



Tips & Expectations for PILI Fellows

PILI's Graduate Fellowship Program reflects the heart of our mission, to cultivate a lifelong commitment to public interest law and pro bono service. Participants in this program are part of a distinguished group of lawyers who have committed themselves to impacting the quality and delivery of legal services in Illinois for people, families and communities in need. The value of a PILI Fellowship can be both personal and professional as you experience the world of legal aid, expand your network and gain practical legal skills. At the same time, there are certain expectations of PILI Fellows that you will be held to by your firm, your host agency and PILI.

1. **Develop a realistic work schedule.** PILI and your host agency want you to pass the bar exam as much as you do, so you will find that the agency will be accommodating to allow for bar study. You should work with your supervisor to develop a realistic schedule before, around and after the bar exam, for completing the 300 hours required of you for your Fellowship. You should also work with your supervisor to ensure that there is a smooth transition of your work when you leave for the bar exam and at the conclusion of your Fellowship.
2. **Engage in your agency.** Attend meetings and events, as appropriate, in order to learn from and meet people in the legal aid community. As you continue your career, the legal aid and PILI networks can be a valuable asset. Be proactive in identifying additional ways in which you can help the agency and its clients. If there are specific experiences you hope to obtain during your Fellowship, such as participating in a deposition or working on a particular type of case, talk to your supervisor early on about these interests so that they can try to accommodate you and assign projects that meet your interests. Before the end of your Fellowship, develop long range plans to stay connected to your agency, whether through an ongoing case, associate board involvement or attendance at future fundraising events.
3. **Seize the opportunity to learn.** Public interest law is one of the many types of law practiced, and is as complex and important as other types of law you will be practicing at your firm. The staff of your agency are seasoned and skilled in the legal areas in which they practice and in serving their client population. Your Fellowship provides you with an amazing opportunity to learn practical skills, substantive areas of law, client and project management, and other valuable skills that will aid you in your future practice even though it will be in a different area of law. PILI also hosts weekly programming for Fellows and Interns on a variety of public interest law topics. These sessions provide a great opportunity to learn more about public interest law and to meet like-minded individuals working at a vast array of organizations.
4. **Build your reputation.** The PILI Fellowship is an excellent opportunity to define yourself as a new lawyer. The Illinois legal community may be large in size, but it is well connected, so be mindful that your work and reputation as a Fellow will follow you as you join your firm. Fellows are expected to maintain a standard of conduct and integrity which is in keeping with the spirit of the legal aid community, and one which will serve you and your firm well. This standard of conduct applies to interactions in all forms, including over electronic mail and on social media networks. In addition to yourself, there will be nearly 80 other Fellows in your PILI class, offering you the opportunity to expand your network of incoming associates in Chicago.
5. **Understand your workplace culture.** Just as each law firm has its own culture, so too does each legal aid agency. Be aware of the culture and expectations of your agency, so that you can better understand the organizational structure, determine your work schedule, learn whether it is possible to work remotely, and communicate effectively. For example, your host agency's resources are significantly more limited than your firm's. You, just like those on staff, will often have to provide your own administrative support. If you have questions about workplace culture, your supervisor is the best reference point for this information.

6. **Practice client cultural sensitivity.** Fellows should be aware of, and responsive to, the cultural and demographic diversity of the population served by the agency, and communicate effectively within the clients' cultural context. Race, ethnicity, culture, gender, disability and socio-economic status all impact our attitudes, perceptions and reactions – both from the client side and from the attorney side. Ask for training or shadow agency attorneys, if needed.
7. **Seek out professional development opportunities.** Take initiative and look for opportunities to further your education. If there is a project that interests you, ask your supervisor if you can get involved as soon as possible in your Fellowship. While working on projects, ask questions and speak up if you need guidance or clarity. Take full advantage of this unique time in your career to both gain practical legal experience and expand your personal knowledge about the legal aid community and the legal needs of clients served. Attending PILI's weekly educational programming and participating in the Advising Program, which matches you with a member of PILI's Board of Directors and/or Alumni Network, are also valuable resources for your personal and professional development.
8. **Ask for feedback.** Meet regularly with your supervisor(s) to ensure that everyone's expectations are being met. Discuss with your supervisor the ways in which you find it helpful to receive feedback and the frequency, as well as your learning goals for your Fellowship. Contact PILI staff immediately if feedback is not occurring, or if you have any issues with your supervision or Fellowship generally.
9. **Plan to provide an evaluation.** All Fellows are required to complete a service tracking form and an overall evaluation. PILI relies heavily on this information to improve the Fellowship Program, and to provide required information to our funders. You will receive more information about the service tracking form and the evaluation from PILI at the beginning of your Fellowship.

Expectations of Your Host Agency

As a PILI Graduate Fellow, you can expect your host agency to:

- Develop a schedule with you that accommodates your need to study for the bar exam;
- Identify a supervisor who is an attorney;
- Orient you to the workings of the agency and train you on substantive and administrative tasks;
- Provide ongoing guidance and feedback throughout the Fellowship;
- Integrate you into the agency's structure and decision making, where appropriate;
- Assign you work that furthers your practical legal knowledge and that is appropriate for a law school graduate;
- Allow you time to attend programming through PILI's Educational Seminar Series;
- Provide you with an appropriate workspace; and
- Treat you with respect and as a valued member of the agency's staff.

Additional information about PILI's Graduate Fellowship Program, including information about our Summer Educational Seminar Series, can also be found on our website at www.pili.org/fellowships.

We hope you have a terrific experience through your PILI Graduate Fellowship and we look forward to meeting you. Please do not hesitate to contact Brent Page, PILI's Program Manager, with any questions or comments throughout your PILI Graduate Fellowship, at 312-832-5128 or bpage@pili.org.