

Justice Entrepreneurs Project Information for Potential Participants



At the Justice Entrepreneurs Project, we prepare talented and entrepreneurial lawyers in the Chicago area to manage innovative, socially conscious, and successful law practices. We believe in the power of entrepreneurial lawyers to make a difference as solo practitioners in the quest to ensure access to justice for all. Are you a recently admitted lawyer interested in obtaining the skills and resources necessary to build an innovative and successful law practice? Are you interested in making a positive impact on your community as a social entrepreneur? We offer access to mentorship, continuing legal education, a network of like-minded individuals, and subsidized resources to kick start a legal practice targeted at the underserved middle market of potential clients. The JEP is seeking applications for its next class of participants who will begin the program in November of 2017. Additional information about the JEP, including the JEP's mission and goals, is available at www.chicagobarfoundation.org/jep.

About JEP Participants

JEP is seeking lawyers who are:

- Dedicated to establishing a long-term practice that serves the legal needs of low and moderate-income individuals and small businesses
- Committed to providing access to justice and using the practice of law to enrich the lives of clients and build better communities
- Interested in using technology and innovation to find new ways of providing cost-effective legal services
- Enthusiastic about the prospect of becoming a social entrepreneur
- Excited to explore new ideas about problem-solving and the practice of law by using a collaborative approach with other program lawyers, leaders in the legal profession, the community and clients

Participants must:

- Have an entrepreneurial spirit and, preferably, a track record of entrepreneurial, innovative or creative activity
- Have a demonstrated commitment to public service and access to justice
- Have the ability to learn and apply new skills in high-need areas of law and inspire confidence in clients and the legal community
- Have work experience indicating an aptitude for successfully operating your own business
- Be creative, flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances
- Be a member of the Illinois bar in good standing at the start of the program (those who have taken the IL 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 graduated from law school in 2012 or later (the program is intended for newer lawyers; exceptions to the 2012 cutoff will be considered on a case by case basis)
- Commit to 18 months of active participation in the JEP, and plan to continue practicing after participation

Those chosen to participate in the program will receive:

- Top-notch training on substance, skills and law practice management
- Expert coaching and assistance on business issues and client development

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- Mentoring by experienced and respected practitioners
- Structured pro-bono program providing hands-on legal experience and a better understanding of the legal aid community and the legal service delivery system
- Shared office space in a collaborative environment that fosters innovation and peer mentoring
- Practice resources, including law practice management technology and legal research tools
- Access to a variety of helpful networks through the CBA, CBF and other partners
- The ability to collaborate with peers and other successful practitioners

About the JEP Program

Participants in the JEP develop their practices while receiving training, mentoring and other support on business and legal issues as well as space and other infrastructure as they get started. The 18-month program is broken into three 6-month modules. In the first module, participants perform pro bono work approximately 20 hours per week with partner legal aid organizations. Throughout that time, participants receive training, workshops and coaching on business and other issues needed to start a solo/small practice. Participants establish their own independent practices (including providing their own malpractice insurance), begin handling cases in areas traditionally needed by low and moderate-income clients, and strive to offer predictable and fixed, modular fee models for their services. During the second and third modules, participants develop fuller caseloads and continue to receive training, mentoring and coaching on business and legal issues, preparing to move their practices out of the JEP at the end of the 18 months. Participants pay a participation fee (considered subsidized rent by some) of \$300 per month during the last 12 months of the program.

Application Process

Please submit a resume, a copy of your law school transcript and a statement of interest of no more than 3 pages: (1) describing your vision for your practice (including practice areas and target markets) and your participation in the JEP and (2) describing a circumstance when you have demonstrated entrepreneurial initiative or another experience that demonstrates your ability to be a successful social entrepreneur.

Information sessions to learn more about the program will be held at the JEP offices at 208 S. Jefferson, Suite 204, on Tuesday, February 20th, 2018, at 12:00 p.m. and Thursday, February 22nd, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. Links to register for an information session and to submit application materials are on www.jepchicago.org. Please apply no later than Monday, March 5th, 2018, to be considered for the next JEP cohort. Two rounds of interviews will be held in late March and early April. Selections will be made by April 16th for the May 7th, 2018 start.

The Justice Entrepreneurs Project is an incubator designed to help lawyers develop the skills necessary to create and operate a successful law practice that provides affordable legal services to low and moderate-income people and small businesses. Participation in the JEP creates an immediate positive impact on the community through participants' bono work and provision of affordable legal services. The JEP ultimately hopes to create long-term community impact by incubating law practices that will operate over the long-term. If your ultimate goal is job placement rather than creating your own law practice, please do not pursue participation in the JEP.