



Engaging Communities • Eliminating Barriers • Securing Justice

FELLOWSHIP, FAMILY LAW UNIT

HOWARD C. WESTWOOD FELLOW

Opening Date: May 7, 2026 Closing Date: Open Until Filled

Neighborhood Legal Services Program for the District of Columbia will have an opening for one Westwood Fellow, who will start in the Fall of 2026. All third-year law students and those who graduated in 2024 or 2025 from accredited law schools in the District of Columbia (American, Catholic, UDC-DACSL, 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, Neighborhood Legal Services Program for the District of Columbia ("NLSP") has provided free legal services in civil cases to low-income residents of the District of Columbia. NLSP pioneered the concept of a law office rooted in the neighborhoods that it serves and established landmark precedents that have retained their vitality and relevance. NLSP remains embedded in D.C.'s most low-income communities, builds its work on strong partnerships with community-based organizations, and seeks to achieve lasting change for its clients and their communities by using a full range of advocacy tools. It's diverse, multi-lingual, and passionate staff embraces an explicitly anti-poverty, antiracism mission and shares a deep commitment to securing meaningful access to justice.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF POSITION

The law firm of Covington & Burling LLP ("Covington") funds annual Fellowships for graduates of Washington, D.C. 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 legal services programs nationally.

Each graduate awarded a Westwood Fellowship 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 area of family law. The fellow will be supervised by the Managing Attorney for the Family Law Unit. The fellow will be allowed to work a hybrid schedule, a minimum of two days at Headquarters, located at 64 New York Avenue NE, Suite 180 Washington, DC and up to three days remotely from home.

Covington provides funding through NLSP to cover salaries and other benefits for Fellowship recipients, as described below. Renewal eligibility for the second year is conditional upon the fellow's job performance, membership in a State Bar, and at least a pending application to the DC Bar.

The 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 support staff members 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 56-year relationship. It helps ameliorate a shortage 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.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Westwood Fellow will:

- provide direct representation for clients in family law (custody, divorce, child support) and domestic violence 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 attending hearings and trials.
- receive internal trainings about relevant substantive law, litigation, and NLSP's approach of using the law to fight poverty.
- attend external substantive law and litigation trainings.
- contribute to NLSP's sense of community by participating in committees and organizing periodic 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 2024 or 2025 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) and strong interpersonal skills;
- (7) outstanding problem-solving skills and creativity; and
- (8) an ability to work independently.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Westwood Fellows are paid \$ \$68,680 as law school graduates. Once admitted to the State Bar to practice law, compensation is consistent with NLSP's salary scale for staff attorneys, beginning at \$71,770. 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, the 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. Recipients of the Westwood Fellowship are employees of NLSP, not Covington & Burling.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Those interested in applying for a Covington & Burling LLP Westwood Fellowship should email the application materials to Marka Belinfanti, directorofpaihiring@nlsp.org. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

The application should include

- (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 law school transcript.
- (3) Resume (including whether you speak any languages other than English and your level of proficiency in these 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 writing sample of original work 3 - 5 pages in length.

Please Apply at this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/W1y4g11vcJ>

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.