



2023 Fellowship Announcement

Georgia Justice Project (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 2023.

ORGANIZATION:

Georgia Justice Project (GJP) is a non-profit law office that serves people currently or previously involved in the criminal legal system. We do this through a combination of direct and holistic legal representation of clients facing criminal charges or dealing with the collateral consequences of a criminal record, outreach and education, and engaging in statewide policy and legislative advocacy. On the legislative front we have had major victories in the last several years that expanded expungement (SB 288), created clear paths for early termination of probation (SB 105) and reduced driver's license suspensions for failing to appear in court (SB 10). Our work is informed by our 36 years of experience representing individuals and our practical understanding of the systemic forces that disproportionately impact people of color and poor people in our community. **With that in mind, our work focuses on two specific goals: reducing the number of people under correctional control in Georgia and reducing barriers to reentry.** While we care deeply about children and families, our work is focused on adults. You can read more about our mission and the wide range of services we provide at GJP.org.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

We are seeking highly motivated applicants to design and implement a project in partnership with our legal team, which will significantly impact our program work and clients. Because the goal of the fellowship is to create a sustainable project, we have identified the following broad areas of need that fit with our strategic plan for growth, but we are also willing to consider other proposals that support the two goals stated above. The applicant and GJP will develop the specifics of the project together through the application process. We do not expect a fully formed proposal at the time of initial contact.

1. Collateral Consequences of Traffic Court
 - Many traffic offenses, while seemingly minor, can ultimately result in jail time, criminal records, and debt that affects successful reentry.
 - This project would focus on alleviating those collateral consequences through direct representation of people charged with non-serious traffic offenses and/or individuals who cannot afford to pay traffic court debt (including individuals on "pay-only probation" due to their inability to pay a traffic ticket).
 - This project would also focus on developing and advocating for policy initiatives that build on the work of SB 10 this past session, to stop the cycle of justice involvement that can start with a minor traffic incident, as well as community education.

2. Restorative Justice

- GJP believes that there are better ways to minimize the harm of crime and the criminal legal system for everyone who is impacted and is seeking to start a restorative justice program.
- Many restorative justice efforts have focused on juvenile justice and minor offenses; Georgia Justice Project is interested in creating a program to fill the gap by focusing on adults charged with felony offenses.
- The fellow would assist with the development and implementation of the program as well as extensive community education and dialogue.
- The fellow would also work to identify policy changes on the state level that would make it easier to implement restorative programs and practices.

3. Improving outcomes for justice-involved individuals with mental health diagnosis

- In 2022, Georgia passed the Mental Health Parity Act (HB 1013) which represents a small step forward in access to care and creating pathways other than jail or prison for people with mental health diagnosis.
- There is still a long way to go to address all the needs of this group of people. Because of our holistic model of criminal defense, Georgia Justice Project has extensive experience working with this population.
- The fellow would work to examine mental health practices in jails and prisons, provide community education, and identify additional policy changes needed.

4. Increase access to expungement

- While Georgia has made incredible strides in the last two years to expand who is eligible for expungement, studies suggest that a very low percentage of eligible people ever seek to have their record cleared.
- There is a movement around the country to implement “Clean Slate Initiatives” that automatically expunge certain criminal records, which greatly reduces barriers to employment, housing, and other opportunities.
- Georgia faces challenges in implementing automatic expungement because we do not have a unified court record system, but other states are finding creative ways to move this idea forward in the absence of a unified system.
- The ideal candidate for this fellowship would be someone with a technology background, particularly in data management.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

If you are interested in pursuing a fellowship with GJP as your host organization, please email your resume and a brief (1-2 page) cover letter indicating your preferred area(s) of work as listed above (or describing a project that closely aligns with GJP’s stated goals), your personal interest in this work, and your interest in working at GJP. Also, please include a brief writing sample (or excerpt) of no more than 5-7 pages. Please email these materials (as a single, combined PDF) to Careers@GJP.org. Please use the subject line “2023 Fellowship Applicant.” Candidates must be sure they will have time to meet with GJP staff and draft the applications from mid-August to mid-September to meet the September deadlines.

GJP will accept applications until August 5th, 2022, but will consider applications as they are received, and may select a candidate and remove the notice prior to that date.

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 especially invite applicants who are themselves formerly incarcerated or justice-involved, or have family members that are directly impacted by the system.