

PUBLIC INTEREST GRANT PROGRAM
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

SUMMER 2026

APPLICATIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY TO:

publicinterest@law.gwu.edu

TO BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 PM
ON MONDAY April 6, 2026

PUBLIC INTEREST GRANT PROGRAM
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OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC INTEREST GRANTS FOR 2026

There will be seventy-six grants awarded for work done in the summer of 2026. All awards for those who have completed only one year of law school will be \$5000; for those who have completed two years, the amount will be \$6000. Any student seeking any public interest job is eligible for the 58 unrestricted grants. There are 20 grants with conditions that apply either to the student's year at the Law School or the subject matter of the summer work.

The total amount available for awards is limited, and so if you are being compensated by your sponsoring organization, or there is a possibility of compensation, the Committee needs to know about all such payments. This applies both at the time of applying and also if the payment becomes a reality after you have been awarded a grant. Modest payments, beyond travel expenses, may be acceptable, but they must be disclosed to the Committee in item 2, Part II of the Application, or, for payments that become available after your application is submitted, by email to Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan at aperezgaitan@law.gwu.edu so that the Committee can exercise its judgment.

In addition to these summer grants, students who begin their third year of full-time law school in August 2026 are also eligible to apply for twelve (12) tuition remission grants of up to \$7500 per semester for work in public sector jobs in the fall of 2026 or spring of 2027. Students who receive these awards may NOT receive academic credit or other pay for that work. Applications will be made available in June for submission by early August and in November for submission in early January.

Applications are now available online and must be completed online and submitted to Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan, PUBLICINTEREST@LAW.GWU.EDU, by **5pm on Monday April 6, 2026**. The Committee, which includes professors and students, will announce its decisions no later than Tuesday April 21, 2026.

GRANTS WITH CONDITIONS (20)

1. ***Twelve Shapiro Summer Internships*** are for students who have completed *no more* than their first year by the beginning of the summer of 2026 and who are working in the Washington metropolitan area (Baltimore and Richmond do not count).
2. ***One Squire Patton Boggs Public Policy Fellowship*** will be awarded to a student working in a public policy position in a non-profit or government office (legislative, administrative, or executive) anywhere in the world.
3. ***One Ira Jaffe Labor & Employment Fellowship*** will be awarded to a student who is working in the fields of labor and employment at either a government agency or a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization.
4. ***Two Levy First Amendment Fellowships*** are for students working for a non-profit organization that seeks to protect First Amendment rights.
5. ***Two Khoury Criminal Justice Fellowships*** will be awarded to students doing innocence litigation or other criminal defense work, with a preference given to students working for the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project.
6. ***One US Attorney Fellowship*** will be awarded to a student who is working at the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia.
7. ***One Staton Fellowship*** will be awarded to a student working for a civil rights organization committed to advancing equality, justice, and inclusivity.

UNRESTRICTED GRANTS (58)

George Washington University Law School Public Interest Scholarships (52)

GWULS & Murray Snyder Scholarships (2)

Boyer Public Interest/Public Service Fellowships (2)

Morrison Scholarship (1)

Professor Jonathan Turley Summer Fellowship (1)

The application is the same for all grants. Students need not indicate which one they are applying for. The Committee will apply the grants in the way that fits best and allows for them all to be distributed.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the above listed public interest grant programs, a student must satisfy the following requirements:

1. The student must submit a COMPLETE application (attached) and include, **as a single PDF file in the following order**, a resume, transcript, an essay describing the applicant's interest in public interest work in general and in the specific job in particular, and a completed sponsor's commitment letter (attached). The essay should refer to the criteria for selection listed below, including those that indicate how your prior activities, interests, and educational pursuits are related to the particular public sector organization for which you will be working. Letters of reference from professors, prior employers, or others may also be submitted but are not required.
2. The student must be a candidate for a JD degree. There is no required GPA, but students with a cumulative average below 3.0 are less likely to receive an award.
3. The student must work full time (ten weeks, 35 hours per week) for the sponsoring organization. In the past, students have asked whether they may work the requisite total number of hours in fewer weeks than specified. The Committee prefers that students work for the entire ten-week period rather than on a condensed schedule. Nevertheless, it will consider applications from students if (1) the student works the requisite total number of hours; (2) the sponsor agrees to the condensed schedule; and (3) the student adequately justifies his or her condensed schedule. Examples of acceptable reasons include students who have enrolled in the GWU-Oxford program or students who split their time between two public interest organizations. In the latter case, commitment letters must be submitted from both organizations.
4. The student must work under the supervision of a licensed attorney.
5. Because the Committee takes into consideration the type of work proposed, a student may not change summer jobs and keep a grant. If a student wishes to change jobs due to unforeseen circumstances, they must immediately contact *Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan*, aperezgaitan@law.gwu.edu, to discuss the situation.
6. If, because of unforeseen events, an award recipient is unable to work throughout the entire specified period, they must immediately contact *Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan* to discuss the situation.
7. **If for any reason a student does not complete the work as required for an approved award, and/or does not submit a completed sponsor certification, the Law School reserves the right to recover all or a portion of the amount paid to the student based on all of the circumstances.**
8. A student may apply for a grant even if their government position is contingent on a background check which has not been completed when they submit their application. Under such circumstances, if the student subsequently fails the background check, they must immediately contact *Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan*. Any student who does not pass a background check will **not** be

