



Tips for PILI Supervisors Working with Interns & Fellows Remotely

Below is a collection of suggestions for Intern and Fellow Supervisors to help with the new challenge of students and recent graduates working remotely. We are all together adapting to this new normal as a public interest law community, trying to serve our clients while helping train and support the next generation of lawyers. PILI wants each of our Interns and Fellows to have the best and most rewarding experience possible, and we also want to provide our partner agencies with valuable resources. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to PILI staff for help.

Planning for the Arrival of Interns & Fellows

1. **Plan in advance.** In a remote environment, it is more important than ever to have a concrete plan for when Interns and Fellows start. Have projects ready that are primarily legal in nature. Keep in mind that the value of an Intern or Fellow's experience is enhanced when a project, or a component of the project, can be completed over the service period. Give consideration to their level of experience, the educational value of each project, the time available, and the availability of proper supervision.
2. **Get a Rule 711 license in advance.** Provide the necessary forms so Interns and Fellow can complete and submit the paperwork in advance, with optimism that courts may be opening soon in some capacity.
3. **Check your bucket list for projects.** Now may be the time to consider those projects that you have always wished to work on but you haven't had the resources to complete. In addition to the regular work of your organization, you might decide to assign your Interns and Fellows special projects to assist your organization and in serving your clients.

Time Requirements

1. **Hour obligation.** PILI school-year Interns are required to work 200 hours over the semester. PILI summer Interns are expected to work 400 hours. PILI Fellows are expected to work 300 hours. PILI educational events and any paid agency holidays count towards those hour requirements. While PILI intends to be flexible as a result of any COVID-19 related obstacles in meeting this obligation, contact Brent Page immediately if you anticipate challenges in meeting these requirements.
2. **Utilize their time.** Interns and Fellows are eager to learn and work during their time with your agency and expect to be fully utilized for their total time requirement. Have them join you on calls with clients, video meetings, and even larger legal aid and community meetings.

Assignment of Projects

1. **Explain the project assignment in detail.** Precise communication is important. Be clear with expectations and what success looks like. In most cases, it is preferable to have the assignments in writing.
2. **Meet at least weekly with Interns and Fellows to check on the status of assigned work.** This is appreciated even if the meeting is brief. Interns and Fellows often are reluctant to bother their supervisors, and without the ability to have more spontaneous in-person chats, regular virtual meetings are going to be even more important. Being new to the work force, Interns and Fellows may require even greater check-ins when working remotely than experienced staff.

3. **Explain how the project fits into the overall picture of the project or case.** This will give Interns and Fellows a better understanding of the impact of their work and a sense that they are contributing to something greater, which is particularly helpful to reinforce with Interns and Fellows working remotely.
4. **Be specific about the work product desired.** Whether you are seeking a legal memo, a brief letter, a draft pleading, etc., do not assume that the Intern or Fellow will know what you want. If possible, provide a sample document of the type you are requesting.
5. **Provide a time frame, not just a deadline.** Be clear about how much time should be spent on a project, when the project should be completed, when might be a helpful time to check in and what to do if time runs out.
6. **Ensure that proper supervision is in place and resources are available.** Leverage the technology resources available like video conferencing, chat and other tools. You may also want to suggest books or articles, sample pleadings, legal precedents from other cases, or other people at your agency who can help.
7. **Explain any reports you require.** If the Intern or Fellow is expected to provide progress reports, give details about when and to whom the reports should be given.
8. **Give clear assignments.** At the end of each meeting, make certain that the Intern or Fellow understands the assignment. Invite questions, both at that initial meeting and later.
9. **Avoid conflicts of interest.** This is an issue to be mindful of with regard to Fellows. When a project is being assigned, check for possible conflicts of interest between the Fellow's law firm and the matter. When in doubt, check with the firm, or even better, always perform the check.
10. **Provide prompt feedback.** One of the most common complaints from Interns and Fellows is that they do not get enough or timely feedback on their work. Evaluate work product promptly when Interns or Fellows have completed projects. Discuss the evaluation and invite questions. Review of the work product and constructive criticism are essential. It is important to include positive comments with negative ones. With working remotely, providing regular and ongoing feedback will likely play an even greater role than usual.
11. **Provide more formal evaluations.** After five weeks, plan a video conference for a mid-point evaluation of work. At the end of the Internship or Fellowship, meet with each person to evaluate their work as well as to receive comments, suggestions, and criticisms about the experience.

