Guide to Penn Law’s Fellowship Boot Camp:
Phases of Boot Camp and Proposal Writing Guidance

Welcome to Fellowship Boot Camp, a unique program for Penn Law students/graduates in the postgraduate fellowship market. Each of you has decided to pursue a fellowship and we are thrilled to support you through this process. This document is designed to orient you to the various phases of boot camp, highlight key deadlines, and guide you as you begin to draft your proposals.

**Phases of Boot Camp**

| 2018-2019 academic year | • Presentation given by Immigrant Justice Corps *(9/18)*
| | • Presentation given by Justice Catalyst *(10/9)*
| | • Presentation given by Director of the Skadden Foundation *(2/19)*
| | • Presentation given by current Gideon’s Promise Fellow Chris Brigante L ’18 *(2/21)*
| | • Presentation given by EJW representative *(2/22)*
| | • Presentation given by Independence Foundation Fellowship *(4/23)*

| May/June/July | • Research potential organizations, specific fellowship opportunities, and the application process for each fellowship (primarily using psjd.org and Symplicity).
| | • Schedule one-on-one counseling appointments with CP&P to set goals, priorities, and strategies around reaching out to host organizations and applying for sponsorship.
| | • Begin outreach to alumni and other mentors who secured fellowships, begin outreach to organizations, and apply for sponsorship.

| July/August | • Secure a host organization and draft project proposals in collaboration with host organization.
| | • If applying for Skadden or EJW, pitch project idea to their representatives and solicit feedback.
| | • Provide drafts to CP&P and alumni who have gone through the process and receive and incorporate feedback *(August)*.

| Late August/Early September | • Participate in meetings with reviewers from the Penn Law Fellowship Committee who will review written materials and provide extensive feedback.

| Early September | • Submit revised application materials for a final round of editing by one committee member, assigned by CP&P.
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October - June

- As soon as applicants are notified that they will be interviewed by the foundation/funder, let us know so that we can schedule a mock interview.

### Deadlines and Eligibility for Fall 2020 Fellowships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fellowship</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skadden Foundation</td>
<td>third year law students, outgoing judicial law clerks</td>
<td>September 16, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal Justice Works</td>
<td>third year law students, recent law school graduates, Penn Law Fellows, experienced attorneys</td>
<td>September 20, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence Foundation</td>
<td>third year law students, outgoing judicial law clerks, Penn Law Fellows, and attorneys currently employed and applying within 5 years of law school graduation (sponsoring org must be located in Philadelphia or surrounding counties)</td>
<td>September 23, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Justice Corps</td>
<td>third year law students, outgoing judicial law clerks</td>
<td>October 11, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gideon’s Promise Law School Partnership Project</td>
<td>third year law students</td>
<td>Early October 2019 (check website in early August)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Catalyst Fellowship</td>
<td>third year law students, current law students</td>
<td>December 1, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penn Law Fellowships</td>
<td>third year law students, outgoing judicial clerks who clerked immediately after graduation (*note that only third year law students are eligible for the Penn Law Catalyst Fellowship).</td>
<td>Late March/Early April 2020</td>
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- For additional fellowship deadlines, consult psjd.org for a Fellowship Comparison Chart.
Meetings with the Fellowship Committee

This year, fellowship committee meetings will take place August 27, 28, 29, and September 3, 4, 5, and 6. Please hold these dates for now and we will be in touch in early August to schedule your meeting.

Please email your materials to fellowships@law.upenn.edu three full days in advance of your scheduled meeting so that we have time to thoroughly review your materials.

The committee of reviewers (faculty and staff who have experience with fellowship projects and have a keen sense of what makes a strong project) will review your draft 1) to ensure that your project is clear and manageable; 2) to ask you to clarify any ambiguities in how you will work with your sponsoring organization; 3) to be sure your passion for the clients and the issues jumps off the page; and 4) to be sure your writing is strong and impactful. The committee will ask you many questions about your project, not to simulate an interview, but to work through the nuances in your application and project. The simulated interview will come later!

