides free, high quality legal assistance to low income clients in civil matters and serves the communities of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain and Geauga counties. Students will be exposed to a variety of cases and projects. The extern may assist attorneys at all stages of representation including interviewing applicants and clients, engaging in legal research, drafting memoranda, motions, pleadings, affidavits and other correspondence, assisting in trial preparation, attending court and administrative hearings, and participating in community legal education and outreach events. **Our Spring Program starts in mid-January (applications accepted October and November) and our Fall Program begins in late August/early September (applications accepted May through mid-August).**

Student Qualifications: Legal Aid externs should be currently enrolled in law school. Special consideration is given to students with a demonstrated commitment to serving disadvantaged people and communities. If your resume does not reflect a commitment to public service due to personal financial constraints, please provide an explanation in your cover letter. Law students who speak Spanish are strongly encouraged to apply.

Essential Functions:

- Assist attorneys with initial client interviews and ongoing client contact.
- Assist attorneys in all aspects of advocacy and litigation, including legal research, drafting of pleadings and letters and the preparation of charts, tables, documents and other evidentiary materials, and accompany and assist at hearings and other court proceedings.
- Conduct factual investigation, including obtaining, analyzing and summarizing documents and other evidence.
- Effectively communicate with clients, co-workers, community partners, volunteers, judges and court staff.
- Develop and organize education materials and participate in community outreach events.
- Provide appropriate intake support and make referrals.

To Apply: Qualified candidates should submit a cover letter, resume and writing sample to the placement office at a law school or directly to volunteers@laslev.org with “Externship” in the subject line. Applications will be accepted for Fall and Spring Semesters based on the dates above.

Legal Aid is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate because of age, race, gender, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

About Cleveland Legal Aid: Our mission is to secure justice and resolve fundamental problems for those who are low income and vulnerable by providing high quality legal services and working for systemic solutions. Founded in 1905, Legal Aid is the fifth oldest legal aid organization in the United States. Legal Aid’s 40 staff attorneys, 68 staff members, and over 2,000 volunteer lawyers ensure access to justice for low income people.

Our Work:

The **Community Engagement Practice Group** works to develop and maintain relationships with low income communities in order to inform our work and seeks to ensure that Legal Aid identifies and responds to emerging issues, unmet client legal needs, and barriers for vulnerable populations. Law students spend significant time on legal education materials, outreach activities, advocacy projects, research and writing and only limited time on individual cases.

The **Consumer Practice Group** promotes the economic stability of low-income consumers who have been victimized by fraudulent or abusive business practices by defending homeowners in foreclosures and representing clients in high cost loans, deceptive business practices, bankruptcy, and utilities.

The **Family Practice Group** assists clients, families and children who are experiencing safety and financial problems impacting their daily stability by providing representation in matters such as divorce, civil protection orders, custody, and child support cases.

The **HEWII (Health, Education, Work, Income and Immigration) Practice Group** focuses on improving the economic stability of low-income clients.

Health: This work focuses on expanding healthcare to low-income individuals and families.

- **Community Advocacy Program:** A partnership with MetroHealth that seeks to improve health outcomes for children, immigrants, seniors and formerly incarcerated people.

Education: This group focuses on special education and access issues, including homelessness.

Work: Legal Aid's employment practice focuses on workplace abuses suffered by low-wage workers in Northeast Ohio through education, outreach and direct representation.

- **Tax:** The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) represents individuals in federal income tax collections and does other tax-related advocacy, including identity theft in tax preparation.
- **Unemployment Compensation:** The employment practice includes direct representation in unemployment hearings and systemic issues affecting unemployment claimants.

Income (Public Benefits): The group assists clients in accessing public benefits needed to maintain the safety net and become self-sufficient, with particular focus on persons with disabilities.

Immigration: Legal Aid's immigration practice promotes lawful residence and basic human rights protection to detainees and individuals who are vulnerable and at risk of removal.

The **Housing Practice Group** seeks to preserve and increase the supply of decent, affordable housing for low income persons, to secure and retain rental subsidies, and to expand reasonable policies and practices in the subsidized housing programs.

The **Volunteer Lawyers Program and Intake Group** handles applications for persons seeking legal aid and provides support for the volunteer attorneys who assist Legal Aid in providing legal assistance throughout our service area.