

OSGOODE

OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL
YORK UNIVERSITY

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY CLINICAL PROGRAM

If you are a lawyer or a legal service provider to an organization that may be taking forward a public interest legal file that could advance environmental justice and sustainability, and if you could benefit from the help of motivated, capable JD students during the upcoming school year (September 2015-March 2016), the Environmental Justice and Sustainability (EJS) Clinical Program at Osgoode Hall Law School wants to hear from you.

What is the EJS Clinical Program?

Osgoode Hall Law School, a pioneer in experiential and social justice-oriented legal education, has launched an environmental justice and sustainability clinical program to start in Fall 2015. In this year-long clinical program, **students explore the theory and practice of public interest environmental law**, working on files chosen for their likely lasting positive impact on environmental justice and sustainability. The program's dual focus on remedying environmental injustice and promoting environmental, social and economic sustainability makes it unique among environmental law clinical programs in Canada. The program is directed by Adjunct Professor David Estrin and Professor Stepan Wood.

What Are We Looking For?

We are looking for exciting legal files for students to work on in the 2015-16 school year in partnership with external legal organizations. The clinic helps

public interest-oriented lawyers to **leverage their limited resources and enhance their positive impacts** on environmental justice and sustainability by enlisting **JD students who work for free** under the supervision of the external lawyer(s) and Osgoode law professors. In the process, the JD students gain invaluable exposure to the practice of public interest-oriented environmental law.

Who is Eligible to Participate?

We are eager to work with **legal service providers, based anywhere in Canada, who work in the public interest to advance environmental justice and sustainability**. This might include environmental law non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and legal aid clinics; in-house or external counsel to environmental or human rights groups, municipal governments, First Nations, or social enterprises; or lawyers in private practice who engage in public interest-oriented legal work on a pro-bono or reduced-fee basis.

What Types of Files Are Eligible?

We wish to work on **active, real-world legal files for real clients with real interests at stake**. While we will consider assisting in work that would help determine the merits of a proposed legal proceeding, we are not interested in purely academic or speculative projects. We are open to a **variety of file types** including litigation (before courts or tribunals), non-judicial proceedings (eg applications to environmental watchdogs like Environmental Commissioners or the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation), law reform, legislative drafting, freedom of information requests, and public legal education and outreach. Files can address a **wide range of subject-matter** including biodiversity, energy, water, food, climate change, pollution, resource extraction, land use planning, human rights, green technology, corporate social responsibility, toxic torts, and regulatory compliance. Files can relate to any geographic location in Canada, **from local to national**. Within this broad scope, we choose files for their **likely lasting positive impact on environmental justice and sustainability**.

What Kind of Work Can We Do?

EJS Clinic students can do **any work that a JD student can do in a law office setting**, including legal research and writing (internal memos, public reports, educational materials, etc.), legal drafting (pleadings, law reform

submissions, affidavits, legislation, contracts, etc.) and document review. With appropriate supervision, they might gather or analyze evidence, work with experts, interview clients or witnesses, assist with examinations for discovery, or even appear before administrative decision-makers or courts. Any interaction with clients or third parties would always be under your direct supervision.

Where, How and When Do We Work?

The Clinic uses a “virtual placement” model. **The students work at Osgoode.** They do not work at your office. They conduct their work on their own computers and using the law school’s library resources. The **academic directors work closely with the students** to maximize the value of the students’ work for you and to ensure that both you and the students can benefit from the academic directors’ insight and expertise. You interact with the students and academic directors via **telephone, video conference and email**, as appropriate. If you are based in the Toronto area, we strongly encourage periodic in-person meetings either at your office or at Osgoode. In appropriate circumstances, students might accompany you on visits to clients or relevant sites.

We prefer students to **work in teams of 2-3** so that they gain experience with collaboration and can support each other, but they may work individually in appropriate circumstances.

Students **start working on their files in late September and finish in late March**. They are expected to devote 15 hours per week to their file work over around 20 weeks, for a total of around 300 hours per student. Files should be capable of completion on this time scale and should accommodate the students’ academic schedules, including Fall and Winter Reading Weeks and Winter holidays. It is wise to steer clear of files that are highly time-sensitive or involve unpredictable or variable workloads.

In addition to their clinical file work, students attend an academic seminar and complete a research paper or project that complements but does not duplicate their clinical work. To help build the Clinic’s profile and impact, we plan to make the results of their research projects public in a way that does not compromise the confidentiality of the clinical files.

How Do We Ensure Confidentiality?

Clinical files are treated in the strictest confidence. The students and academic directors sign confidentiality agreements with you. We protect solicitor-client privilege by having students work under your direct supervision. We protect confidential files and data by implementing appropriate protocols for storage and transmission of physical and electronic files, and training students accordingly.

How Are the Students Supervised and Evaluated?

We have a dual supervisory structure. **You maintain control of and professional responsibility for the file** and you are the students’ supervisor for purposes of professional responsibility. The academic directors are the students’ supervisors for academic purposes, but not for purposes of professional responsibility.

Both you and the academic directors provide students with feedback on their performance. You provide them with informal feedback via supervisory discussions and written comments on their work. The academic directors provide students with interim written feedback in the fall and winter, and a final written evaluation at the end of the school year. The academic directors seek your input for these academic assessments, but retain responsibility for them.

How and When Are Mutual Expectations Settled?

To ensure smooth planning and execution, we need to **agree on project goals, deliverables and timeframe before the school year begins in September**. If you are interested in pursuing this opportunity, please call us or send us a brief, confidential outline of your proposed project as soon as possible. If the project looks promising, we will work with you to finalize goals, deliverables and timelines before September.

Questions? Contact Us!

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