



Strengthening Public Defenders.
Transforming Public Defense.

LAW SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM FAQs

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What is the Gideon's Promise Law School Partnership Program?

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The Law School Partnership Program (LSPP) connects law schools, recent graduates, and partner public defender offices through a fellowship program that places new attorneys in public defense positions. The program is designed to support law school graduates committed to indigent defense while helping public defender offices strengthen their capacity to serve their communities.

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How does the fellowship work?

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Law Schools sponsor or support recent graduates by funding a fellowship for a designated term of one year. Graduates are placed in partner public defender offices where they gain hands-on experience, training, and mentorship. Partner public defender offices receive new attorneys who help expand their capacity while being trained in Gideon's Promise's values-based model of client-centered defense. Except in limited circumstances, partner public defender offices agree to hire their fellow as a full-time employee upon completion of the fellowship.

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What role does Gideon's Promise play?

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Gideon's Promise acts as a resource to partner public defender offices and connects them with young bright attorneys. The fellows also automatically enter the Gideon's Promise CORE 101 program when they are connected with an office. Core 101 is a 3-year program where new public defenders learn client-centered values, legal skills critical to indigent defense, and build community with a cohort of public defenders nationwide.

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What benefits does this bring to participating law schools?

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LSPP provides enhanced career opportunities for graduates committed to public interest law and fosters stronger alumni networks in public defense across the country. The fellowship also increases visibility of the partner school as a leader in supporting access to justice and public service careers.

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What benefits does this bring to public defender offices?

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Partner public defender offices receive immediate staffing support from new attorneys dedicated to indigent defense and stronger recruitment pipelines for future permanent hires. Alongside this, fellows receive access to training and mentorship through Gideon's Promise, which equips fellows with long-term skills and commitment. Overall collaboration with law schools and Gideon's Promise serves to strengthen the broader public defense community.

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What kind of law graduates are ideal candidates?

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Ideal candidates are individuals who embody Gideon's Promise values: client-centered advocacy, integrity, community engagement, and resilience.

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How is the fellowship funded?

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Fellowships are typically supported by:

- Law schools, through postgraduate fellowship funding programs.
- Philanthropic contributions when available.
- Hybrid models, depending on the resources and partnerships established.

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How long is the fellowship term?

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Fellowships run for up to one year, though extensions or permanent positions may be available based on the fellow's performance, office needs, and funding.

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How do law schools or public defender offices become partners?

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Interested institutions can contact Gideon's Promise to discuss participation and identify available funding or fellowship slots.

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Where are partner defender offices located?

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Fellowships run for up to one year, though extensions or permanent positions may be available based on the fellow's performance, office needs, and funding.

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Who can I contact for more information?

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For law schools, public defender offices, or funders interested in partnering, please contact: programs@gideonspromise.org.