Duke Law School is proudly able to offer funding for summer internships with public interest or government entities. Some of the funding is awarded on a competitive basis through Duke Endowed Fellowships. The school also has guaranteed summer funding through the Dean's Summer Service Grant Program. Law students may receive funding through other sources at Duke University, including through the Stanback Environmental Internship Program, or outside programs. For Endowed Fellowships and Dean’s Summer Service Grants, students may seek additional funding outside the Law School or Duke University, including from their employer or through other sources (see reverse), up to a total of $6500 without a reduction in their grant amount.

Duke Endowed Public Interest Summer Fellowships

These competitive summer fellowships are made possible through endowments to Duke Law School from generous alumni donors. To qualify for these fellowships, applicants must secure a summer position with a non-profit, NGO, or government organization in the U.S. or abroad. Open to 1Ls and 2Ls; full summer (8 or 10 weeks at 40 hours per week) and split summer arrangements are eligible. Successful applicants will have a demonstrated commitment to developing a career in the public interest; other factors which will be considered are involvement in public interest and pro bono activities at Duke Law and prior public interest and volunteer work. These are competitive fellowships, with a preference for 2Ls. Students awarded these fellowships typically receive more funding than they would through solely a Dean’s Summer Service Grant.

Dean's Summer Service Grants

The Dean’s Service Grant guarantees summer funding to students who secure a qualifying public service position for the summer, including: local, state, or federal government; not-for-profit organizations or NGOs (including international); and summer judicial clerkships (2Ls only). To qualify for a full grant, 1Ls must commit to at least 8 weeks (at 40 hours per week) and 2Ls to at least 10 weeks; funding may be pro-rated for lesser commitments or split summers. Grant amounts for 2Ls are higher than for 1Ls.

*Students must complete at least 20 hours of public service work during the school year to receive funding; at least 10 hours must be through volunteering with PILF (see below) and the remaining 10 may be through PILF or through a pro bono project that is approved by the Office of Public Interest and Pro Bono.

Dean’s Summer Service Grants are heavily supported by the Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF), a student-run fundraising organization whose mission is to help the law school raise money to award summer fellowships to 1L and 2L students who accept unpaid summer public interest internships and to provide bar grants to graduating students entering public interest positions. PILF’s largest annual fundraiser is its Auction & Gala in the spring semester; other fundraisers, including Duke Law merchandise sales, take place throughout the year.

Students who receive funding from the above two sources must stipulate that they will do the following:

- Send a personal thank you letter to their identified donor(s) describing their summer work;
- Participate in programming to discuss summer positions for the following summer;
- For those who work in the private sector 2L summer and earn more than $20,000 for both summers combined: donate two days’ pay or half of their grant amount back to PILF.
For the Summer of 2017, 85 students received over $375,000 in Duke funding.

Examples of Other Funding Sources

- PSJD.org
  Resource Section

  Go to “Funding Sources” and then “Summer Funding” for a list of resources related to funding sources in various locations or regions, including law firm split summer programs and more.

- Equal Justice Works
  AmeriCorps JD

  This AmeriCorps-funded program provides a $1230 education award voucher that can be directly applied to qualified educational expenses. Students must complete 300 hours of summer legal work at a nonprofit, public interest organization, within one of the program’s outlined practice areas. Applications are accepted from December to April and awards are made on a rolling basis.

- McMillian Fellowship Program

  Interested in working in Charlotte? The McMillan Fellowship Program offers stipends of up to $3000 for students interested in a public interest career who are working with participating employers in Mecklenburg County. After students apply for and receive a position, the employer will then submit an application on behalf of the student. The McMillian website typically lists participating employers; applications are generally due around March 1.

- Rural Summer Legal Corps

  Run in conjunction with Equal Justice Works, the Rural Summer Legal Corps connects public interest law students with Legal Services Corporation-funded civil legal aid organizations around the country. Students receive a $4,000 stipend to work with a selected organization. The Equal Justice Works website includes participating locations. Applications are generally due in February.

For more information, visit https://law.duke.edu/publicinterest/summerfunding or email Assistant Dean Stella Boswell at boswell@law.duke.edu.