

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

RIPL is seeking enthusiastic and socially-conscious attorneys 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 access to resources like pleadings templates, and discounted practice management software. 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 sustainable law practices that serve the legal needs of limited-income individuals and small businesses in rural and underserved communities across Montana and the tribal nations; and excited about using technology and innovation to implement new ways of providing cost-effective legal services.

Participants must:

- commit to 24 months of active participation in RIPL:
 - attend the 3-day Business Boot Camp in Helena (early May or early October depending on start time);
 - 50 pro bono hours the first year and 20 hours the second year;
 - 250 modest means (reduced fee) services the first year and 280 hours in the second year
 - develop a practice serving rural communities through a combination of remote and in-person services;
 - participate in networking opportunities and regular staffing calls;
 - establish a solo or small firm (within the first 2 months 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;
- 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;
- hands-on legal experience and a valuable understanding of the legal aid community and legal service delivery systems that work;
- access to office space to meet with clients in certain locations;
- 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.

To Apply:

Submit a resume and letter of interest to ripl@mtlsa.org. In the letter of interest (average 1-3 pages):

- (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.**

Application and Admission is on a Rolling Basis:

- Fall Boot Camp: Tentatively Scheduled for Sept 30-Oct 2, 2019
- Spring Boot Camp: Tentatively Schedule for the first full week of May

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