

## Lawyers for America Partnership Proposal

### Organization

Please provide any information about your organization (mission, history, size, office location(s), etc.) that you think would be helpful to student applicants.

**The Mission of the Solano County Office of the Public Defender is to protect and defend the rights of our indigent clients through effective, vigorous, zealous, compassionate, ethical and creative legal advocacy. We first opened our doors as the Solano County Public Defender's Office in 1968 and added the Alternate Public Defender's Office in 1989. We have two office locations, Fairfield and Vallejo. The Fairfield office represents indigent adults accused of misdemeanors and felonies; juvenile dependency and delinquency; and some conservatorships and other civil proceedings where the loss of liberty is possible. The Vallejo office represents adults charged with misdemeanors and felonies. We currently have over 80 employees with a total of 49 lawyers between the two offices.**

### Workplace

If your organization has more than one office location, please note the location to which the fellow would be assigned in the first and second years.

For each of the above offices, please note (approximately) how many FTE attorneys and non-attorney staff work in that office.

**The Fairfield office of the Solano County Public Defender has 22 attorneys, 5 investigators, 2 social workers, 1 paralegal and 7 legal secretaries. The Vallejo office has 12 attorneys, 2 investigators and 3 legal secretaries. In addition, each office has a receptionist. The fellow will very likely be placed at the Fairfield office during the 3L year.**

### Supervision

What is the name and job title of the person you expect to be the fellow's supervisor and the LfA liaison? Will other attorneys be giving the fellow assignments as well?

**Elena D'Agustino, Chief Deputy Public Defender, is the supervisor of the fellow and LfA contact. Other experienced attorneys will be supervising the fellow on individual assignments.**

What formal training will the fellow be provided by your office? Please describe the duration, nature, and scope of that training.

**Initially, the fellow will be provided with training on office policies and procedures, criminal procedure, and common motions that the fellow will be expected to research, draft and argue. Most training will be provided by the supervising attorney. We also have an annual week-long training for misdemeanor lawyers and one for new felony lawyers.**

What additional training opportunities (regular in-services, conferences, etc.) will be available to the fellow during the two-year fellowship?

**The fellow will be expected to attend monthly internal trainings on all aspects of our practice (such as evidentiary issues; immigration and other collateral consequences; forensic science; new law updates; etc.). As a licensed attorney, the fellow may be sent to trainings held by the California Public Defender's Association or California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, such as their Trial Skills program or DUI Defense.**

Supervisors will be asked to participate in periodic formal written evaluations during the 3L year. What additional evaluation and feedback structures will you implement for the fellow throughout the fellowship?

**The fellow will be provided with feedback on all motions written, and after each court appearance, and provided periodic reviews on his or her progress.**

Does your office currently employ, or has it recently employed, post-graduate fellows and/or volunteer attorneys? Does your office host externs earning academic credit? Would the LfA fellow(s) supplement or replace other fellows/volunteers?

**We have volunteer law student and post-bar interns, but we do not generally have volunteer attorneys. We have hosted externs for academic credit from UC Berkeley, UC Davis, USF and GGU. During the academic year, the LfA fellow will likely supplement other volunteers.**

#### Fellow's Work and Professional Development

To maximize her/his professional development, the fellow should be assigned lawyering tasks of increasing complexity and responsibility during the course of the entire fellowship. The second semester should build on the first, and the post-graduate year should include tasks typical of an entry-level attorney.

Below, please describe as concretely and specifically as possible the work that the fellow will perform in her/his first semester.

**During the first semester, the fellow will most likely be assigned to assist felony attorneys. Their responsibilities will primarily focus on writing and drafting motions. They will be given the opportunity to argue less complex motions in court, such as motions to dismiss and 1203.4 petitions (to "expunge" criminal convictions).**

Please briefly describe what additional skills and experiences you anticipate that the second semester will offer.

**In the second semester, the complexity of the motions will increase and the fellow will be given the opportunity to conduct evidentiary hearings, such as preliminary hearings and motions to suppress**

**evidence. This may also be built upon by the fellow representing some misdemeanor clients of their own under the supervision of a senior attorney.**

Finally, describe the fellow's responsibilities during the post-graduate year.

**As a post-graduate, the fellow will be assigned to a misdemeanor unit and will have a caseload of his or her own. The fellow will make decisions on those cases, with supervision, such as determining motions to litigate, avenues of investigation, and whether to plea bargain. As a post-bar, the fellow may try cases to jury together with an attorney; as a licensed attorney, the fellow will be able to conduct jury trials independently.**

Preferred pre- and co-requisites

What, if any, classes *must* a fellow take before starting work at your organization? Include both substantive/doctrinal classes, as well as skills classes. What classes would you *prefer* that candidates take before starting? Please note whether fellows could take these classes *during* the fellowship.

**Fellows must have completed Evidence and Criminal Procedure. Trial Advocacy is preferred and may be taken during the fellowship.**

If there are other requirements or preferences (e.g., prior experience in a particular field or language ability), please note them here.

**We look for fellows who have a commitment to advocate aggressively on behalf of our indigent clients. In addition, strong research and writing skills and an ability to work independently are desired.**

In addition to eight units of fieldwork credit, LfA fellows will earn four units through accompanying classroom work each semester. If there is an area of substantive law or professional skills that would ideally be covered in the classroom portion, please note that here.

**It would be helpful for the fellow to have some knowledge of Immigration law and Ethics.**

LfA fellows are expected to work a minimum of 32 hours/week at the partner site. To earn the four units/semester of classroom credit, they will need to take a very limited course load on campus. What days/times would the fellow need to be consistently available, e.g. for weekly staff meetings or a particular court calendar? We will try to accommodate those scheduling needs to the extent possible.

**Generally, court appearances start at 8:30 am. If classes are taken, it would be better if they could be later in the day.**

Finally, please feel free to tell us anything else you think might be useful for the LfA program or student applicants.

**If you have additional questions regarding our office or program, please contact Elena D'Agustino at [edagustino@solanocounty.com](mailto:edagustino@solanocounty.com).**