

PILG CLERKSHIP FAQs

1. What is a PILG Clerkship?

The Public Interest Law Group (PILG) Clerkship is a \$3,500.00 stipend given to selected candidates to fund a summer legal project at a non-profit or governmental organization. Funding for the Clerkships is raised each year through PILG fundraising activities, primarily through the annual PILG auction. Additional funding for PILG Clerkships is available through a generous donation from the Donnell Fund.

2. How does PILG select clerks?

Because PILG Clerkship funds are limited, the selection process is competitive, and unfortunately not all eligible projects can be funded. PILG Clerks are selected by a committee of prior PILG Clerks, based on the “Key Criteria for Selecting PILG Clerks” listed below. The PILG Clerkship Committee interviews applicants and selects clerks based on these criteria and the available funds for clerkships. The Clerkships are awarded at the annual PILG Auction.

3. What are the selection criteria for PILG Clerks?

The Key Criteria for Selecting PILG Clerks include:

- Is the student working for a non-profit organization or government agency?
- Is the project designed to address unmet legal needs?
- Does the project benefit traditionally underserved populations or causes?
- Is the student able to fund the project through other means?
- Would the student be able to pursue this opportunity without the clerkship?
- Could the host organization carry out the project without the clerkship?
- How defined is the proposed project?
- Does the host organization have the ability to provide mentoring to the clerk and commitment to the project?
- Is the applicant willing to participate in the PILG auction, or has the student previously participated in the auction?
- Is the applicant willing to write a report on his or her experience and the work he or she accomplished to be submitted to PILG Board?

- NOTE: We do not consider grades, class rank or participation on a law review or journal.

4. How much is the PILG Clerkship stipend?

The stipend for PILG Clerks is \$3,500.

5. What are the obligations of PILG Clerks?

- PILG Clerks are required to complete at least 300 hours of work for a non-profit organization or government agency over the course of at least 8 weeks during the summer of their PILG Clerkship award.
- PILG Clerks must submit a report on the PILG Clerkship experience to the PILG Board, including a detailed description of the work accomplished.
- During the academic year following their Clerkship summer, PILG Clerks must be available to select summer PILG Clerks for the following year, including participating in informal student meetings to discuss the PILG Clerkship program and assisting with interviewing PILG Clerkship applicants. Most if not all of this work will take place in the spring semester.
- Finally, PILG Clerks must actively participate in the PILG Auction that occurs in the year following the PILG Clerkship by volunteering at least 30 hours of time toward the PILG Auction or soliciting at least ten auction items.
- Students who fail to work on the project for which they were awarded a PILG grant must return their entire PILG Clerkship stipend to PILG. PILG Clerks who fail to meet any of the other listed obligations must return half of their PILG Clerkship stipend to PILG.

6. How many Clerkships will be awarded this year?

PILG is typically able to award between 3 – 12 Clerkships per year. The number of Clerkships varies according to the amount of money PILG is able to raise through its annual PILG Auction and PILG Kickball Tournament, as well as through private donations. PILG may only award Clerkships to qualifying applicants, so the number of Clerkship awards also relates to the number of outstanding qualified applications students submit. You can increase the number of PILG Clerkships available by assisting with the PILG Auction, the PILG Kickball Tournament, and the annual PILG Clerkship application drive.

7. I need help framing my PILG Clerkship. How do I identify a host agency and supervisor?

You will find numerous examples of prior PILG Clerkships on PILG's website. You can also speak with the Director of Public Interest in the Externship Office, with the Career

Development Center, or with prior PILG Clerks to develop ideas for potential PILG Clerkships.

8. What is an “unmet legal need?”

An unmet legal need is one that the host agency would not be able to fill without the PILG Clerk. This need goes beyond a typical internship or externship placement by creating a unique project that the agency would not be able to complete without you.

9. Does work at a government agency qualify for a PILG Clerkship?

Yes. The organization must be a public interest organization that is not organized for profit, and the work must fulfill an “unmet legal need.”

10. Can I complete my PILG Clerkship with two different agencies?

Yes. A Clerk may “split” the summer between two projects, typically a local project and an international project. PILG Clerkship applicants should be creative in the creation of their Clerkship proposal.

11. How many hours of work are required to complete a PILG Clerkship?

PILG Clerks must complete at least 300 hours of public interest legal work over the course of at least 8 weeks within the summer of their PILG Clerkship.

12. How many weeks do I have to work in my placement as a PILG Clerk?

PILG Clerks must complete at least 300 hours of work over a minimum of 8 weeks. PILG Clerks should avoid “cramming” more than 40 hours of work into a week or more than 12 hours of work into a day.

13. Does a PILG Clerkship have to be completed in the U.S.?

No, the PILG Clerkship may be completed anywhere, as long as the work is for a nonprofit or governmental organization, is supervised by an attorney, and fills an unmet legal need.

14. Why are PILG Clerkships only offered in the summer?

Funds and student energy are only sufficient at this time to coordinate a summer PILG Clerkship program. You can help develop the program and create additional Clerkship opportunities by becoming an active PILG member.

15. Can I use my PILG Clerkship to fulfill the Public Interest Requirement?

No. Your work as a PILG Clerk does not satisfy the Public Interest Requirement because students may not receive compensation for the Public Interest Requirement.

16. Can I apply for a PILG Clerkship if I am a 1L?

Yes. The PILG Clerkship is an *excellent* way to gain legal experience during the summer after your first year of law school. 1L, 1LE, 2L, 2LE, and 3LE students are eligible for PILG Clerkships.

17. Can I apply for a PILG Clerkship if I am graduating in May?

No. The PILG Clerkship is intended to help 1L, 1LE, 2L, 2LE, and 3LE students gain experience in public interest law *during law school*. Graduating students who intend to practice law have more important obligations to consider, such as preparing for the bar exam!

18. Can I obtain externship credit for the work I complete during the PILG Clerkship?

Yes, but all criteria and responsibilities related to externships apply and must be fulfilled through the Externship Office.

19. Can my PILG Clerkship supervisor or agency pay me for the work I complete during my PILG Clerkship?

No, students who receive PILG Clerkships may not receive additional compensation for the work they complete as PILG Clerks. This defeats the purpose of the PILG Clerkship. PILG Clerkships often lead to job offers with the host agency after fulfillment of the PILG Clerkship, and PILG encourages students to pursue such work. However, a PILG Clerk may not be paid for summer work he or she completed as a PILG Clerk.

20. Can I begin my Clerkship in the summer and complete it in the fall?

No, PILG Clerkships must be completed within the summer semester of the awarded Clerkship.