



Office of Career and
Professional Development
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN LAW SCHOOL

Summer Public Service Fellowship Fact Sheet 2026

I. Overview

This Fact Sheet provides key information about the Summer Public Service Fellowship (“SPSF”) program at the University of Wisconsin Law School. (“the Law School” or “UW Law”). It outlines program guidelines and procedures for applicants and award recipients. Keep this Fact Sheet for reference during the application process and the summer. If you have questions not answered here, please contact Lindsay Slaker (lslaker@wisc.edu) in the Office of Career and Professional Development (“OCPD”).

A. Background and Purpose

The SPSF program provides stipends to UW Law students who accept unpaid or low-paid summer public service positions. These funds help students cover basic living expenses while working in qualifying legal roles.

B. SPSF Determination Process

The Law School annually appoints a Student Award Committee (“the Committee”), comprised of faculty and staff members, who has input on the SPSF criteria, reviews applications, and determines awards. Although the Committee aims to provide funding for every qualified, eligible applicant, funding cannot be guaranteed.

The Committee bases its funding decisions solely on information in the application. GPA is not considered. If unable to fund every applicant, the Committee may consider:

- Completeness of the application;
- Whether Applicant has complied with the Statement of Professional Obligation;
- Applicant’s cost of living during the summer;
- Whether Applicant diligently sought other sources of funding;
- Whether Applicant will receive other funding for the summer employment;
- Applicant’s year in Law School.
- Other criteria at the Committee’s discretion.

Applicants may submit a brief explanation of special circumstances.

II. Award Amounts and Funding Rules

A. SPSF Award Amounts

SPSF awards are not guaranteed. If selected for an award, a student can anticipate receiving between \$2,500 and \$5,000. Total funding from outside sources and SPSF cannot exceed \$5,000 combined.

Most students who receive an SPSF award will receive an award between \$2,500 and \$3,500. The award may be below \$2,500 if a student is receiving funding from other sources, even if they have not reached the \$5,000 cap. However, a student will never be placed in a worse position than if they had not applied for or received other funding. Students are encouraged and expected to seek other sources of funding.

Students are expected to engage professionally in all interactions with employers and abide by the Statement of Professional Obligation. Failure to comply with the Statement of Professional Obligation may result in reduction or revocation of your SPSF award.

B. Impact of Outside Funding

Funding may be decreased or eliminated for candidates who receive outside funding or funding from their employer. Students must disclose all external funding in their application - whether a wage or stipend from the employer, a grant from another organization, or a promise of funding from a future employer for accepting unpaid and/or public service work this summer. If a student receives additional funding *after* submitting their SPSF application, they must immediately notify Lindsay Slaker (lslaker@wisc.edu).

Failure to disclose other funding sources may result in forfeiture of the SPSF award. Since students will not be put in a worse position than if they had not sought outside funding, students are encouraged and expected to seek outside funding. If your position is eligible for alternative funding sources, failure to seek such funding may result in the reduction or denial of your award.

III. Eligibility Requirements

A. Student Eligibility

Any returning, enrolled UW Law student may apply. This includes current 1Ls and 2Ls who will still be working toward their degree in the Fall 2026 term, and those intending to graduate in December 2026.

Students transferring to another law school in Fall 2026 are ineligible. If an SPSF applicant seeks to transfer after the SPSF deadline, you must immediately notify Lindsay Slaker by email (lslaker@wisc.edu) and keep her updated on your intention and plans to transfer. Students who receive an SPSF award and later commit to transfer must repay the award.

An applicant who is fully funded (i.e. receiving \$5,000 or more from their summer employer) is ineligible for both SPSF and the below-described Additional Fellowship Awards.

B. Job Eligibility

To be eligible for SPSF, you must have accepted a qualifying summer role at the time of applying. To qualify, a job must be:

- With a non-profit organization or a government agency that complies with the UW Law School nondiscrimination policy (<https://law.wisc.edu/career/employers.html>) and applicable local, state, and federal nondiscrimination laws;

- Legal in nature;
- At least 10 weeks AND 400 hours (375 hours if employer has a 37.5-hour week); and
- Supervised by a licensed attorney.

