



Engaging Communities • Eliminating Barriers • Securing Justice

FELLOWSHIP, ECONOMIC SECURITY UNIT HOWARD C. WESTWOOD FELLOW

Opening Date: February 12, 2025 **Closing Date:** April 30, 2025

Neighborhood Legal Services Program for the District of Columbia (“NLSP”) will have an opening for one Westwood Fellow, who will start in the fall of 2025. All third-year law students and those who graduated in 2023 or 2024 from accredited law schools in the District of Columbia (American, Catholic, UDC-D CSL, George Washington, Georgetown, Howard, Scalia School of Law (George Mason)) 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 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 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, 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 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 49. The fellow will work in one of our two neighborhood offices (Headquarters or the Deanwood/Far Northeast Office). All NLSP staff members, including fellows, are currently working on a hybrid schedule, but are expected to attend outreach events, onsite clinics, and other events in person.

Covington provides funding through NLSP to cover salaries and other benefits for Fellowship recipients, 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 longstanding 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 established relationship.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Westwood Fellow will:

- provide direct representation for clients in consumer law (e.g., 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 participating in periodic office social 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 2023 or 2024 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 \$66,680 as law school graduates. Once admitted to practice, compensation is consistent with NLSP's salary scale for staff attorneys, beginning at \$69,680. 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.

APPLICATION PROCESS

For best consideration please apply **by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, April 30, 2025**. NLSP will review applications on a rolling basis, but invitations for interviews will only be sent after April 16, 2025.

Please apply using the form at the following link: <https://forms.office.com/r/xaShbk0mgX>.

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 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.