This year’s Fellowship Committee members will be: Sarah Paoletti, Kara Finck, Seth Kreimer, Arlene Rivera Finkelstein, Lou Rulli, Jennifer Fernandez, and Jamie Reisman.

Preparation for this meeting:

- Know your proposal inside and out: be prepared to explain all parts of the proposal and practice your elevator pitch – Why you? Why this project? Why this org?.
- Show an understanding of the issues, goals, and expected outcomes of your project.
- Be enthusiastic and focus on the skills you have that will help make the project successful.
- Be prepared to discuss your relationship with the sponsoring organization.
- Don’t forget to prepare for standard interview questions.

Please note that during these sessions, it can be a bit overwhelming to receive so much feedback, so keep in mind that the committee simply wants you to anticipate every question that someone might ask when reviewing your application. If at any point you get feedback that you think might be contradictory or inconsistent, please let us know – you may be receiving different diagnoses to the same problem and we will help you work through this.

This process is competitive and requires an extraordinary amount of work, but it will reap great rewards. We are committed to being with you every step of the way. Please be sure to utilize every resource available to you so that you can have the best possible chance of success. Also, we encourage you to support each other in this process. Moral support goes a very long way.
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Proposal Writing Guidance

**Crafting a Project:**
- Treat the fellowship process as an opportunity to create your dream job!
- **Internal Reflection:**
  - What causes and communities are your priorities? Why?
  - What skills/attributes/experiences do you uniquely bring to advocacy for these communities?
  - What are your geographic preferences (if any)?
  - What kinds of organizations are you most interested in working with?
  - Use self-assessment to determine your values, interests, and skills, and how you can fit them into your project.
- **External Research:**
  - Get to know the community and their needs and issues.
  - Use psjd.org, Symplicity, and research on organization’s websites to identify opportunities.
  - Reach out to the organizations that interest you. What is their sponsorship process? Once you find a host organization, communicate with the organization about its priorities. Communication and collaboration with your organization are key!
  - Get ideas from other fellows working in the field.
  - Model your project after one that has proven successful elsewhere. Fellowship websites include descriptions of past fellowship projects, and past fellows are often happy to discuss their projects with you.
  - Know the funding priorities and prohibitions of the different fellowship providers.

**Writing the Project Proposal:**
- Read the application instructions in detail and provide exactly what is asked for.
- If you have pre-application questions for the funder, ask them. Your thoughtful questions and concerns can make an impression on the funder.
- *Articulate a Need:* Convince the funders of a genuine problem that is both significant and narrow enough in scope that you can reasonably alleviate it through the work of your project.
- *Provide Evidence of the Need:* Use anecdotal evidence, data, reports, and news articles to support your articulation of the problem you are seeking to solve.
- *Be the Solution:* Your proposal should make clear why your project is the solution to the problem you are seeking to address.
- *Demonstrate Your Passion:* Show rather than tell how your passion has manifested itself in your work/school experiences and how you will bring that passion to the work of your project.
- *Client Focus:* It’s about the clients, not about you and your career goals. Make sure to emphasize how your project makes an impact and who your clients will be. If possible, seek client feedback on your proposal.
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- **Demonstrate Community Buy-in:** Demonstrate that you know the community you wish to serve and identify who your community partners will be.

- **Project Focus:** Convey that you will be committed to your project and that your work will not overlap too greatly with the day-to-day caseload of traditional staff attorneys within the organization.

- **Show Your Execution Abilities:**
  - Be specific and set realistic objectives for your project
  - Don’t underestimate the importance of a project timeline
  - State both long-term and short-term goals
  - Include specific legally-related strategies within each of the goals
  - Clearly state the expected outcomes of the project
  - Highlight the project-management skills that you would bring to your work (e.g. pro bono leadership experience)

- **Use Strategic Thinking:** Try to include more than one legal strategy to solving the problem (e.g. you could combine a direct legal services caseload with the development of an impact case, the development of a handbook of best practices for other practitioners, and the writing of policy recommendations that would advance the goals of your project)

- **Show Sustainability:** Present ideas for how your work will be a good long-term investment for funders and will have continuity beyond your time as a fellow (e.g. through trainings programs for other attorneys, the creation of an informational website that will assist clients, and other resources that will translate the work you’ve done to a larger audience).

