



BRIDGE *to* PRACTICE

OVERVIEW FOR PROSPECTIVE HOST EMPLOYERS

DUKE LAW

THE PROGRAM

THE BRIDGE TO PRACTICE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM allows Duke Law students who are pursuing post-graduate employment to engage in meaningful, paid, three month or longer professional experiences following the July bar exam. Graduates provide highly skilled support to the employing organization and are able to use the fellowship experience as a springboard to full-time positions. Launched in 2008, the Bridge program provides particularly valuable opportunities for graduating students who aim to launch full-time careers with employers that prefer or require bar passage or that otherwise hire only as positions become available. Numerous organizations have benefitted from taking on a Fellow while simultaneously helping that new law graduate join the profession in a meaningful way.

TIMING

Starting dates are arranged between the Fellow and Host, and typically will begin after July bar exams sometime between August and October. The Fellowship is anticipated to last three months; however, duration and hours per week may be modified to best fit the needs of the Host and Fellow. Fellowships with government or public interest Host organizations may be extended.

The expectation is for students to confirm positions well in advance of the typical start dates so that Hosts can plan ahead and students will have plans in place once the July bar exam is completed. The later in the year a position is confirmed, however, the more likely that funding for the Bridge may be limited, so finalizing positions as early as possible is recommended.

WHAT WE ASK OF HOST ORGANIZATIONS

- Primarily, we simply ask that you provide a meaningful work experience to your Fellow.
- You are encouraged to support and facilitate the Fellow's pursuit of full-time employment through professional feedback and networking support.
- Financial support is not expected to come from Hosts; stipends are funded by alumni, donors and other resources.
- There is no expectation that the Fellow will remain with the Host organization beyond the Fellowship period. However, in the past a number of Hosts and Fellows have decided during that period to extend the relationship.
- We ask for your understanding if your Fellow secures a full-time position prior to or during the Fellowship; if this occurs the Fellow may not be able to complete the fellowship.

During the fellowship, graduates speak every other week with a Duke Law School career counselor about the graduate's current work and ongoing plans to secure subsequent full-time employment. Fellowship supervisors and career counselors may also communicate during the fellowship.

CONTACT US

For questions, contact Kelly Briggs at briggs@law.duke.edu, or call (919) 613-7031. We look forward to your participation in the Bridge to Practice Fellowship Program.

SELECTED PRIOR HOST EMPLOYERS

ACLU of Washington State SEATTLE, WA

Americans for Immigrant Justice MIAMI, FL

Center for Death Penalty Litigation DURHAM, NC

Office of the District Attorney DURHAM, NC; NEW CITY, NY; SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

Environmental Defense Fund BOULDER, CO

Florida Attorney General's Office TALLAHASSEE, FL

Hon. Paul Huey, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit TAMPA, FL

Hon. Mary Ellen Coster Williams, Court of Federal Claims WASHINGTON, DC

NC Department of Justice, Attorney General's Office RALEIGH, NC

Office of the Public Defender, WHEATON, IL; ROCKVILLE, MD;
DURHAM, NC; ORANGE COUNTY, CA; SAN FRANCISCO, CA; WASHINGTON, DC; PORTLAND, OR

The Legal Aid Society NEW YORK, NY

Southwest Airlines DALLAS, TX

Wake County Public Defender's Office RALEIGH, NC

Wicker Smith FT. LAUDERDALE, FL

ZwillGen, PLLC WASHINGTON, DC

"We recently hired a Duke Law graduate. We had a large number of highly qualified and experienced applicants, but he was great and all the references – particularly those about his 'practice abilities' from his Bridge to Practice Fellowship host employer – made me confident that he is the right choice for us."

Kendra Montgomery Blinn
N.C. Innocence Inquiry Commission
Raleigh, N.C.

COMMENTS FROM RECENT FELLOWS

“I feel so grateful and appreciative for the [Law School’s] awareness of the needs of recent graduates. I could not have afforded to just not work or to not get paid at all. And just having the sponsorship of the school — having it be a program and having a stipend made it easier to work with [potential employers.] If you know where you want to be, I can’t imagine a better program to help you get in the door and end up where you want. I don’t think I’d be doing what I’m doing now if not for it.”

“Spending time working for a magistrate judge not only gave me great experience for my future law practice, it also exponentially accelerated my networking and job hunting. When you meet five to ten new lawyers every day, eventually you will hear about a job opening. My work at the federal courthouse ended on Friday and it was a great experience. I am meeting with my new firm this week to work out the details.”

“When I connected with [my Bridge Host] about the possibility of working for him, he told me that the firm rarely hires, but that if I could show I would add value to the firm, he’d keep me on. The Bridge fellowship was the perfect way for my firm to minimize risk and for me to prove that I could excel at the cases assigned to me.”

“Thank you, sir, for this great opportunity. Through the Bridge to Practice, I’ve been able to continue working on cases and that has helped me prepare for one of my DA interviews where I was asked to ‘run the courtroom’. Because the Durham DA knew my work, he found me a position when I was about to accept an offer in another city.”

CONTACT

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