allowed to use the grant for another position without the approval of the Committee. Accordingly, it is advisable for students to apply for their government positions early and to start any needed background check as soon as an offer is accepted. If the background check is not completed by the time that the student is awarded a grant, the student should contact their agency periodically to make sure that the background check is being processed expeditiously. If the student has not received confirmation that the background check has been successfully completed by one week *before* the start date, the student should contact *Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan*.

9. An award of tuition remission is not treated as taxable income for federal and state income tax purposes. A monetary award is treated as taxable income, and the University is required to issue a Form 1099-MISC to the student, with a copy to the Internal Revenue Service. Depending on a student's individual tax circumstances and other income sources, a student may have to file a federal and/or state income tax return, including the monetary award as income. Such an award is not, however, considered to be wages subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes.
10. Generally, awards are only made to students who receive no or minimal compensation from their sponsors. If your sponsor decides to pay you more than the amount stated in paragraph 7 of the Sponsor Commitment Letter (attached to your application), you must immediately contact *Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan*. A decision will be made at that time, based on all the circumstances, whether the Law School will make any further payment of the award or will recover from the student some or all of any amount already paid.
11. Many law firms are actively recruiting and hiring students from the Class of 2028 for 2L summer associate positions (Summer 2027). Any student who has accepted an offer from a law firm for a 2027 summer associate position (or who has an active offer under consideration) must disclose that information on this application. Absent exceptional circumstances explained in their Personal Essay, such students will not receive a grant. Students who have accepted summer associate positions from firms providing public interest funding for their 1L summer will **not** be eligible for the grant program.
12. You may not accept any other public service grant funded by The George Washington University for the same work, with the sole exception of a KACIF grant. This prohibition includes grants from the GW Law Equal Justice Foundation. However, you may receive additional public interest grant funding from sources outside the University, provided that you disclose this funding in your application.
13. If you are awarded a public interest grant under this program, you may also be able to receive academic credit for your summer public interest work through the law school's field placement program. To ascertain whether public interest work qualifies for credit and to learn about additional academic requirements, please consult the Bulletin and contact the Director of Field Placement, Assistant Dean Keri McCoy.

14. All recipients of grants are required to submit completed Sponsor Certification Forms to Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan, publicinterest@law.gwu.edu, Stuart 104A, by no later than September 4, 2026. At that time, recipients must also submit **the attached *Placement Evaluation Form***, which will be used by future students considering public sector employment.
15. Recipients of grants are required to receive their money by direct deposit to their checking accounts (instead of by checks sent by mail). Recipients will receive instructions on how to arrange for direct deposits when they are notified of their award.
16. All signatures may be done by typing /s/First Name, Last Name.

Additional information can be obtained from Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan, aperezgaitan@law.gwu.edu.

SPONSOR ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. The sponsoring organization must complete and sign a commitment letter (attached). *No late commitment letters will be accepted or considered.*
2. The definition of public interest and public service work for these grants is very broad. Litigation, transactional work, regulatory, legislative reform, and law related policy work are included. Approved sponsoring organizations include all of the following:

Organizations exempt from income taxation under either section 501(c)(3), section 501(c)(4), or section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code or comparable provisions for non-US sponsors.

Organizations in the executive branch of federal, state, or local governments.

Organizations in the legislative branches of federal, state, or local governments but only for work on legislative committees or support organizations or offices, such as the Government Accountability Office or Legislative Counsel (Drafting) Offices. Work for the personal office of a legislator is not eligible.

Student job placement evaluations can be found in this Google drive folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12kUhr7GhtapoDRR8OwPQmwhE6uFVOjpv>

You must be logged into your @law email to view.

