

2021 Cornell Law School Summer Grant FAQs

December 2020

1. DEFINITION

The Cornell Law School Summer Grant Program provides funding to Cornell Law Students for unpaid summer positions with public interest organizations, government agencies, and judges, and in some cases, public interest law firms. A full-time Summer Grant of \$5,000 consists of two components: 1) a PIF (Public Interest Fellowship) grant; and 2) a Federal Work-Study grant.

1. PIF (Public Interest Fellowship) grants:

PIF grants are funded by the Law School. PIF grants are guaranteed for all 1Ls and 2Ls who secure eligible summer placements and meet PIF requirements as outlined below. The PIF application process is administered by the Office of Public Service.

2. Federal Work-Study grants:

The Federal Work-Study program is funded by the Federal Government. Work-Study grants are part of your financial aid package and are administered by the University through the Law School's Financial Aid Office.

Note: If you meet PIF grant requirements but are not eligible for a Federal Work-Study grant, your summer grant award will be \$1,600.

2. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO EARN THE SUMMER GRANT?

1Ls and 2Ls

- a. Complete and submit the on-line PIF grant application by **March 15**.
- b. Apply for Work-Study funding through the Financial Aid Office.
- c. Secure summer employment with a qualifying employer.
- d. Complete the required paperwork including an I-9 and summer placement agreements.

1Ls only

- e. Attend the Public Interest Symposium in April 2021

3. WHO ARE QUALIFYING EMPLOYERS?

The employer must be a non-profit legal organization a government agency, or a judge. For example, federal, state and local agencies, prosecutors' offices, public defender offices, legal services organizations and other non-profits are qualifying employers. Federal, state, and local judges and courts qualify as well. Jobs with Cornell Law School clinical programs qualify for PIF funding. Jobs as research or teaching assistants for professors do not qualify for PIF funding.

4. CAN I USE THE SUMMER GRANT TO FUND AN INTERNSHIP OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.?

As Federal Work-Study funds cannot be used outside of the U.S, only the PIF portion of the summer grant can be used internationally. In light of this, Cornell will award five Public International Fellowships of \$5,000 each to students working for public international organizations or government agencies outside the U.S. Details will be available in January.

5. WHERE DO I GET A PIF GRANT APPLICATION AND HOW AND WHEN DO I SUBMIT IT?

A link to the electronic PIF grant application form will be emailed to all 1Ls and 2Ls in December. You must submit your PIF grant application by **March 15**. **IMPORTANT:** We know that some of you will not have your summer job nailed down by March 15. That's OK. You must submit an initial application anyway. Once you find a job, you **must update your application**. You may change your mind and not take the grant should your plans change, **but if you do not submit the initial application by March 15, you may not be eligible for a PIF grant.**

6. WHERE DO I GET A FEDERAL WORK-STUDY APPLICATION AND HOW AND WHEN DO I SUBMIT IT?

Work-Study eligibility is determined by the Law School's Financial Aid Office. They will notify you about your eligibility for federal work-study funds. Note that you must be a U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident Alien ("Green Card" holder) to qualify for Federal Work-Study funding. Non U.S. citizens working in the United States qualify for the PIF grant of \$1,600.

7. CAN I STILL GET THE FUNDING IF I DO NOT APPLY FOR FEDERAL WORK STUDY?

All eligible students must apply for federal work-study. No funding will be disbursed until the financial aid office makes a final determination of eligibility. International students are not required to apply for federal work-study.

8. WHAT DOCUMENTS MUST MY EMPLOYER SIGN?

Cornell University requires that your employer sign two documents: 1) the Letter of Intent and 2) the Work-Study Agreement. In rare instances, some employers will not sign these documents. Understand that if the documents are not signed, you cannot receive Work-Study funding; but you can still receive the PIF grant. The Office of Public Service will handle this process – you do not need to negotiate with your employer about the signing of these documents.

9. WHAT IS THE PUBLIC INTEREST SYMPOSIUM AND HOW DO I ATTEND?

The Public Interest Symposium consists of presentations/discussions with Cornell alumni/ae who received the law school's prestigious Frank H.T. Rhodes Public Interest Law Fellowship to launch their public interest legal careers. This year's Symposium is scheduled for April 2021.

10. HOW AND WHEN DO I GET PAID IF I AM RECEIVING PIF AND WORK-STUDY GRANTS?

Your \$5,000 Summer Grant will be paid to you on a bi-weekly basis through Cornell University's payroll system. Your hourly rate is \$15.63. To earn all \$5,000, you will need to work 320 hours over the course of the summer, which is approximately 40 hours per week for 8 weeks. You will receive a notice from the Office of Public Service in late March instructing you to set up an appointment with the Office of Public Service. They will assist you with the required Work-Study and payroll paperwork. You can arrange for direct deposit with the University Payroll Office so your paycheck will be deposited into your bank account.

11. CAN I WORK MORE THAN 320 HOURS AND RECEIVE A LARGER GRANT?

No. The maximum PIF/Work-Study grant is \$5,000.

12. HOW AND WHEN DO I GET PAID IF I AM RECEIVING A PIF GRANT ONLY?

Your \$1,600 PIF grant will be deposited into your University Bursar account in early June.

13. ARE THE GRANTS TAXABLE?

Yes, PIF and Work-Study grants are taxable income for IRS purposes. For international students, if there is no tuition attributed to your bursar account, PIF grants may be subject to a 14% tax withholding. You will want to reach out to the tax office (<https://www.dfa.cornell.edu/tax>; tax@cornell.edu) to find out whether there is a treaty in place with your home country to allow for the tax to be returned to you.

14. WHAT IF MY EMPLOYER CAN PAY ME OR I RECEIVE ANOTHER TYPE OF PUBLIC INTEREST GRANT?

Because demand is high and funds are limited, if your employer is able to contribute any funding, your PIF award will be reduced by that amount. Students earning more than \$5000 from their employer are not eligible for PIF funding.

15. CAN I RECEIVE A SUMMER GRANT AND COURSE CREDIT FOR MY SUMMER INTERNSHIP?

No. You may not receive funding and course credit simultaneously for your summer internship. If you opt to receive course credit, you need to enroll in the Law School's Summer Externship course.