Agency Experience

1. **Be sure to provide each Intern or Fellow with the name of one designated supervisor.** This is especially important if multiple attorneys at your agency will be assigning tasks. You may want to divvy up supervision differently this year, pairing up one specific Intern or Fellow with one primary supervisor.
2. **Assign challenging work.** Assignments should be as substantive and challenging as possible. If everyone helps with phones or data entry, the Intern or Fellow should do so also. However, keep in mind they are with you to learn how to be lawyers. Give each person as much responsibility as they can handle in carrying out assignments with appropriate supervision.
3. **Vary the work.** Assignments should be varied so that each person is exposed to different aspects of agency work. No one should be buried in research all summer or fail to be invited and should be invited to observe court proceedings or meetings when possible.

4. **Include Interns and Fellows in decision-making about cases and projects.** When possible, include them in the decision-making process, e.g., discussion of potential matters, trial strategy, legal theories, etc.
5. **Engage Interns and Fellows in agency matters.** This can include those matters on which they are not working, including things like client meetings, trials, and settlement conferences over phone or video-conference. Also, invite them to attend agency board, staff, and committee meetings as appropriate. Explain the agency's functions, e.g., intake, fundraising, personnel, so they will have a more complete picture of your agency.
6. **Keep in touch after the term ends.** Keep each Intern and Fellow informed of developments in the matters they worked on, even after the summer is over. They are potentially your future pro bono attorneys, volunteers, board members, fundraisers, or even future staff members.

Work Place Situations

1. **Provide adequate support facilities similar to those provided for staff attorneys.** This includes clerical support, access to library and/or online research resources, telephone, etc. It may be helpful to host one orientation with all your Interns and Fellows to go over these issues.
2. **Establish and help maintain staff relationships.** This is more of a challenge with remote work but it is still important to foster a relationship between Interns and Fellows and others who work at the agency, both legal and non-legal. Make room for "small talk" which can get lost when we are not physically together. You may want to organize virtual lunches, coffee breaks or happy hours or other activities throughout the summer.
3. **Communicate evolving protocols.** As your organization adapts its response to the pandemic, be sure to keep your Interns and Fellows up to date on changing protocols.

PILI Programs and Events

1. **Encourage participation in PILI programming.** This year, PILI's is organizing a virtual full-day orientation for PILI Interns and Fellows as well as weekly educational seminars for all area Interns and Fellows. These will all be online and will cover a wide spectrum of the public interest law sector. Attendance at the Educational Seminar Series should be encouraged and is counted towards hour requirements. PILI also hopes to organize several virtual networking events for Interns and Fellows during the summer.
2. **Invite all summer interns and fellows.** PILI welcomes all public interest law student interns and recent graduates who are not affiliated with PILI's Internship or Fellowship Programs to attend all summer programming this year, including Orientation. Please make sure your other interns and fellows know about these programs.
3. **Complete PILI evaluations.** PILI administers two service tracking forms and a final evaluation to all PILI Interns and Fellows as well as a supervisor evaluation to all supervisors. PILI relies heavily on this information to improve the Internship and Fellowship Programs and to provide required information to our funders. We therefore require that every Intern, Fellow and supervisor submit this information. Please encourage your Interns and Fellows to complete their forms along with completing your own.

General Suggestions

1. **Be conscious of knowledge limitation of Interns.** Keep in mind that Interns have only completed one or two years of law school. Please consider their level of experience when making assignments.
2. **Be conscious extreme flux of Fellows' situation.** Keep in mind that Fellows will also need to be studying for the bar exam. Given continued uncertainty around the pandemic, it is possible that Fellows may also be facing a more fluid situation than normal in regard to their hiring law firm.
3. **Provide any necessary client cultural sensitivity training.** Supervisors should keep in mind that not all Interns and Fellows are aware of, or responsive to, the cultural and demographic diversity of the population served by the agency. Some training or shadowing may be needed to demonstrate effective communication within the client's cultural context.
4. **Foster an overall environment of patience, flexibility and understanding.** We all are under a great deal of stress as a result of these challenging times beyond any normal stressors in our lives. It is important to understand and be flexible to the reality that everyone's personal situation is very different.
5. **Contact PILI.** If you are concerned about the work product, attitude or behavior of one of your Interns or Fellows, please contact PILI staff immediately. For our part, we want to be there for you as well as your Interns and Fellows. If there's anything we can do to be of assistance throughout the summer, please do not hesitate to reach out to Brent or any member of the PILI staff.

Additional information for supervisors, including the calendar for the PILI Summer Educational Series can be found on the supervisor webpage at, www.pili.org/resources-for-supervisors.

We hope that you and your PILI Interns and Fellows have a terrific experience through PILI. Please do not hesitate to contact Brent Page, PILI's Senior Managing Attorney, with any questions or comments, at 312-832-5128 or bpage@pili.org.