

Tulane Public Interest Law Foundation

Grant Eligibility Requirements, Application Procedures, and Selection and Funding Criteria¹

Purpose of the PILF Grant Program

The purpose of the PILF Grant Program is to provide financial support to Tulane Law students who are exploring public interest law careers by working in the public interest for six to twelve weeks in legal positions representing individuals, causes, or organizations that typically suffer from a lack of adequate legal representation.

Employment and General Eligibility Requirements

1. Your summer employment must directly serve the public interest in the sense that you will be representing individuals, causes, or organizations that typically suffer from a lack of adequate legal representation.
2. Your position must be at least six weeks in length. However, if you decide to split your summer between two qualifying public interest employers, one of your positions can be for less than six weeks if the total time you are working between the two jobs is more than six weeks.
3. Your position must be legal in nature. Positions that require you to directly engage in lobbying and political activities do not qualify.
4. Because the grants are intended to serve persons or causes that do not normally receive sufficient legal representation, judicial internships do not qualify.
5. Professor-sponsored projects do not qualify unless it can be demonstrated that such projects directly serve the public interest, as defined above.
6. Due to the funding discrepancies between prosecutors and public defenders, positions with prosecutors' offices are not a priority public interest position. However, PILF encourages public interest minded individuals pursuing careers as prosecutors. Prosecutorial positions that are directed at under-served populations and under-prosecuted crimes are the most favored. Examples of favored prosecutorial positions include domestic violence programs, child protective services, and prosecutors' offices that work in conjunction with another qualifying public interest organization (e.g., Innocence Project). When considering whether, or how much, to fund a particular prosecutorial position, the following factors will be considered: the resources of the prosecutor's office, the nature of the prosecutorial work and the population served, the applicant's commitment to prosecution and public interest law as a career, and PILF's resources. If you are applying for a

¹ As adopted by the Tulane Public Interest Law Foundation Executive Board, with the approval of PILF faculty advisor Vice-Dean Janet Hoeffel, on November 15, 2009.

position at a prosecutor's office, you have the burden of addressing these factors in your application.

7. All compensation and benefits of employment must be disclosed. Employment should be unpaid. While PILF considers funding qualifying positions that offer modest stipends, we reserve the right either to decline to award you a grant or to discount the funding that you would otherwise receive based on the amount of compensation.
8. Applicants who choose to split their summer between compensated non-public interest work and non-compensated public interest work are not eligible for grants.
9. Applicants must have paid their PILF dues for the academic year in which they are applying for a grant. Applicants must have had some involvement in PILF fundraising activities to be eligible for a grant.

If you are not sure if your position qualifies for a grant, please contact the current president or vice-president of PILF as soon as possible. Please submit a brief written description of your position and an explanation of why you think your position qualifies.

Application Procedures

Grants will be awarded to first and second-year Tulane University Law School students who complete the application process and are selected by the PILF Grant Funding Committee as grant recipients. Due to the large number of applicants and the limited amount of money PILF raises, **we strongly encourage students to seek alternative forms of funding in addition to applying for a PILF grant.**

While the application process is not anonymous, PILF endeavors to make the process as transparent as possible. Initially, applications are evaluated by PILF Grant Panels, which are made up of three 2L and 3L PILF members who are not applying for a grant during this application cycle. These three-person Grant Panels then conduct interviews with each applicant. Each applicant only interviews once with a single Grant Panel. After the interview and reviewing the application, each member of this panel makes a recommendation to the PILF Grant Funding Committee.

The decision as to the amount of the grant will be made by the PILF Grant Funding Committee, which is made up of the president, the vice-president, and the treasurer (unless the treasurer is a 2L and a grant applicant) of PILF. The president can invite the incoming president, vice-president, and treasurer to participate in the grant funding decision-making process if these individuals are not applying for grants.

While PILF will do everything in its power to fund qualifying applicants, PILF cannot guarantee that any particular applicant will be funded or receive a certain amount of money. However, it is PILF's policy to fund all qualifying applicants that meet our selection criteria.

The Application

Grant Applications will be available by the end of the Fall Semester on PILF's website: <http://www.law.tulane.edu/tlsOrgs/pilf/>. You must include the following in your Grant Application:

1. A completed Overview of Applicant and Employment sheet.
2. A commitment letter from your employer setting out the terms of your employment. While the Employer Good Faith Certification form does not necessarily need to be completed when you turn in your application, you must submit a commitment letter from your prospective employer confirming that you will be working for them. This communication may be in the form of an email, fax, or letter and must contain the following: a supervisor's name, the organization's name, the time frame of your position, the proposed compensation or benefits provided by the organization, and the title of your position. If you have not been offered a position, you must submit a certification stating that you have applied to qualifying positions, providing as many details as possible, and that you expect to have a final decision by the Sunday before the last week of classes in the Spring Semester.
3. An Employer Good Faith Certification form.
4. A Student Good Faith Certification that you have looked for other funding sources. You do not have to list three funding sources that you considered. You just need to show that you made a good faith effort to obtain other funding.
5. A résumé. Do not include your GPA. Please highlight your public interest experience.
6. A one to two page statement, double spaced, that describes your position, your interest in the position, and your commitment to public interest law.
7. A budget sheet and planned budget.

Out of fairness, there **are no exceptions to the grant application deadline**. Please do not ask for funding if you did not turn in your application on time. We understand that PILF members sometimes find jobs after the deadline has passed, however you must do everything you can to find a job or a potential job by the time the application is due.