Students must complete both the 10-week and 400-hour requirements. Exceptions will be considered only for extreme extenuating circumstances. Satisfactory completion of the weekly and hourly requirement will be verified with employers at the end of 10 weeks. Failure to complete hours may result in revocation of the award and billing of the award amount as tuition.

C. Excluded Roles

Students may not receive SPSF funding for internships for which they receive academic credit.

Students participating in the Prosecution Project and Public Defender Project who are placed with a Wisconsin employer for the summer are ineligible for SPSF.

D. Federal Work Study (FWS)

FWS is a need-based program in which the federal government and the employer share the payroll cost of employing a student. Work study is a part of students' financial aid award package; eligibility is determined by the FAFSA. Work study income is taxable and may affect a student's future financial aid eligibility.

UW Law has partnered with specific employers for summer 2026. FWS-eligible students employed by partner employers will receive up to \$5,000 in biweekly paychecks. To seek FWS, both an employer and the student need to be eligible. For summer 2026, the organizations that the Law School has partnered with to offer FWS are:

- Community Justice Inc.
- Gathering Waters
- Legal Action of Wisconsin (excluding the Farmworker Program)
- Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee
- RENEW Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Students apply for FWS using the same SPSF Application form. By opting in for FWS consideration, students give permission to the Office of Student Financial Aid to access their account. You must complete the [FWS Eligibility Inquiry Form](#) to be considered for FWS. The [FWS Eligibility Inquiry Form](#) is considered part of the SPSF Application.

Students accepting FWS are not eligible to receive SPSF funds nor Additional Fellowship Awards.

All other SPSF requirements noted above apply to students accepting FWS.

IV. Application Process

A. How to Apply

Submit the SPSF Application form: [SPSF Application](#).

Deadline: Sunday, April 12 at 11:59pm.

Students must have accepted an eligible role to apply. Students without an eligible role by the deadline may join a waitlist for consideration of an SPSF award, should funds become available. Students may join the waitlist by emailing Lindsay Slaker (lslaker@wisc.edu).

Applications may not be amended after submission without first seeking timely permission. If you want to report a change to your application, you must request permission to do so before the deadline by contacting Lindsay Slaker (lslaker@wisc.edu). The Committee reserves the right to refuse consideration of any amended application.

If you are granted an SPSF award and request permission to amend your application after being notified of such award, your funding award may be reduced or rescinded. The Committee will evaluate if the requested amendment violates the Statement of Professional Obligation.

B. Notification Timeline

Funding decisions for SPSF awards, FWS, and Additional Fellowship Awards (see part V. below) will be announced in the last week of April 2026. Applicants will be notified via email.

C. Award Distribution

After award notifications, employment confirmation requests will be sent to each recipients' employer. Once employment has been confirmed, the award will be disbursed to the student's tuition account. Any remaining balance will be refunded via direct deposit or mailed check. If you have enrolled in eRefunds, it will only take a few days for the SPSF Award to be directly deposited in your bank account. Questions should be directed to the Office of Student Financial Aid.

V. Additional Fellowship Awards

UW Law School is proud to offer several Fellowship Awards through generous donations. Students interested in applying to the below awards complete the same [SPSF Application](#), answering the supplemental questions associated with each funding award they wish to be considered for.

Students applying for any of the Fellowship Awards described below must meet all SPSF eligibility requirements, as well as additional requirements set forth by each Award. As with all SPSF applications, students applying for the below awards are encouraged and expected to apply to additional outside sources of funding.

Students who receive one of the Fellowship Awards listed below will **not** receive any SPSF funds.

Students receiving each of the below awards are required to participate in Stewardship efforts, including drafting letters of appreciation to the funder, and/or attending events hosted by the funder.

