

CHICAGO LAW FOUNDATION
1111 East 60th Street · Chicago, Illinois 60637

3L PUBLIC INTEREST BAR GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION

What is the Chicago Law Foundation?

The Chicago Law Foundation (CLF) is a student-directed nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation that promotes legal work in the public interest through grants to law students for summer work at public interest organizations or for the government. CLF also provides grants to help third-year students with a commitment to working in public interest afford the bar exam and related expenses. CLF is non-partisan and funds projects that fall anywhere on the political spectrum.

Who may apply?

The CLF bar expenses grant application process will only be open to students who are graduating from the University of Chicago in 2008. This includes 3Ls and LL.Ms.

Do I have to have a job lined up to apply?

NO. CLF understands that the timelines for public interest jobs vary greatly. You need not have secured a post-graduation job to be eligible for a CLF grant.

You do need to verify a dedication to public interest work and a sincere intent to begin public interest work immediately following graduation or a clerkship. As a condition of grant receipt, you will be asked to sign a contract agreeing to pay back the grant should you decide to go into public interest work.

Can I apply if I have a clerkship but intend to go into public interest work once my clerkship is completed?

YES. As long as you intend to begin public interest work immediately following a clerkship you are eligible for a CLF grant. However, as a condition of grant receipt, you will be asked to sign a contract agreeing to pay back the grant should you decide to accept employment with a law firm or other non-public interest organization following your clerkship.

How does the application process work?

The CLF Board selects grantees based on a written application and, at the discretion of the Board, an interview with the full CLF Board. Members of the law school administration and the faculty are not involved in the selection process.

All applicants must complete the attached application and should follow the instructions carefully. Applicants should include a copy of their resume and information about the organization for which they plan to work. CLF does not require that applicants demonstrate financial need in order to be considered for grants. Applicants should not include their law school transcript or financial information with their application.

What are the grant criteria for funding?

When reviewing grant applications, the CLF Board will consider the following factors:

- Whether the applicant, based on his or her work and volunteer experience, demonstrates a genuine and ongoing desire to work in the public interest, including a commitment to work in the public interest following graduation from law school.
- Whether the applicant is likely to make a meaningful contribution to the organization for which he or she proposes to work.
- The degree to which the application itself (e.g., presentation, completeness of responses) reflects the applicant's desire to work in public interest and receive a CLF grant.
- Whether the employer is firmly committed to hiring the applicant.
- Whether the applicant is knowledgeable about the work of the organization for which he or she proposes to work or the area of public interest he or she intends to go into. Can the applicant articulate the goal and mission of the organization and explain the activities in which the organization engages?

In selecting grant recipients, CLF also seeks diversity among projects and organizations served by the applicants. CLF funds both impact litigation and direct services and tries to ensure that projects are geographically dispersed. The Board encourages applications from students seeking to serve the public interest in a variety of ways, and intends by its bar exam grants to promote legal work in public interest, which includes the following areas:

- Protecting the rights of disadvantaged minorities;
- Protecting the rights of victims of racial, sexual, or religious discrimination;
- Protecting the rights of the elderly, the homeless, the handicapped, and the young;
- Assisting those who cannot afford paid legal representation;
- Protecting the environment;
- Promoting greater governmental openness, accountability, and efficiency;
- Protecting the rights of all others whose basic statutory or constitutional rights have been challenged or denied.

CLF funds students who desire to serve the public interest by working with government agencies at the local, state and federal levels, including, for example, state and federal prosecutors' offices, public defenders, and federal and state regulatory agencies and departments.

Are there any types of work that CLF does not fund?

- CLF *will not* fund work of a purely academic nature.
- CLF *will not* fund lobbying or political work.
- CLF *will not* fund clinic positions either at the law school or at other schools.
- CLF *will not* fund applicants who earn from any source more than \$10,000 of direct aid or other support (e.g. housing).

CLF is a 501(c)(3) corporation, and is therefore prohibited from funding either lobbying or work on campaigns in support of or in opposition to candidates for political office. Internal Revenue Code Section 4911(d) defines lobbying. You can work for an organization that engages in some lobbying or political work; however, CLF requires that all organizations employing grant recipients (or the grant recipients themselves) write a letter stating that the grant recipient will not personally engage in lobbying or political work. If you have any questions about a specific organization's eligibility, please ask a CLF Board member.

Non-Discrimination Policy

In the administration of its grant-making policies and decisions, the Chicago Law Foundation does not discriminate against grant applicants on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, status as a veteran, age, disability or other factors irrelevant to work or study. (CLF Bylaws, Article VII, ¶ 4.)

CLF reserves the right to refuse to fund organizations that discriminate on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, status as a veteran, age, disability, or other factors irrelevant to work. (CLF Bylaws, Article VII, ¶ 3.)

How much are the grants?

All 3L bar exam grant recipients will receive a standardized amount to be determined by the board. In 2006, all 3L bar exam grant recipients received \$3,000. In 2007, all 3L bar exam grant recipients received \$4,000. CLF grants are not need-based. However, CLF reserves the right to adjust the standardized amount for individuals who will receive other funding or grants for their bar expenses.

Please note: CLF grants are taxable income. Recipients are responsible for all taxes on their grants.

How many grants are available?

The total number will vary depending upon funds raised by the organization and the standardized grant amount determined by the CLF board, as well as the number of 2L summer grants awarded.

How will outside funding affect my CLF grant?

CLF seeks to fund as many students as possible. Thus, CLF encourages grant recipients to pursue alternative and additional sources of funding. Such additional funds can come from the grant recipient's public interest or government employer or from an outside source.

Grantees who earn less than \$10,000 of outside CLF money (during the summer of 2007 or from other funding grants meant to cover bar expenses) are still eligible for funding, but these earnings must be disclosed in your budget. CLF reserves the right to reduce the grant amount for those receiving other funding for the bar exam, but will not necessarily do so.

What are the responsibilities of grant recipients?

CLF grant recipients are required to provide employment information and contact information as soon as it is available. CLF will then contact the organization to verify employment.

Whom should I contact with questions?

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