- **Other Guidance:**
  - Think about these questions as you begin to draft your proposal: How did you pick your project? What moves you about this population? Why this population and project rather than another? Why this organization rather than another?
  - Use language that is both persuasive and positive.
  - Carefully edit and proofread your proposal.
  - Share your drafts widely but brace yourself for abundant and varied feedback! Establish a process for prioritizing and applying edits that help you more effectively communicate your project.
  - Ask a non-lawyer to read your application to ensure that you are not using too much jargon.
  - Save one special editor/reviewer for the final draft – fresh eyes are most important at the finish line!

**Personal Statement:**
- Write personal essays that describe your commitment, public interest experience, and motivation.
- Consider the broad range of experiences that you’ve had, including beyond law school, that demonstrate your commitment to this work

**Letters of Reference:**
- You’ll be asked to submit 2-3 letters of recommendation, depending on the funding source, from people who know your work and who can speak to your ability to carry out the proposed
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project and your commitment to the mission of your project (keep in mind that these letters should be tailored to your candidacy for a fellowship, and will differ from clerkship letters or letters for other jobs).

- Request letters from your references as early as possible, schedule a time to speak with your references in person, and give your references a copy of your resume and a detailed explanation of your project proposal.

Letter from Sponsoring Organization:
- Make sure the sponsoring organization addresses the training and supervision that they will provide to you during your fellowship.
- This letter is an opportunity for the organization to highlight the significance of the problem you are addressing and the value you will add by executing this fellowship.

Resume:
- Your resume should be over a page in order to give the funders an understanding of your longstanding commitment and broad array of experiences that prepare you to successfully execute this project.

Skadden Specific Guidance:
- Q1: Describe briefly (300 words) your proposed public interest project. Please specify what legal rights you will be enforcing and how you think your project will work.
  - The answer to this question should focus heavily on who your client is, what is the problem/need you are addressing, and what is the legal solution to the problem/need
- Q2: Select one or two of your previous public interest projects and state briefly (300 words) their significance:
  - This question is asking you why can YOU make this project work? What skills and experiences do you have that make you the best person for this project?
- Q3: State briefly (300 words) your sense of the relevancy of public interest work to contemporary society:
  - What motivates you to do this work each and every day and what will motivate you to continue in this line of work even after the fellowship, for the duration of your legal career.

The word limit is a guide - you can exceed the limit as long as your essay fits onto the single page.

- It’s important to reach out to Susan Butler Plum and Kathleen Rubenstein as you develop your project proposal to seek their input. First reach out to Susan and Kathleen by email (Susan.Plum@skadden.com and Kathleen.Rubenstein@skadden.com), introduce yourself, and ask for good times to talk. Then plan on a very brief phone call where you share a bit more about yourself, let them know who you are partnering with and what your project is about, and ask them a question (as long as it’s not already answered on the website). It can be as simple as: do they think you should reach out to anyone in particular to discuss the project or do they have any feedback on your idea while you are in this writing stage.
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- Don’t submit more than 2 letters of recommendation but if you have worked for/with a former Skadden fellow, they can submit a note to the Skadden Foundation on your behalf and it will be included in the file.
- We recommend including a cover letter that describes in bullets everything that you are submitting in the order it is attached, addressed to the Skadden Director.
- List the bar exams you anticipate sitting for if you haven’t already taken the exam.
- The references that you list for the application are the individuals who wrote your letter of recommendation.
- Let CP&P know if either of your recommenders has a policy of not sharing their letter with their students/supervisees and we will work together to submit a complete packet. Make sure to communicate with your recommender a plan for how CP&P will receive the letter.
- Plan for time to assemble all of your materials into one PDF, and in particular combining the password protected transcript with the rest of your documents.
- Skadden deadline for submission is 5 pm on the date announced.
- If you have technical difficulties on the day of submission, call the Foundation.

We look forward to working with you as you plan to launch your career through a public interest fellowship! If you have any questions, please contact Neta Borshansky at nborshan@law.upenn.edu or Jamie Reisman at jreisman@law.upenn.edu.