



## **2018 Fellowship Sponsor Announcement**

Georgia Justice Project ([www.gjp.org](http://www.gjp.org)) seeks applications from third-year law students or recent law school graduates for sponsorship of a Skadden, Equal Justice Works, or other public-interest fellowship set to begin in the fall of 2018.

### **ORGANIZATION:**

Georgia Justice Project (GJP) is a non-profit, public interest law office that represents people who are indigent and are currently involved in the criminal justice system or have been previously involved in the system.

For over 30 years, Georgia Justice Project has provided vigorous legal representation combined with holistic social service support to clients who are indigent and facing criminal charges in Fulton and DeKalb Counties, the two major Atlanta-area counties. For the last 10 years, GJP has also assisted clients around the state with expunging and correcting their criminal history and dealing with the collateral consequences of a record. GJP also actively engages in statewide policy and legislative advocacy in an effort to lower barriers for people with criminal records on a systemic level. We have been an active force in recent criminal justice reform efforts in Georgia, and have been involved in significant legislative changes.

### **POSITION REQUIREMENTS:**

We are seeking highly motivated applicants who have the demonstrated ability to help design and implement a project, under the direction of our Legal Director, that will significantly impact our program work and clients.

We have identified three areas of need for a fellow, and urge applicants to identify which area best fits their interests and skillset:

1. **Child Support Advocacy:**

GJP intends to broaden its representation to encompass low-income clients who are burdened by child support payment orders that they cannot afford to pay. Unpaid orders can result in wage garnishment, added fines, revoked drivers' licenses, and incarceration—all because of a person's inability to pay. As a result, people are at an even bigger disadvantage to be able to find stable employment and housing, and the entire family often suffers.

We envision a fellow spearheading a new program that would provide critical advocacy and education in this arena, including filing and arguing motions to modify payment orders for clients, fighting against incarceration based on an inability to pay, and working with other community groups to push for legislative and policy changes. Currently, there is no group in Georgia providing representation in this area to low-income parents.

2. Probation Advocacy:

GJP has identified probation advocacy for indigent clients as a gap that needs to be filled in Georgia. Though Georgia has made recent reforms to its probation system, it currently places a greater percentage of people on probation than any state; this overuse of probation is a major driver of Georgia's rate of correctional control—1 in 12 Georgians is either in jail, in prison, on probation, or on parole.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of people on probation in Georgia do not have adequate access to representation while serving a probation term. When issues arise during the course of a probation sentence, people are often left without legal guidance or proper advocacy. As we seek to expand our representation in this area, we would rely heavily on a fellow to provide the bulk of the direct client services, to lead the effort in designing and implementing the program's structure, and to push forward with statewide advocacy efforts to expand recent reforms.

3. Retroactive First Offender Advocacy:

While the other two identified areas of need seek to expand the type of representation we offer, this area of need seeks to expand our capacity in an existing service. The First Offender Act is a Georgia law that allows a judge to sentence eligible people to a first offender sentence, which provides for the dismissal of a case—without conviction—upon the successful completion of the sentence. In 2015, with GJP's help, Georgia enacted a law that enables a person to petition for a retroactive grant of first offender status in an old case—which has the effect of restricting the case from their record.

This law has been underutilized and not implemented evenly across the state, and we want to change that. GJP would like to expand our advocacy in this area so that we are able to accept more clients, take on more difficult cases, and reach people in more rural areas. The fellow would help us to be more aggressive and expansive in our retroactive first offender advocacy, lead an education campaign to ensure judges, prosecutors, and attorneys are informed about this option, and would also be instrumental in efforts to both improve the existing retroactive first offender law and to expand current law to allow for the expungement of convictions in Georgia.

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:**

If you are interested in pursuing a fellowship with GJP as your host organization, please email your resume, personal statement of interest (including your preferred area of work), a list of three references, and a cover letter to [genny@gjp.org](mailto:genny@gjp.org). Please use the subject line “Fellowship Applicant.”

GJP will accept applications received by **July 14, 2017**.

If you have further questions about GJP and our vision for this fellowship, please contact Cory Isaacson at [cory@gjp.org](mailto:cory@gjp.org).

*GJP is an equal opportunity employer to all persons regardless of race, sex, color, age, religion, actual or perceived gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic or national origin, or familial status. We welcome applicants who are formerly-incarcerated or justice-involved.*