A. Arlen Christenson Environmental Law Fellowship

Thanks to a generous donation from Caroline Fribance (UW Law '74), we are able to offer the Arlen Christenson Environmental Law Fellowship award on a bi-annual basis. This donation honors and celebrates Emeritus Professor of Law and Environmental Studies Arlen Christenson who made a tremendous impact on countless students throughout his career. With the goal of honoring Professor Christenson while also providing formative opportunities for growth and development for the recipient(s), this award is designed to offer one or more awards up to \$5,000 to students who demonstrate a commitment to a career in environmental law and take a summer position at a public interest or government entity in environmental law or a closely related field.

B. Boardman Clark Summer Public Interest Fellowship

Recognizing that people of all backgrounds thrive in a more equitable community, Boardman Clark established this program in support of the Law School's commitment to preparing its students to help address persistent problems of racial, social and economic inequity.

The Boardman Clark Summer Public Interest Fellowship will provide \$4,500 in financial assistance to one or more UW Law students who have completed their first year of Law School and have accepted summer employment to do public interest law in the greater Madison area.

C. Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson Award

In honor of Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson, this award provides funding for students enrolled in the University of Wisconsin Law School who have demonstrated interest in pursuing public interest careers. Recipients must be accepted for a summer fellowship for full-time (10 weeks) legal work in public interest or a closely related field. The recipient will receive an award between \$3,000 and \$5,000.

D. Children's Justice Project (CJP) Fellowship

CJP fellows are awarded up to \$5,000 for summer legal work that benefits children. The actual award amount may vary, depending on the number of selected recipients, and whether the selected fellows receive funding from other sources.

CJP fellows must work for a public or private sector organization or agency that is unable to pay a salary, or pays a very low salary or stipend, to summer law interns. Government agencies that focus on children are eligible employers. The work may be domestic or international.

All recipients of the CJP fellowship will be required to prepare, upon receipt of the award and after the completion of the recipient's summer work, letters to the CJP advisory board, as well as to the Theda Clark Smith Foundation, whose generous support not only helped CJP create this fellowship program, but has financially sustained the fellowship.

Each recipient is also required to make a brief presentation on the experience at a CJP meeting during the Fall semester. The letter and presentation should describe the organization where the recipient worked, the type of work the recipient completed, and a summary of the recipient's experience. Thus, any applicants for the CJP award consent to their names being shared with the CJP leadership, CJP advisory board, and the Theda Clark Smith Foundation if they are selected.

E. Jackie Macaulay Fellowship

Thanks to a generous donation from Stewart Macaulay, in honor of his late wife Jackie Macaulay (UW Law '83), we are able to offer two (2) students a \$5,000 award who have demonstrated interest in public interest careers. Recipients must be accepted for a summer fellowship for full-time legal work in public interest or a closely related field. Based on Jackie Macaulay's interests, the preference will be for students with an interest in law related to women's reproduction, adoption law, and facilitation of legal representation for people with modest resources.

F. Joel J. Rabin Social Justice Internship

Thanks to a generous donation from the Rabin Family, we are able to offer The Joel J. Rabin Social Justice Internship. This internship award is designed to offer one or more awards of up to \$5,500 to students committed to a social justice career with financial need.

To qualify, you must meet the requirements of SPSE, answer supplemental questions on the application form, and be willing to provide a statement to be shared with the Rabin Family describing how the award assisted you in meeting your social justice goals and be willing to participate in Law School programming regarding public interest summer experiences.

G. Michael P. May Fellowship

In honor of the late Michael P. May, this Fellowship provides funding for a student enrolled in the University of Wisconsin Law School who has a demonstrated interest in pursuing a career in public interest. The recipient must be accepted for a summer fellowship for fulltime legal work in public interest, nonprofit, government, or other similar organization. The selected student will receive an award between \$3,000 and \$5,000.

H. PILF/WLSA Awards

The Public Interest Law Foundation and the Women's Law Student Association support students working in public interest and/or women's issues with funds raised from the Jackie Macaulay Auction. To be considered for this funding, you must answer the 3 supplemental questions on the application form. A separate student committee will evaluate the PILF/WLSA applicants anonymously.

VI. Other Funding Sources

Please refer to [OCPC's Funding for Summer Internships](#) page for additional resources, including scholarships and external funding applications.