



Minnesota Justice Foundation

History: In 1982, a small group of law students who were concerned about serving their communities founded the Minnesota Justice Foundation. MJF's founders believed that lawyers and law students have a special professional obligation to provide quality legal services to those who cannot afford legal representation, and that the legal profession can be an engine for positive social change.

Mission: MJF's mission is to provide quality pro bono legal services, to encourage public service, to shape public policy, and to promote social justice. MJF serves Minnesota's low-income and disadvantaged by connecting law students with pro bono and legal aid attorneys.

Programs: Today, MJF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation with a 26-member State Board of Directors, seven staff members, more than 600 student and attorney members, and offices and student chapters at each of Minnesota's law schools.

Summer Clerkship Program: This is MJF's oldest program. Since 1983, MJF has sponsored paid summer clerkships with legal aid and public interest agencies throughout Minnesota. MJF administers the entire Summer Clerkship process from fundraising, agency selection, and publicity, to the interview process and orientation of students. MJF raises funds throughout the year from law firm and corporate sponsors that are committed to pro bono service, then uses these funds to pay each clerk a stipend. Law clerks work for ten 40-hour weeks, directly supervised by one or more public interest attorneys. The legal research and ancillary tasks a clerk performs enables public interest these attorneys to increase their own workloads, thereby helping those who might not otherwise be served.

Law School Public Service Program: This new program is a collaborative effort of MJF, the Minnesota law schools, the Minnesota State Bar Association, and over 100 community-based legal service providers. The *Law School Public Service Program* builds public interest legal issues into the core of a Minnesota legal education by urging law students to perform at least 50 hours of pro bono legal service during their time in law school, and by incorporating public interest and pro bono legal issues into the standard curriculum. Through this Program, Minnesota will enjoy an increase in services to low-income and disadvantaged people, a well-trained cadre of future public interest attorneys, and an increase in attorneys in all practice areas who are familiar with the need for pro bono legal service.

Contact: For more information, call (612) 625-1584, visit our website at www.mnjustice.org or direct e-mail to: betsy@mnjustice.org