Legal Skills in Social Context

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN OUR PROGRAM AS PARTNERS IN THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.

Northeastern University
School of Law
THE LEGAL SKILLS IN SOCIAL CONTEXT (LSSC)
PROGRAM IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES AND THE SCHOOL OF
LAW TO ADDRESS UNMET SOCIAL JUSTICE NEEDS.

As part of Northeastern Law’s commitment to experiential learning and community partnerships, students in the LSSC program employ their analytical research and writing skills to address social justice challenges identified by a wide range of partner organizations and agencies. Through the partnership, organizations can contribute to the legal education of future lawyers by participating in a team-lawyering effort and introducing students to the spirit and practice of public interest lawyering.

LSSC can benefit your organization by pursuing aspects of your social justice agenda that you might otherwise have to forego due to staffing or resource constraints. The program will provide your organization with a free and closely supervised lawyer think-tank composed of a team of first-year law students. Throughout the course of an academic year, the team will engage in extensive legal and field research on your organization’s behalf to analyze possible avenues of systemic reform.

The work-products produced by the students are wide-ranging and can serve your organization in a variety of ways. Students have drafted research white papers, used by organizations to inform community members as well as key decision-makers; model legislation; practice guides; Know Your Rights materials; sample litigation documents; and training manuals.

Since its inception, LSSC has partnered with more than 300 organizations seeking to implement broad changes to laws, policies and practices across a wide array of legal areas, including civil rights, criminal law, education, housing, immigration and poverty law. Included in this brochure is a brief sampling of the projects undertaken by LSSC students. A complete list of partner organizations may be found at northeastern.edu/law/lssc.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with your organization and to assist you in addressing critical issues faced by your organization and individuals in your community. Your project will be our students’ first experience of real lawyering for social justice. Thank you!
Criminal Law

Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services
An LSSC student team conducted multi-jurisdictional research on the feasibility of replicating, in other states, the Rapid Response to Brutality Project, responsible for a substantial drop in Massachusetts guard-on-prisoner assaults. Research included examination of laws allowing legal professionals access to prisoners; federal and state laws supporting a right to photograph clients; and international human rights laws relating to prison brutality. The final product included a report providing a state-by-state strategic analysis and rationale of jurisdictions that may accept such a program.

Immigration

Vera Institute of Justice
The Vera Institute of Justice project investigated the extent to which non-English speaking parties to immigration court proceedings have a right to be provided with translations of “vital documents” under federal law and the US Constitution. An LSSC student team conducted a survey of state agencies and departments to determine a number of innovative and low-cost strategies that could be implemented in immigration court proceedings to increase access for parties with limited English proficiency. The report concluded with recommendations for the Executive Office of Immigration Review on ways to increase access to the service population with limited English proficiency while respecting the procedural and substantive due process rights of these respondents facing removal.
Education

Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts (PHENOM)
The LSSC student team provided comprehensive, social justice-focused recommendations for modifications to the Massachusetts Student Loan Bill of Rights legislation to ensure the proposed bill would help even the most marginalized victims of the student debt crisis. The student team also created a Know Your Rights community resource guide that is officially distributed by state legal offices, regulators and colleges and universities to those individuals seeking student loans.

Health/Disability Rights

AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts
A team of LSSC students addressed a number of concrete legal questions toward the establishment of the first Safe Consumption Facility (SCF) in the commonwealth. The team conducted research and drafted an interdisciplinary review of federal, state and local legal barriers to evaluate the possibility of SCF establishment in Massachusetts, and explored potential ways forward in Massachusetts, including general legislative recommendations.

Poverty

Southern Legal Counsel, Inc.
Students examined the issue of court-imposed debt, or legal financial obligations, in Florida. The student team created a report outlining the legal standards regarding the imposition and collection of court-imposed fines and fees in the criminal legal system; analyzed reform efforts undertaken around the country; and identified several possible avenues to secure relief for individual clients and ideas for possible systemic litigation to address the burden created by a cycle of debt and/or re-criminalization for failure or inability to pay.
APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDELINES

If your organization would like to participate in the LSSC program, please complete the LSSC project application form, which can be found at northeastern.edu/law/lssc-partners. The application should include a proposal consisting of a single project or a set of small, related projects that can be completed in an academic year. Successful project proposals have a clearly defined goal and desired outcome and include both legal and investigative field research components.

Applications are due by April 25, 2019. Organizations will be notified by July 2019 if their proposals have been accepted.

The partner organization is an important part of the learning experience for Northeastern Law students. Partner organizations assist in this pedagogical endeavor by helping to fashion the appropriate scale and scope of the project, meeting with the students (in-person or virtually) at various points throughout the academic year and responding to questions from the team as needed. The projects culminate in a multi-media oral presentation to the partner organization, law school community and interested stakeholders, held in early April.

Organizations whose proposals are not chosen for a project for the 2019-2020 academic year may have their proposals considered for further development and vetting by closely supervised upper-level students through an incubator course, Dynamic Lawyering for Social Change.

QUESTIONS?

For more detailed information, please visit our website at northeastern.edu/law/lssc or contact Professor Margaret Hahn-DuPont at m.hahndupont@northeastern.edu.
Employment

Migrant Farmworker Justice Project
The LSSC student team conducted a two-prong project on reconciling federal regulations with migrant farmworker wage discrepancies. The students (1) answered the administrative law question of what typically occurs when a prior rule is reinstated in light of the potential for a period of regulatory void, and (2) weighed the options of pursuing either a class action lawsuit or multidistrict litigation to pursue back wages owed to H-2A workers. The students produced an appellate brief encompassing three of the most powerful arguments that the Migrant Farmworker Justice Project could present to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and produced a strategy memorandum for possible litigation.