The Civil Rights section of the Institute for Public Representation (IPR) invites applications for a two-year graduate fellow/staff attorney position to start in August 2016.

What is IPR?

IPR is a public interest law firm and law school clinic founded by Georgetown University Law Center in 1971. IPR serves as counsel for groups and individuals who are unable to obtain effective legal representation on issues of broad public importance. IPR provides third-year law students an opportunity to develop a wide range of lawyering skills by working on real cases under the supervision of faculty members and fellows (also referred to as staff attorneys). IPR’s work is divided into three sections: civil rights, environmental law, and communications law and policy. Each section is directed by a faculty member with the assistance of graduate fellows.

There are six fellow positions at IPR, and we are now recruiting for two of these two-year positions for the 2016-2018 term, one in the civil rights section and one in the environmental law section. There will be a separate announcement for the environmental law position.

IPR’s Civil Rights Section

The faculty member responsible for the civil rights section of IPR is Visiting Professor Michael Kirkpatrick. Professor Kirkpatrick joined the faculty in 2014 after a 23-year career in public interest law, most recently as an attorney with Public Citizen Litigation Group (PCLG). Before joining PCLG, Professor Kirkpatrick was a senior trial attorney with the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Earlier in his career, he was a staff attorney with the Farm Worker Division of Texas Rural Legal Aid.
IPR’s civil rights section operates as a public interest law firm, representing individual clients and other public interest organizations, primarily in the areas of discrimination and constitutional rights, workplace fairness, and open government. Beginning in the Fall of 2015, the section will expand its work into the area of voting rights. Students interview clients, develop case theories, draft and file complaints in state and federal courts, conduct discovery, engage in motions practice, and prepare appeals. Students also file FOIA requests and analyze responsive documents, and work in coalition with other public interest organizations to develop impact cases. Recent projects include:

- Litigating a complex federal Freedom of Information Act suit against the Department of Defense and the CIA on behalf of researchers seeking records on “enhanced interrogation” used in the War on Terror;
- Litigating wage theft claims against private entities and government contractors on behalf of employees denied fair wages or overtime;
- Litigating retaliation claims on behalf of employees terminated for asserting their rights under FLSA and DC Wage and Hour law;
- Litigating on behalf of an individual improperly assessed a deficiency under Maryland consumer protection statutes;
- Litigating on behalf of an individual whose employer improperly denied her the lactation breaks she was entitled to under state and federal law;
- Litigating on behalf of an individual whose employer improperly denied her disability and pregnancy accommodations, discriminated against her on account of her national origin, and illegally assessed fees against her in connection with her resignation;
- Filing amicus briefs in four appellate cases – two pending before the United States Supreme Court, one in the DC Circuit, and one in the New York Court of Appeals;
- Filing FOIA requests and using the responsive documents to prepare reports exposing government misconduct;
- Preparing and arguing two appeals in federal court, one in the DC Circuit and one in the Fifth Circuit; and
- On behalf of a public interest organization, analyzing potential APA claims related to the recall of exploding airbags and other automobile defects.
What do the Graduate Fellows/Staff Attorneys do?

Fellows are responsible for day-to-day supervision of the students and work closely with the students on improving their lawyering skills, especially legal writing. In the civil rights section, the fellow has principal responsibility for about half of the docket and supervises all facets of the litigation. Much of the fellow’s time is spent guiding students in legal and factual research, reviewing student drafts, making suggestions for improvement, and preparing the students for oral presentations. In recent years, fellows have worked on all phases of litigation, including taking depositions, handling evidentiary hearings, and briefing cases before federal district courts, courts of appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Fellows also play a key role in case development and in planning other IPR activities. Fellows participate in case rounds and assist in teaching seminars on litigation practice and substantive law.

Past fellows have emphasized that the IPR experience is unique in several respects:

First, the fellows work on interesting, often cutting-edge litigation. In light of our broad agenda, we have leeway to develop cases that present unique educational opportunities for students and fellows and have a significant impact on the law.

Second, fellows assume substantial responsibility and generally play a more important role in the decision making process than do their contemporaries in other types of law practice. They work on a variety of cases in different stages of the litigation process and gain a broad understanding of how litigation works, from interviewing a potential client through appealing to the Supreme Court. Fellows also work closely with other IPR fellows and other public interest organizations, meeting other lawyers involved in public interest law and seeing how their organizations function.

Third, fellows work closely with a full-time faculty member who has substantial litigation experience and expertise. As part of the Georgetown Law community, fellows are encouraged to attend seminars, workshops, and programs both on and off campus. Georgetown provides substantial support and guidance for fellows interested in pursuing academic scholarship or careers.

Pay and other benefits

The annual stipend for the position will be approximately $53,500, plus an opportunity to participate in group health insurance and other benefits, including unlimited free access to a state-of-the-art, on-site fitness center. The fellowship will start in August 2016 and end in August 2018. Fellows are awarded an L.L.M. in
Advocacy at the completion of the fellowship. Fellows are considered full-time students and may qualify for deferment of student loans.

What qualifications are we looking for?

Typically, IPR fellows have had substantial experience as practicing lawyers. On occasion, we have hired recent law school graduates or graduates just completing a judicial clerkship. We are looking for applicants who demonstrate

- a commitment to public interest law
- excellent writing and communication skills
- an interest in clinical legal education
- experience or strong interest in litigation

Fellows must be admitted to the District of Columbia Bar or take immediate steps to apply for membership (through examination or reciprocity) after being accepted for the position.

How to apply

Applicants should submit

- a résumé
- a law school transcript
- a list of references, including contact information
- a recent legal writing sample of any length that represents the applicant’s most challenging legal work (The writing sample should not be a collaborative work or a piece significantly edited by someone else.)
- a brief statement (no longer than one page, single-spaced) explaining the applicant’s interest in the position

Send your application materials in a PDF file attached to an email to IPR’s Administrator, Niko Perazich, at nwp2@law.georgetown.edu.

We will consider applications on a rolling basis, and the position will remain open until filled. We will select candidates to be interviewed at our office. Although IPR will not pay candidates’ travel expenses, we will try to arrange interviews at a time convenient for the candidate.