The Interview

Interviews are mandatory. It is your responsibility to schedule your interview time and to arrive on time. Please be prepared to answer questions on the following topics:

1. PILF activities that you have participated in.
2. Current or future PILF positions.
3. Volunteer work, legal or otherwise, in New Orleans.
4. Your interest in your summer job / commitment to a particular cause.
5. Your budget.

6. Commitment to public interest as a career.
7. Other funding sources.
8. Other commitments that prevented you from participating in PILF (i.e., childcare or work commitments, etc.).

Selection Criteria

The Grant Panels will evaluate your application and interview on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated commitment to PILF fundraising efforts as indicated by PILF hours and the type of fundraising activities that you were involved in.
2. Demonstrated commitment to public interest work since coming to law school. While we are mainly looking for volunteer work in the greater New Orleans area, participation in other public interest oriented organizations, on or off campus, is also considered. Public interest work done before law school will be considered when it is directly relevant to the applicant's summer position.
3. Quality of application and interview. We are looking for timely and professional applications and applicants. Consider this as an opportunity to articulate exactly why you want to pursue a public interest law career.
4. Applicant's commitment to public interest law as either a career or as a part of his or her private practice.

Funding Criteria

Once the three-person grant panel has evaluated your application and your interview, they will make a recommendation as to the worthiness of your application. Thereafter, the Grant Funding Committee will make the decision as to the size of your PILF grant in the following manner:

- (1) All submitted monthly budgets will be reviewed to ensure that all expenses are reasonable.
 - a. The Grant Funding Committee takes a hard look at these budgets and only funds what it considers reasonable claims of expenses. Applicants are strongly encouraged to be honest and frugal with their budgets. The cost of living in different cities is taken into account. Applicants will not be awarded a grant in excess of their costs. For example, if you demonstrate costs of \$1,200, you will not receive a grant in excess of \$1,200.
- (2) A spreadsheet will be generated containing the names of all applicants recommended by the PILF Grant Panels, the full reasonable amount requested by each, the geographic location of the position, and its duration in weeks.

- (3) As a starting point, the average grant that could be allotted to each applicant will be determined. This will be done by dividing the total amount of money available for grant funding by the total number of weeks that will be worked cumulatively by all applicants. This average amount per week will then be multiplied by the number of weeks each applicant will be employed to arrive at the applicant's total average grant amount.
 - a. Ex: If PILF raises \$50,000 and there are 30 applicants that will work a total of 250 weeks, each applicant could be given \$200/wk. Applicant A, who will work 10 weeks, will begin the process with an average grant of \$2,000.
- (4) The next step will be to review the list to determine if there are applicants that have requested less than their average grant. If so, the difference between their requested grant and the average will be placed in a general pool and made available for distribution to others.
- (5) The PILF Grant Funding Committee will then review the individual applications and determine whether each applicant deserves more or less funding based on the strength of recommendation by the PILF Grant Panel. If a grant is reduced, the amount it is reduced by will be placed in the general pool and the Funding Committee will use funds from the general pool to increase the grants of applicants deserving more funding.
- (6) The PILF Grant Funding Committee will take into consideration the fact that living expenses will vary according to geographic area. The Committee will strive to award similar grants to applicants who have similar applications in the same city.
- (7) The PILF Grant Funding Committee will also consider the amount of other funding available to applicant. PILF will not provide more funding than the applicant's cost of living. For example, if an applicant submits a budget indicating that her total costs for eleven weeks of her summer job will be \$5,000 and she is receiving a \$4,000 grant from another source, PILF will not provide more than a \$1,000 grant.

Please keep in mind that the amount of money it would require to fully fund all applicants will almost certainly exceed the amount of money PILF has available to distribute. Accordingly, the PILF Grant Committee has created the method described above to achieve a fair and practical distribution of our limited resources.

Summer Faculty Lounge

If you are receiving a grant and will be in New Orleans for any part of the summer, you **must** volunteer for shifts to keep the faculty lounge running. The faculty lounge must be set up and taken down every workday during the summer. If you are unable to help with set-up or take-down, you must explain the reasons why your job or family commitment

prevents you from helping. PILF hours accumulated over the summer will count double and will be used toward consideration for next summer's grant.

End of Summer Memo and Employer Verification Letter

You must submit a memo at the end of the summer describing your experience and listing the contact information for your employer **and** a letter from your employer verifying that you completed the number of weeks you said you would be working. Failure to submit a verification letter and a memo will result in you being asked to repay your grant. Please submit any photos you take while working at your summer job so PILF can use them for promotional purposes.

Questions

Questions about grant eligibility requirements, application procedures, and selection and funding criteria should be directed to the current President or Vice-President of PILF, preferably in writing.

PILF Grant Interview Evaluation Form

Name of Grant Applicant: _____

After interviewing the applicant and reviewing his or her application, please place any relevant notes under the following categories and make a final recommendation. The Grant Funding Committee will take your recommendation seriously in determining the amount of applicant's grant.

Involvement with PILF:

Commitment to Type of Work Done by Summer Employer:

Commitment to Public Interest Law:

Legitimacy of Summer Costs of Living and Budget:

Professionalism in Interview and Quality of Application:

Final Recommendation

Please select one of the following options and provide a written explanation:

(1) the applicant deserves to receive the **average** grant amount for applicants working the same amount of weeks in the same or similar location; (2) the applicant deserves to receive **more than the average** grant amount for applicants working the same number of weeks in the same or similar location; (3) the applicant deserves to receive **less than the average** grant amount for applicants working the same number of weeks in the same or similar location; (4) the applicant deserves to receive a token grant amount (\$500 or less).
