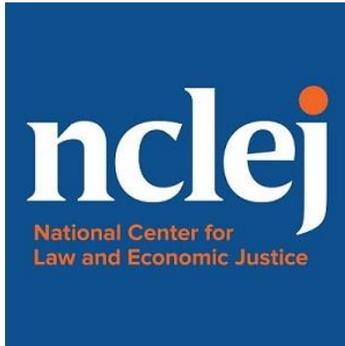


# Seeking Candidates to Sponsor in 2017 for Fellowships in 2018



The National Center for Law and Economic Justice advances the cause of economic justice for low-income families, individuals, and communities through ground-breaking, successful litigation and policy work. We work nationwide with low-income individuals, grass roots organizations, and their advocates. Our current advocacy is focused on 1) fighting for the rights of low-income families for economic security; 2) expanding and enforcing employment law protections for low-income workers; 3) defeating unfair and abusive debt collection practices; and 4) using the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to advance the rights of low-income people.

In light of the Trump administration's threats to social safety net programs, civil rights, and the rights of immigrants, low-income workers and their communities, NCLEJ's work is more important than ever. NCLEJ seeks energetic, motivated candidates with a record of commitment to social justice work, experience in developing and implementing projects, and excellent writing, legal research and communication skills, to apply for fellowships that would start in September 2018, including Skadden, Equal Justice Works, and any other relevant fellowships such as those offered by law schools.

NCLEJ welcomes applications describing possible projects that fit within NCLEJ's mission and areas of work, as well as applications from individuals who have not yet formulated a project. Projects can be national or regional in scope, or focused on the New York City area, and can include impact litigation, legal and policy advocacy, training, and community education. In its advocacy, NCLEJ considers how exploring these issues through the lens of race, gender, or immigrant status can provide new insights into ways of seeking redress. NCLEJ welcomes the fellow's participation in this effort. If we select the applicant we will work with that person to develop a project in an area where interesting new work is emerging, such as:

- 1. Protecting the Rights of Low-Wage Workers.** Under the current administration, workers face threats to their basic employment rights on multiple fronts, including retaliation against workers who attempt to organize and failure to provide equal pay. Migrant and seasonal dairy workers in upstate New York are especially vulnerable. Wage theft is rampant and the workers' compensation systems set up to provide for injured workers are failing dairy workers and others who work in low-wage jobs, such as restaurant workers. Potential projects include fighting for equal pay by using the law to combat pregnancy discrimination or addressing wage theft through outreach to farms and dairies, collaboration with upstate or New York City-based worker centers, and a multi-pronged advocacy approach at the national level.
- 2. Challenging Unconstitutional Collection of Criminal Justice Debt.** Over the last decade, many states have imposed onerous "user fees" on people who have criminal convictions, seeking to balance state budgets on the backs of the indigent defendants processed through the system. As a result, many people with criminal convictions emerge from court owing thousands of dollars in fines and fees on top of their sentences. People who are too poor to pay are punished with jail time, extended probation, and the deprivation of their driver's licenses. The Fellow would work with partner organizations around the country to address these problems using a variety of tools including litigation and policy advocacy.

**3. Protecting Families' Access to Safety Net Programs.** New policy initiatives at the federal and state levels threaten low-income families' access to critical safety net programs, including SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, and cash assistance. These threats are independent of federal legislative proposals to restrict these programs and may include actions to increase procedural hoops to limit families' access, new work requirements, drug testing and other eligibility restrictions. Working with partners in various states, the fellow would develop and implement advocacy strategies to protect families' access to these essential benefits.

**4. Protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.** Persons with disabilities face significant barriers in attempting to access and maintain public benefits. Projects could address disability-based discrimination regarding: appointing counsel and providing other assistance in administrative hearings as a reasonable accommodation for persons with mental impairments; refusal to provide interpreters for persons who are deaf; the lack of availability of documents converted into alternate formats for persons who are blind; ensuring adequate access to personal care services for persons with disabilities living at home, in order to prevent their being forced into nursing homes and other institutional settings; allowing persons with developmental disabilities to transition from rote, subminimum wage work activities in sheltered workshops to competitive employment in the open labor market; and ensuring that persons with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations designed to provide meaningful access to public benefits, including SNAP, Medicaid, and cash assistance.

**5. Expanding Access to Health Care under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).** One in five Americans and one in three of the nation's children are insured by Medicaid or CHIP. Despite bipartisan support for these programs, the Trump administration has proposed drastic budget reductions that will threaten Medicaid and CHIP access. In addition, many state Medicaid agencies are contemplating seeking approval from the Trump administration for waivers of various federal Medicaid requirements that may threaten the availability of essential, medically necessary services for low-income individuals and individuals with disabilities. The Fellow would develop a project addressing systemic barriers to medically necessary services caused by these forthcoming developments, and in partnership with local advocacy organizations in one or more states, use a combination of individual assistance, impact litigation, and policy work to help increase health care access.

See our website at <http://nclej.org/jobs-and-internships> for links to a video and other information about past fellows.

NCLEJ is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, marital or family status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other consideration prohibited by law. Persons who are of color, are former recipients of public assistance, or have grown up in poverty are especially encouraged to apply.

The 2017 scale calls for a law graduate to receive \$62,400. Generous benefits.

Please submit (1) a cover letter setting out why you believe you would be a good candidate for such a fellowship, and your ideas about what you would hope to accomplish in such a fellowship, (2) a resume, (3) a writing sample, and (4) three references. Send these materials by e-mail to [fellowship@nclej.org](mailto:fellowship@nclej.org) or by mail to Fellowship Applications, National Center for Law and Economic Justice, 275 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1506, New York NY 10001-6860. Your application will be acknowledged by e-mail.