

MEMORANDUM

To: WSBA Elder Law Section Executive Committee

From: Ronald St. Hilaire, Patrick M. Erker – Grants Committee co-Chairs

Date: December 15, 2020

Subject: Peter Greenfield Internship (the “Internship”)

The purpose of this brief memorandum is to provide general information and recommendations regarding the following questions presented, as discussed during the Fall 2020 Elder Law Executive Committee Retreat:

1. Should the Internship applicant pool continue its annual rotation between Seattle University, Gonzaga, and University of Washington, or should it remain open to each law school each calendar year?
2. Should the Elder Law Section take over sole funding obligations for the Internship summer stipend?
3. Should the Internship summer stipend amount be increased from \$6,500.00 to \$8,000.00?

General Findings

Annual Rotation:

There have been instances where multiple, highly qualified students applied for the Internship. However, due to the fixed rotation schedule, close runners-up were de facto barred from future participation.

Alternative funding sources may be available if the Internship is universally available, each year, to law students statewide.

Funding Obligations:

In years past, some law schools have been reluctant to financially participate with the Internship, in part, due to staff turnover and/or being uninformed of the subject school’s historic connection with the program.

Law Schools are facing difficult economic realities due to the impacts of COVID 19, and this may prevent ongoing financial participation.

Increased Grant Award:

Prior to bar year 2019, the Internship summer stipend had not been updated in many years, if at all.

The following summer internship/fellowship/fee rate financial metrics were derived from conversations with relevant staff at each Washington State law school:

- WSBA Labor Law Section fellowship = \$8,000.00 per summer , Gonzaga pays \$3,000.00;
- Public Interest Goldmark Fellowship = \$10,000.00 per summer;
- Gonzaga Center for Civil and Human Rights fellowship(s) = \$5,000.00 per summer;
- Gonzaga 1L Diversity Program Fellowship(s) = \$1,500.00 per week;
- Seattle University Center for Professional Development = Average Summer Stipend of \$6,000.00 or \$16.69 per hour;
- Seattle University Public Interest Law Foundation = \$5,500.00 per summer
- Private Firm Hourly Rate (depending on firm size and applicant qualifications) = \$17.00 - \$25.00 per hour.

General Recommendations

The Internship should be available to each Washington law school, each calendar year. This will ensure the broadest applicant pool and may provide alternative funding solutions for the summer stipend/grant award. Extra care should be taken in communicating application opportunities and deadlines to each law school, so as to support collective participation with the program.

The Elder Law Section should assume funding obligations. It appears that sufficient funds are available to support self-funding. Furthermore, should the Committee decide to forego the current triennial rotation (as a University is unlikely to contribute funds to a program if it is not guaranteed one of its students will benefit from the same), community funding sources are likely available. Specifically, we recommend reaching out to the KCBA's Guardianship and Elder Law Section ("GELS") regarding cost-sharing.

The Elder Law Section should consider increasing the Internship summer stipend amount to \$8,000.00. This will make the program highly competitive with other WSBA Section sponsored internships and related programs and will help offset higher costs of living for out-of-area selectees. Following the model adopted between Gonzaga and WSBA's Labor Law Section, we should discuss a \$5,000.00 (Elder Law Section)/\$3,000.00 (KCBA GELS) split.

We look forward to discussing matters with all of you.

Ronald St. Hilaire
Patrick M. Erker



Washington State Attorney General's
Office of Military & Veteran Legal Assistance



M.E.D.A.L. PROGRAM

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Program Description

Through the M.E.D.A.L. Program, the Office of Military & Veteran Legal Assistance facilitates direct representation for military service members and veterans. The M.E.D.A.L. Program receives requests for legal assistance and refers qualified requests to registered volunteer attorneys who can offer assistance with self-selected civil legal issues. The M.E.D.A.L. Program also facilitates the appointment of volunteer attorneys to serve as court-appointed counsel to current military service members when required under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

Volunteer Position

M.E.D.A.L. Program Volunteer Attorney

General Duties

- Provide direct limited representation when reasonable or full representation on a particular matter through completion of a client's case;
- Meet or otherwise communicate with client to develop case strategy;
- Draft pleadings and motions as necessary; and
- Help prepare client for *pro se* representation or represent client at hearings and trial.

Time Commitment

Volunteers are asked to accept 1-4 cases per year. The time required to complete a case will vary depending upon type and complexity. Office of Military and Veteran Legal Assistance staff will provide registered volunteer attorneys with a case summary and volunteers may choose to accept or decline taking on the representation.

Qualifications

- Licensed to practice law in Washington State; and
- Willingness to represent a client facing a legal issue in a familiar practice area or be trained to offer assistance in a new practice area.

Benefits

- Contribute toward making legal resources more accessible to Washington's military families in need; and
- Access to free CLE credit, through both on-demand trainings in a variety of practice areas and pro bono service hours.

Training & Support

- CLE trainings on select issues;
- Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Resource Manual;
- Connection to volunteer mentors (subject to availability); and
- Use of Attorney General's office space for meeting with clients (subject to availability).

For questions, email OMVLA@atg.wa.gov

Register to volunteer online at: www.atg.wa.gov/volunteer-opportunities