3. Ordinary judicial clerkships and judicial internships do not qualify for these grants. Clerkships with administrative law judges are eligible. However, if there is something unique about your work for a judge that suggests you should be considered, please apply or contact Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan to discuss your particular opportunity. In the past, public interest grants have been awarded to students working with judges on international tribunals considering human rights violations.
4. Law school clinics do not qualify for these grants.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

1. The Committee, which includes members of the faculty and two third-year students who have previously received a grant, makes the final decisions on all grant awards.
2. In making these awards, the Committee will endeavor to provide public interest grants to committed and capable applicants working for a broad range of public sector organizations that provide high quality legal services. The deliberations of the Committee with respect to any particular application are confidential. **In evaluating the applications, the single most important factor is the applicant's demonstrated commitment to, and interest in, public interest and public service work and the likelihood that the applicant will pursue a public interest or public service career.** In addition, the Committee may consider the following factors, as well as any others that may be relevant. In exercising its discretion, the Committee will decide how much weight, if any, to give each factor.
 - (A) the applicant's grades at the law school (a cumulative average below 3.0 is a negative factor);
 - (B) whether the applicant is receiving compensation from the sponsoring organization;
 - (C) students who receive merit aid of more than \$40,000 per year are less likely to receive an award; for students receiving lesser amounts, the amount may be considered;
 - (D) 1L students who have an offer for a summer 2L position at a law firm will not ordinarily receive an award, absent exceptional circumstances;
 - (E) the legal skills that the applicant is likely to gain from the particular work proposed;
 - (F) the applicant's evidence of leadership, maturity, and responsibility;
 - (G) the applicant's law school year (students who are closer to graduation will be given some preference);
 - (H) the proposed job and how that job furthers the objective of serving the public interest;
 - (I) the reputation of the sponsor for providing high quality public interest legal services; and
 - (J) the diversity of organizations assisted by the law school by the provision of summer grants.

The Committee does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, color, religion, ethnic/national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity in the award of these grants.

TIMETABLE

- January 20, 2026** Applications are available on the Summer Funding webpage under the Public Interest and Public Service Law Center webpage. Applications should be completed online using a computer or handwritten (using black ink).
- April 6, 2026** Applicants must submit completed applications electronically to publicinterest@law.gwu.edu by 5pm. **No materials provided after this time will be accepted or considered.**
- April 21, 2026** Announcement of awards no later than this date. Offer letters and acceptance forms, as well as rejection letters, will be sent by email. Students also will be informed if they have been selected as an alternate.
- April 24, 2026** Awardees must return completed Acceptance Forms to publicinterest@law.gwu.edu.
- April 27, 2026** Awards of public interest grants to alternates will be announced no later than this date and earlier if possible.
- September 4, 2026** Awardees must submit completed Sponsor Certification Forms to publicinterest@law.gwu.edu.

Any questions can be directed to Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan, aperezgaitan@law.gwu.edu, 202.994.2680, STU104A.

PART II:

Additional Information

You may answer the following question as part of your personal essay; if you elect to do so, please indicate that below.

1. List any previous experience with public interest organizations, private or public, whether providing legal, charitable, civic, or other community services. For each experience, indicate the name and location of the organization, the approximate dates during which you worked, and whether you were paid and/or received academic credit, or worked pro bono. Please use this section of your application (and/or your personal essay) to indicate how your previous public interest activities are related to your current interest in working for the listed public sector organization(s). Include a discussion of your pro bono work and work with public service student organizations at the law school.

2. Is the sponsoring organization for your summer position going to compensate you? This includes a request by the sponsor that you apply for a GW summer grant and that it will pay you the difference. If the answer is yes, provide the details below.

3. Are you the recipient of a merit scholarship from the Law School covering all or part of your tuition and expenses? If so, state the annual amount of the scholarship and indicate which years of law school are covered. (Do *not* include any other scholarship or need-based aid.)

4. If you are a 1L or 2Le, do you have an offer from a law firm for the summer of 2027? If so, and if there are circumstances that you believe that you should be given an award, please explain them in your personal essay.

Yes **No** **N/A**

Background Checks.

If your sponsor requires a background check, please complete the following applicable statement:

- A. The background check is complete, and I passed. Yes
- B. The background check has not been completed, but the process commenced on _____.
(Date)
- C. My sponsor has informed me that my background check will begin on _____ and will be completed on or about _____.
(Date) (Date)
- D. The following is all that I know about when the background check will begin and when it will be complete:

PART III

APPLICATION, ATTACHMENTS AND COPIES

Please attach the following to your application in the following order:

1. **Resume.**
2. **Transcript** (official or unofficial).
3. **Personal Essay.**

In no more than 500 words, describe your interest in and commitment to public interest work in general. In explaining your dedication to public service, you may include information concerning personal hardships you have experienced in pursuing public interest opportunities in the past. Describe in particular your interest in the position that you have secured. How does this job fit into your long-range plans? Why were you interested in this particular organization? What aspects of your past experience or particular skills suggest that you can make a meaningful contribution? Please add any additional information that might be useful in assessing your application. Although not required, letters of recommendation from prior employers, professors, or others (including officers of law school public interest organizations) may be attached here.

