

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, Fellows will receive 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. These resources support a Fellow's successful transition into solo practice and help meet the needs of underserved and rural communities across Montana.

Requirements:

RIPL seeks attorneys 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 are 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 5-day Business Boot Camp in early September, three days of which are in-person in Helena
- establish a solo or small firm (within the first two months of the Program)
- develop a practice serving rural communities through a combination of remote and in-person services;
- provide 25 pro bono hours the first year and 25 hours the second year;
- 125 reduced rate hours in the first year and 225 hours in the second year
- participate in networking opportunities and regular staffing calls;
- 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 contingent on passing the bar exam and being admitted to practice);
- have less than five years of active practice experience;
- 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 of the Fellowship:

- training on substantive law, skills, and law practice management from experienced legal practitioners and jurists (roughly 73 CLE hours);
- training and 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 specific 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
- Opportunities 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 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 what aspects of RIPL you foresee being the most useful for you in setting up and running your own solo/small practice

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

Application and Admission are on a Rolling Basis. The Fellowship starts in early September and is kicked off by the RIPL Boot Camp.

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