



# Rural Incubator Project for Lawyers

*Build Your Business. Practice Law. Serve Your Community.*

The Rural Incubator Project for Lawyers (RIPL) is a *12-month program* designed to train and support attorneys as they develop and launch new solo and small firm law practices.

Through RIPL, attorneys will have the opportunity to enhance access to justice by offering affordable and pro bono legal services to limited-income Montanans and tribal members living in underserved, rural communities. Together, we can innovate for the future of legal practice in Montana.

## Join the future of Montana's legal practice

We seek 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.

**Fellowship applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Fellowships or kicked off at the beginning of September with a business CLE series.**

In exchange for 50 pro bono hours and 150 reduced-rate hours serving clients referred from MLSA, RIPL offers:

- Training and assistance with business and client development
- Training on substantive law, skills, and law practice management from experienced legal practitioners and jurists;
- Hands-on legal experience and a valuable understanding of the legal aid community and legal service delivery systems that work;
- The ability to collaborate with peers and other successful practitioners.

## Requirements:

- Form an independent solo or small firm law practice that operates directly in a rural community or offers remote rural services.
- Provide pro bono and reduced rate services to low- and moderate-income Montanans and tribal members.
- Participate in RIPL programming, including CLE sessions, regular staffing calls, and mentorship meetings for the duration of the 12-month fellowship.
- Fellows must maintain malpractice insurance for their solo practice for clients served outside the scope of the MLSA Pro Bono Residency and reduced rate referrals.

**Montana Legal Services Association**

*Provide, protect and enhance access to justice.*





# Rural Incubator Project for Lawyers

*Build Your Business. Practice Law. Serve Your Community.*

## Benefits of RIPL:

**Business Boot Camp.** The participants' first CLE sessions include an intensive five-day program on rural practice in Montana; access to justice considerations; entity selection and formation; law practice management; legal services delivery options; business planning; marketing; and financing; and technology and resources.

**Business Development and Case Management Coaching.** Fellows participate in 6-month business development and case management coaching period consisting of one-on-one check-ins with RIPL staff.

**Continuing Legal Education.** Fellows have access to continuing legal education ("CLE") sessions focused on substantive areas of law, practical skills, lawyer well-being, and a Pro Bono Membership access to free CLE from the Practising Law Institute.

**MLSA Pro Bono Residency.** Through the Pro Bono Residency, Fellows gain invaluable skills and experience in delivering legal services and practical experience in substantive areas of civil law.

**Mentorship and Mentoring Calls.** RIPL has gathered experienced practitioners excited to mentor Fellows in their expertise and practice management areas. Fellows attend weekly calls with MLSA staff attorneys and monthly training specifically for the RIPL fellows from mentors.

**Practice Resources and Office Space.** Fellows have access to practice resources, including free or discounted case management software, form briefs,

## TO APPLY

Submit a resume and letter of interest to [ripl@mtlsa.org](mailto: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



# Rural Incubator Project for Lawyers

*Build Your Business. Practice Law. Serve Your Community.*

example pleadings, and legal research materials. Fellows also have access to office space to meet with clients referred through MLSA at our offices in Missoula, Helena, and Billings.

**Client Referral Services.** Fellows have free participation in the Modest Means Program and the Montana Lawyer Referral & Information Service that connect prospective clients in need of sliding scale legal services with Fellows. Please note that RIPL refers civil matters only. There are other areas that are referred through the Modest Means program.

**Malpractice Insurance.** While engaged in pro bono and reduced rate services referred by MLSA, Fellows are covered by MLSA's malpractice insurance.

**Student Loan Repayment Assistant.** The Montana Justice Foundation offers RIPL Fellows student loan repayment assistance through its Loan Repayment Assistant Program (LRAP) for up to **\$1800**.

**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](mailto:ripl@mtlsa.org)**