



Engaging Communities • Eliminating Barriers • Securing Justice

FELLOWSHIP, ECONOMIC SECURITY UNIT HOWARD C. WESTWOOD FELLOW

Opening Date: January 14, 2022

Closing Date: Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until February 27, 2022

Neighborhood Legal Services Program of the District of Columbia (“NLSP”) will have an opening for one Westwood Fellow, who will start in the fall of 2022. All third-year law students and those who graduated in 2020 or 2021 from accredited law schools in the District of Columbia (American, Catholic, UDC-D CSL, George Washington, Georgetown and Howard) and the University of Maryland’s School of Law are eligible to apply for this fellowship.

ABOUT NLSP

Since 1964, NLSP has provided high-quality civil legal services to low-income residents of the District of Columbia. NLSP has a long tradition of fighting for justice for the poor, combining direct representation with efforts to achieve broad-based change. Its three offices are located in the poorest sections of the District to maximize its visibility, accessibility, and connections to the communities it serves.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF POSITION

The law firm of Covington & Burling LLP (“Covington”) funds annual fellowships for graduates of Washington, DC law schools and the University of Maryland’s School of Law to work as NLSP staff attorneys. The Westwood Fellowship Program was established and named in honor of Covington’s former partner, Howard C. Westwood, who helped found and preserve NLSP and other legal services programs nationally. The Westwood Fellowship provides a crucial source of funding and staff for NLSP and offers an opportunity for local law school graduates to dedicate their talents and energies to providing legal services to the poor.

Each Westwood Fellow must commit to serve as an NLSP staff attorney for at least one year, with an option to apply for renewed fellowship commitment for a second year. This year’s fellow will practice in the areas of consumer law, barriers to employment, and public benefits. The Managing Attorney for the Economic Security Unit will supervise the fellow. Supervision of the fellow’s activities will meet the requirements of D.C. Court of Appeals Rule 46-A. The fellow will work in one of our three neighborhood offices (Headquarters, the Deanwood/Far Northeast Office, or the Southeast Office). All NLSP staff members, including fellows, are continuing to work remotely.

Covington provides funding through NLSP to cover salaries and other benefits for the fellow, as described below. Westwood Fellows are employees of NLSP, not Covington. Renewal eligibility for the second year is conditional upon the fellow’s job performance, membership in a State Bar, and admittance to or a pending application to the DC Bar.

The Westwood Fellowship expands Covington's long-standing relationship with NLSP. In 1969, Covington decided to make a formal commitment to help meet the enormous need for civil legal assistance among DC's poor by sending two of its lawyers and a paralegal to work at NLSP's neighborhood offices on a full-time basis for six-month rotations. Started in 1991, the Westwood Fellowship adds another dimension to that 51-year relationship.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Westwood Fellow will:

- provide direct representation for clients in consumer law (e.g., student loan and other debt collection, fair credit reporting, unfair debt collection practices), barriers to employment, and public benefits cases.
- represent clients in all stages of the litigation process, including interviewing clients, drafting complaints and motions, filing and responding to discovery, preparing for hearings and trials, and representing clients at hearings and trials.
- receive internal trainings about relevant substantive law, litigation, and NLSP's approach of using the law to fight poverty and racial inequity.
- attend external substantive law and litigation trainings.
- contribute to NLSP's sense of community by participating in committees and office events.
- attend monthly staff meetings and regular practice area and supervision meetings.

QUALIFICATIONS

All third-year students at the accredited law schools in the District of Columbia (American, Catholic, UDC's David A. Clarke School of Law, George Washington, Georgetown and Howard) and the University of Maryland's School of Law are eligible to apply for the Westwood Fellowship. Lawyers who graduated from those schools in 2020 or 2021 are also eligible. Recipients of a Westwood Fellowship will be eligible to reapply for a second year.

Primary selection criteria include:

- (1) a commitment to serving low-income residents of the District of Columbia;
- (2) a commitment to racial equity;
- (3) a passion for public interest law;
- (4) strong academic performance, including excellent research and writing skills;
- (5) experience with legal services (including internships and clinics);
- (6) exceptional communication skills (written and oral);
- (7) strong interpersonal skills focused on client services;
- (8) outstanding problem-solving skills and creativity; and
- (9) an ability to work independently.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Westwood Fellows are paid \$52,500 as law school graduates. Once admitted to practice, compensation is consistent with NLSP's salary scale for staff attorneys, beginning at \$55,500. Fellows receive all employment benefits available to NLSP staff attorneys including:

- employer-paid medical, dental, and vision insurance;
- employer-subsidized family health coverage;
- paid vacation, holidays, personal days and sick leave;
- 8-week parental leave for birth or adoption of a child;
- employer-paid life and long-term disability insurance; and
- 403(b) Thrift Plan (voluntary retirement savings program).

Additionally, this fellowship will reimburse fellows for expenses incurred in taking the bar examination and a bar review course up to \$2,000. Reimbursement is not retroactive and is not available to candidates who are already licensed in any jurisdiction.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Those interested in applying should send the required application materials **by 5:00 pm on Sunday, February 27, 2022**. NLSP will review applications on a rolling basis, but invitations for interviews will only be sent after February 28, 2022.

Please email, as a single pdf file, your required application materials in an email with the subject line, "2022 Westwood Fellowship" to: Victoria King Taitano, Managing Attorney, Economic Security Unit at ykingtaitano@nlsp.org and copy knewtoncole@nlsp.org.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS

- (1) A cover letter explaining why you want to work at NLSP and why you are specifically interested in the Westwood Fellowship. The cover letter should be addressed to the "Fellowship Committee."
- (2) Recent official or unofficial law school transcript.
- (3) Resume (including whether or not you speak any languages other than English and your level of proficiency in those languages).
- (4) Three letters of recommendation from professors, judges, practicing lawyers or others in a position to comment on the applicant's qualifications for a position at NLSP.
- (5) A legal writing sample of original work 3 - 5 pages in length, not including any statement of redaction, permission to use, or other explanation.

NLSP IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

It is the policy of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program that no employee or applicant for employment or services will be discriminated against because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, family responsibilities or family status, veteran's status, or any other basis prohibited by law, including the D.C. Human Rights Act and Language Access Act.

NLSP thrives on our diversity and we strongly encourage women, persons of color, LGBTQ individuals, veterans, persons with disabilities, returning citizens and persons from other underrepresented groups to apply.