4. **Sponsor Commitment Form.**

Use the attached form. It is your responsibility to ensure that this form is completed by your sponsoring organization(s), attached to this application, and submitted no later than 5 pm on April 6, 2026. **No application will be considered without a sponsor's commitment form.**

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY TO publicinterest@law.gwu.edu as a single pdf in the above order.

APPLICANTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS WHEN COMPLETED.

PART IV

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the information submitted for these awards, including the information about payments from my sponsoring organization, is true to the best of my knowledge.

Sign: _____

Date: _____

The Committee does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, color, religion, ethnic/national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity in the award of these grants.

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SPONSOR COMMITMENT LETTER

Student:

LAST FIRST MI

Organization:

Org. Address:

STREET CITY STATE ZIP

Supervising

Attorney:

Attorney

Phone:

Attorney

Email:

Please read the following statements and indicate your certification of the following requirements of the program. If necessary, use the "remarks" section below to discuss any problems with or limitations upon your certification.

- 1. The above-named student has accepted our offer of a full-time position (35 hours a week which can include holidays and breaks allowed regular employees) for ten weeks or more.** This statement may be marked "correct" even if the offer is contingent on the student's receipt of a public interest grant from the law school or the student's successful completion of a background check.

CORRECT SEE REMARKS
BELOW NOT
CORRECT

- 2. If statement "1" immediately above is incorrect, please indicate below the amount of time that the student is scheduled to work during the summer:**

WEEKS HOURS PER WEEK

- 3. If a background check is required for this position, please complete the following applicable statement:**

- A. The background check has been completed, and the student passed_____.
- B. The background check has NOT been completed, and the estimated completion date is_____.

4. Please complete the following statement:

The above-named student will NOT be working on behalf of a political candidate or political party or on a political campaign as part of his or her responsibilities in this position.

CORRECT

SEE REMARKS
BELOW

NOT CORRECT

5. In the space below, or by attachment, briefly describe the work of your organization, including whether it is a governmental agency or unit, an international organization, or a §501(c)(3), §501(c)(4), or §501(c)(5) organization.

6. Briefly describe the work that the above-named student will be expected to perform.

7. Please indicate on the following lines the amount(s) your organization will compensate the above-named student. If you will not pay the student anything, please write "0".

(1) \$_____ for WORK performed during the SUMMER of 2026.

(2) \$_____ for TRAVEL expenses during the SUMMER of 2026.

(3) Please check this box if you do not know what you will pay the student, including whether any payment from you is contingent in whole or part on whether the student obtains a grant from GW. If so, please explain here.

Name of Supervising Attorney

Organization

Attorney Signature

Date

Signatures may be completed by use of /s/ First Name, Last Name.

PUBLIC INTEREST GRANT PROGRAM
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SPONSOR CERTIFICATION FORM

STUDENT INFORMATION	Name		GWID	
	E-mail			
	Street	City	State	Zip

EMPLOYER INFORMATION	Organization			
	Street	City	State	Zip

1. The above-named student has worked at this organization for _____ WEEKS during the summer of 2026 (at least 35 hours per week).

2. This organization has paid or will pay the student for his or her summer work a total of \$ _____.

3. If any of the above compensation is a travel stipend, please indicate the amount of the travel reimbursement here: _____.

Supervising Attorney

Telephone

Attorney Signature

Date

PLEASE HAVE YOUR SPONSORING ORGANIZATION COMPLETE AND SIGN THIS FORM AT THE END OF YOUR SUMMER. YOU MUST RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM TO PUBLICINTEREST@LAW.GWU.EDU, BY SEPTEMBER 4, 2026 ALONGSIDE YOUR PLACEMENT EVALUATION FORM.

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PLACEMENT EVALUATION FORM

This form was created to assist students in deciding whether a particular office would be a good fit for them. It will be placed in a Google Drive folder that will be available for all GW Law students. If you have confidential information about the placement, please convey it to Anapaula Pérez-Gaitan, aperezgaitan@law.gwu.edu.

Name of organization (including relevant component):

Name of primary supervisor:

General nature of work assigned:

1. How busy were you?

Overwhelmed Just right Generally fine Not enough to do

2. Overall, how challenging was the work?

Very As expected Not very

3. Overall, how interesting was the experience?

Very As expected Not very

4. Did you do written work that you could use (with redactions) for a writing sample?

Yes No

5. Did you attend interesting trials, hearings, depositions, meetings, or other events in which you participated or were an observer?

Yes A few No

6. Describe your overall reaction to the feedback you received on your work:

Regular & useful Limited Almost none

7. Overall, would you recommend this placement?

Yes Maybe No

Additional comments:

Name & class: _____

If you are willing to discuss your placement with interested students, please provide your email and/or telephone: _____