

Fellowship Description/Posting

The Rural Incubator Project for Lawyers (RIPL) seeks Fellowship Applications

RIPL is seeking enthusiastic and socially-conscious attorneys interested in launching a solo or small law firm dedicated to serving underserved and rural communities across Montana.

During RIPL's 24-month program, RIPL Fellows will obtain training in practice management and relevant areas of substantive law, gain practical experience and skills, receive mentorship and access to a network of like-minded practitioners, student loan repayment assistance, and be provided subsidized resources like pleadings templates, practice management software, and office space. All these resources are provided to enable attorneys to successfully transition into solo practice and help meet the needs of underserved and rural communities across Montana.

Requirements.

RIPL seeks attorneys who are:

- dedicated to establishing a sustainable law practice that serves the legal needs of low- and moderate-income individuals and small businesses in rural and underserved communities across Montana and the tribal nations;
- committed to providing access to justice and using the practice of law to enrich the lives of clients and build better communities across Montana and the tribal nations;
- excited about using technology and innovation to implement new ways of providing cost-effective legal services;
- excited to solve problems and innovate the practice of law by collaborating with other RIPL Fellows, leaders in the legal profession, clients, and communities.

Participants must:

- commit to 24 months of active participation in RIPL, including:
 - attending a Business Bootcamp;
 - providing pro bono services to legal aid clients through the MLSA Pro Bono Residency* (first 6 months);
 - developing a practice serving rural communities through a combination of remote and in-person services;
 - participating in networking opportunities and roundtable discussions (the entire 24-months);
 - either already established a solo or small firm or preparing to establish one during the first month of the program;*
- be an active member of the Montana Bar in good standing at the start of the program (those who have taken the bar exam and are awaiting exam results may apply; acceptance into the program will be conditioned on passing the bar exam and being admitted to practice);
- have less than five years active practice experience (exceptions may be made to this requirement on a case by case basis);
- commit to serve a rural or underserved community within Montana;
- commit to have 50% of clients served by your practice be 200% or below federal poverty guidelines;
- demonstrate a commitment to public service and access to justice;
- have an entrepreneurial spirit;

- have the ability to learn and apply new skills in high-need areas of law and inspire confidence in clients and the legal community;
- be creative, flexible, and adaptable to changing circumstances.

Benefits:

RIPL fellows will receive:

- training on substantive law, skills, and law practice management from experienced legal practitioners and jurists (roughly 73 CLE hours);
- assistance with business and client development;
- mentoring by experienced practitioners;
- a structured Pro Bono Residency* program that provides hands-on legal experience and a valuable understanding of the legal aid community, and legal service delivery systems that work;
- shared office space in a collaborative environment that fosters innovation and peer mentoring;
- practice resources, including law practice management technology, legal research tools, and access to example pleadings and documents;
- Loan repayment assistance (LRAP) from the Montana Justice Foundation;
- access to a variety of helpful networks through MLSA, the State Bar of Montana, the Montana Justice Foundation, and other partners; and
- the ability to collaborate with peers and other successful practitioners.
- We are currently working on securing funding to offer low-interest business loans and living stipends.

To Apply:

Submit a resume and letter of interest to Hannah Cail at ripl@mtlsa.org. In the letter of interest:

- (1) state your commitment to developing a practice to serve an underserved and/or rural community in Montana;
- (2) outline your basic business plan including the rural community or communities you intend to serve and if you plan to concentrate in a specific area of law; and
- (3) explain why you believe RIPL can help you meet your goals.

***RIPL Fellows are expected to start their own law practices and will not be employees of RIPL or MLSA.**

Deadlines for Fellowship Application Consideration:

- **January 28, 2019**, will be the first review of Fellowship Applications and letters of interest to be considered for the Spring Bootcamp scheduled for March 4–8, 2019.

If you are a practitioner that would like to attend some of our CLE programming but cannot commit to our entire 24-month program or otherwise do not meet all the listed requirements, please contact Hannah Cail for more information at ripl@mtlsa.org.