



Strengthening Public Defenders.
Transforming Public Defense.

LAW SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM STUDENT FAQ

Q What is LSPP?

A The Law School Partnership Program (LSPP) is a unique opportunity to launch a career as a public defender with the training, support, and community needed to thrive. As an LSPP Fellow, students receive up to one year of funding from your school while working in a partner public defender office that commits to hiring them for at least a three-year term within a year of the fellowship start.

Q When do applications open?

A

- Applications open on Monday, June 1, 2026.
- Once you begin the application, you do not need to complete it in a single sitting. You will be able to save the application and return to it as needed before submitting.
- You may download the Essay Question PDF on the LSPP website page so that you can review the essay questions prior to starting the application.

Q What do I need to submit for the application?

A

- The application asks for basic personal information about you (i.e., law school, graduation date, current location, etc.)
- Your most up-to-date resume
- Two letters of recommendation.
- Writing sample
- Unofficial law school transcript
- The application includes a number of essay questions, which we read closely. Please take your time in answering them, as this is one of the key parts of the application that helps us identify candidates who are a good fit for joining the Gideon's Promise movement and who are committed to the mission and purpose of Gideon's Promise.

Q

When do applications close?

A

This year's LSPP applications will close on Friday, October 2, 2026.

Q

How do I rank offices for my application?

A

- You will be asked to rank your preferences for placement once you have made it through the screening process.
- You will have the opportunity to rank offices in order of interest, or indicate that you are open to being placed anywhere. While completing your rankings, please note that some offices (i.e. those in urban areas) are highly requested and their application process is highly competitive.
- Rankings are all about personal preference. While you will make an initial ranking to identify your offices of interest, you will have an opportunity to revisit your rankings after the interviews are complete as you are also interviewing the offices through this process. Think about what you want from your practice, what kind of office culture and leadership you would like to experience, and the location where you would like to practice. It is helpful to determine what is most important to you in a post-graduate placement because we expect that you will make **at least a 3-year commitment to that office**. Therefore, if you are not interested in an office and could not see yourself making the commitment, please do not rank it.

Q

How do I schedule interviews with the partner public defender offices?

A

- Upon receiving the applications of interested candidates, offices will determine which applicants they will interview. You will receive an email notification from Gideon's Promise with the offices that received your application materials for review.
- We are asking our partner offices to interview candidates between November 5 - December 3, 2025. Please keep the office interview time frame in mind so that you are available when office representatives contact you for a LSPP placement interview.
- Offices will reach out to you directly to schedule an interview. Most of these interviews take place via phone or online. A small number of offices may require an in-person interview.

Q

How does the pairing process work?

A

After interviewing applicants, offices will submit to us their own rankings of the students they have interviewed. We will then take the rankings we receive from our partner offices and match them to the rankings provided to us by the applicants. While the process is not exact, we try to ensure that applicants receive one of their top choices as a placement.

Q

What are some things to ask during the partner office interview?

A

Each fellowship will be slightly unique based on the pairing between the partner office and the partner law school in terms of employment terms, available benefits, and compensation.

- Listed below are recommended questions to ask when interviewing with a partner office as well as questions to ask your law school if offered a fellowship.
- Make sure you speak with your law school's career services department to determine the fellowship guidelines and compensation terms (i.e. compensation amount, benefits, length of fellowship, etc.)
- When interviewing with the Partner Office please make sure you cover the following:
 - Are you eligible for medical or dental benefits during the fellowship period? If so, when do those benefits begin?
 - Once hired as a full-time employee, what is the starting salary and/or benefit package and its terms?
 - What are the opportunities for vacations, holidays, or other related benefits? When do those benefits begin?
 - What is the official start date in the office?
 - Is there a possibility that you can be hired as a full-time employee before the fellowship term ends?

Q

What happens after the interviews?

A

- After offices interview all the candidates, they will submit to us the rankings of students they are interested in bringing on as a Law School Partnership Project Fellow.
- Once we receive the offices' rankings of the candidates they interviewed, we will send you an email notifying you of the offices that are interested in you.
- You will then send us your own rankings of these offices by December 15, 2026.

Q

Are there any opportunities for early placement?

A

- There are two circumstances where we can potentially place candidates early in the Law School Partnership Project application process.
- If after the application deadline passes and all applications have been received, and there remains a sole candidate who has expressed interest in working only in the office where no one else has applied, the candidate will have the opportunity to interview for an early placement.
- Or if, after an applicant has completed all of their interviews and they rank an office #1, and are the only applicant interested in that office, an early placement can be made if it does not adversely impact any other applicant. For example, if there are two applicants from the same school that only has funding for one applicant, the placement may be deferred until the end of the process.

Q

When will I know if I have received a placement?

A

We tentatively plan for offers to be made by December 21, 2026. Due to the intense process of ranking and matching offices with fellows, we expect individuals to accept the fellowship offers that are made to them. The dropout date to withdraw from the process is December 15, 2025. We expect applicants who receive offers to notify us of their acceptance by January 8, 2027.

Q

How much does the fellowship pay?

A

- The fellowship stipend is determined by the law school that is funding the fellowship. Please check with the appropriate party at your school to determine the stipend amount and what benefits may be available during your fellowship.
- Keep in mind that if a fellowship must be paid directly to a fellow, then the fellow will be responsible for self-employment tax. Again, you will want to inquire with your law school and the offices regarding the payment of any benefits.
- For questions on student loan repayment plans and forgiveness qualifications as an LSPP fellow, we advise you to review information available on the Office of Department of Education website for Federal Student Aid regarding [repaying loans](#).

Q

What is required of LSPF fellows?

A

- Selection as a Law School Partnership Project Fellow means that you will enter into the 3-year CORE 101 training, which will begin in January following placement into your office.
- The fellowship is an “at-will” arrangement. It will be up to the office to make determinations about your status depending on whether or not you pass the bar. Most offices keep fellows on through their first bar failure, but it is entirely up to the office. In addition, you will need to adhere to the office policies and procedures.

Q

When will the fellowship begin?

A

Your official start date will be coordinated with your office, but would occur after you take the July bar exam. All fellows should anticipate a start date before September 30, 2027.

Q

When will my training with Gideon’s Promise begin?

A

If selected as a 2027 fellow, you will participate in the January 2028 Winter Institute CORE 101 class. You will return for the two-week Summer Institute training in July 2028.

Q

Additional Questions?

A

Please contact programs@gideonspromise.org.