

Legal Access Innovation Fellowship Program Whitepaper

Brief

The Legal Access Innovation Fellowship program (LAIF), a Tech For Justice Initiative is a 10-week immersive summer fellowship program designed to train and expose law students the varied uses of technology in delivering access to justice. The goal of LAIF is to leverage law students and the use of technology in a meaningful way to ensure access to justice. LAIF will serve as a catalyst for a future class of tech competent advocates equipped with the tools and necessary resources to make justice more accessible for all. LAIF will also create a broader ecosystem of public and private partners leveraging each other's expertise to increase access to justice for low-income and self-represented people.

Fellowship Overview

LAIF fellows will work with esteemed **Legal Services Corporation** funded legal aid organizations and other non-profits who are expanding legal access through innovative technologies and pro bono initiatives. Fellows will gain practical experience in varied use of technology and innovation in the legal aid setting and assist in the implementation of technology solutions addressing systemic issues that prevent low-income clients from receiving legal aid. Fellows will participate in **webinar trainings** on the varied use of technology in conjunction with the **Legal Services National Technology Assistance Project**. Fellows will have an opportunity to **blog** about their experiences and communicate with other fellows in a cohort model. Fellows also get to engage with **mentors** during the summer who work in the intersection of Access to Justice & Technology to explore future career paths. A prior technology background is not required to apply for the fellowship program. Fellows will receive a \$5,000 stipend during their summer.

The responsibilities of the fellow will vary depending on location and nature of the project, but general duties and experiences include:

- **Data collection techniques in legal aid settings**
- **Measuring metrics legal aid operations**
- **Process mapping for legal projects**
- **Process improvement techniques**
- **Electronic legal research**
- **Drafting memorandums**
- **Drafting legal content**

LAIF fellows will also get practical experience learning:

- **Legal service delivery technologies.**
- **Legal expert systems**
- **Automated document assembly and automation**
- **Technology assisted document review**

- **Online legal triage systems**
- **Design thinking in legal services**
- **Legal expert systems**

Sample Project Descriptions

Example 1: From Illinois Legal Aid Online

Description of Project:

Do you want to be on the cutting edge of the intersection between law, technology, and justice? Are you passionate about public interest work, but feel like innovative solutions need to be implemented to fully meet the needs of people with legal problems?

If so, don't miss your chance to work as a fellow with Illinois Legal Aid Online (ILAO). At ILAO, you will be part of a nationally acclaimed nonprofit that provides essential legal information to people in Illinois who cannot afford legal representation.

You will also help create tools for pro bono attorneys and legal aid advocates to leverage their efforts and provide assistance to more clients.

The law student fellow will work on the development of a Statewide Online Access System to improve the legal services delivery system in Illinois.

This project provides assistance to low-income persons who are having difficulty navigating their legal issues. This project is developing and implementing an automated, online process for getting lower-income individuals and families to the most appropriate legal resources for their problems.

Specific legal activities include the following:

- Drafting, researching and editing legal education materials to assist individuals in over 30 different subject areas throughout Illinois
- Editing, organizing and publishing substantive legal content submitted by attorneys and/or legal aid organizations to be used by Illinois legal aid and pro bono attorneys, such as guidebooks and practice manuals
- Preparing and assisting with the production of live video trainings and archived video presentations.

Outreach & Coordination

Funding

LAIF will seek out funding through public and private sponsorship arrangements to fund fellows and administrative costs of the program. LAIF will leverage technology companies, legal tech companies, foundations and other organizations that support access to justice and education through strategic partnerships.

Outreach to Law Schools and Students

LAIF will coordinate with law schools around the nation to have announcements about the fellowship on their school's Simplicity pages and other online job boards. LAIF will attend law school and student org conferences to share information about the fellowship. LAIF will specifically target student groups such as the Black Law Students Associations, Veterans' Student Groups, Latinx Students Associations, and LGBT students organization to ensure that an diverse applicant pool is represented in the cohort of fellows. LAIF will leverage social media and web presence to engage law students around the nation. LAIF will leverage current and future networks to market to law students.

Outreach to Legal Aid Community

LAIF will leverage the relationship with the Legal Services Corporation to connect with legal aid partners around the nation. LAIF will leverage current and future networks to attract additional legal aid and non-profit organizations to serve as fellowship sites. LAIF will attend legal conferences to share information about the fellowship. LAIF will leverage social media and web presence to engage other legal aid stakeholders.

Year 1 Target

- Place 15 fellows through program.
- Secure \$150,000 in funding.
- Record measurable data through surveys, feedback, and blog posts.
- One FTE staff for project.

