**2015 PILA Grant Application Information & Instructions**

**Key Application Dates:**

* Friday, February 13, 2015 at 5:00pm: Applications and interview signups are due.
* February 16–21: Interviews conducted.
* Wednesday, March 4, 2015: Students will be notified if they have received a grant or are on the waitlist.

*If you have any questions about the application, please contact Rory Erickson-Kulas, PILA Disbursements Director, at rfe2z@virginia.edu.*

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**PILA Fellowship Information**

The Public Interest Law Association (PILA) is a UVA School of Law student organization that supports and promotes public interest law. Through its fellowship program, PILA awards grants to students who will work in volunteer or low-paying public interest positions during the summer. Fellowships are funded through student fundraising efforts; student, faculty, and community donors; the Law School Foundation; the Dean’s Office; and the Law & Public Service Program.

**I. Application Instructions**

1. READ this document.

2. DOWNLOAD the appropriate Word documents from the PILA website:

* Download the “2015 PILA Grant Application” document.
* ONLY IF you are a member of the Program in Law and Public Service, download the “2015 PILA Grant Application for LPS” document.

3. COMPLETE the Word documents.

* Complete **Parts I, II, III, and IV**.
  + **Part IV** must be completed by every applicant who is not a member of the Program in Law and Public Service.
* If you are a member of the Program in Law and Public Service, complete ONLY Parts I, II, and III.
* **Part V** is optional.

🗹 *Note*:Your name should appear *only* in the signature fields in Parts I and II of your application. **Delete your name and address from your resume**.

🗹 *Note*: Your application is confidential. You are identified exclusively by the last five digits of your UVA ID (i.e., if your ID were 1021-30923, your PILA Grant Application ID would be 30923). Make sure that the last five digits of your UVA ID appear in the header of each document. Your year in law school (i.e., 1L or 2L) should appear in every header as well.

4. SAVE the Word documents using the following naming conventions:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Original Document Name*** | ***Personalized Document Name*** | ***Example*** |
| 2015 PILA Grant Application | [Last Five Digits of ID#]\_PILA | 30923\_PILA |
| 2015 PILA Grant Application for LPS | [Last Five Digits of ID#]\_LPS | 30923\_LPS |

🗹 *Note:* If you prefer to convert your application into a PDF, you may do so. Use the same naming convention described above. Both PDF and Word document (.doc or .docx) are acceptable formats.

5. EMAIL your document *in one email*, *as an attachment*, in either Word or PDF format,to the following email address:

**PILAGrants2015@gmail.com**

Your application must be received by the above email address by 5:00 pm on Friday, February 13. You will receive an automated confirmation email immediately when your message is received. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please contact Disbursements Director Rory Erickson-Kulas, as soon as possible, at rfe2fz@virginia.edu. A late application will NOT be considered for a summer fellowship. You are strongly encouraged to submit your application well in advance of the 5:00pm deadline.

6. SIGN UP for a 20-minute interview by visiting:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Yhen9ZjjZepi__90wi-8XxvbTE5bCvxMr_7R8VeC5xA/edit?usp=sharing>. Here, you will find a link to a Google Docs spreadsheet with a calendar containing interview slots. Please put the last five digits of your UVA ID number in the slot you would like. It goes without saying that you may only sign up for an open slot, and you may not delete or move anyone else’s sign-up information. **Write down your interview time in your calendar.**

🗹 *Note:* Please sign up immediately after submitting your application (by February 13).

🗹 *Note:* Your interview will take the entire 20 minutes, so schedule it so you do not have to leave early to get to class.

🗹 *Note:* Interviews *cannot* be rescheduled unless there is a true emergency. **If you miss your interview you will receive zero (0) points for the interview portion of your application, and the PILA Board reserves the right to withdraw your application from consideration. If you are late, your score will be reduced in proportion to your lateness.**

**GOOD LUCK!**

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS,

PLEASE CONTACT PILA DISBURSEMENTS DIRECTOR

RORY ERICKSON-KULAS AT RFE2FZ@VIRGINIA.EDU

**II. Eligibility Information**

I. EligibleStudents:

* **1Ls** who have completed at least 15 unweighted *pro bono* and/or public service hours (between the start of law school and February 13); or
* **2Ls or transfer students** who have completed at least 35 unweighted hours (between the beginning of 1L year and February 13) (see pages 8­–9 for definitions of *pro bono* and public service hours); AND
* Who agree to the conditions in the Honor Pledge (Application Part II); AND
* Who will work in eligible positions for at least 400 hours during the summer.

🗹 *Note:* Applicants need not have received or accepted a job offer before submitting an application. An offer must be accepted, however, by Friday, April 24, 2015.

II. Eligible Positions:

* *Legal work* in government and non-profit public interest organizations; or
* *Policymaking* positions in local, state, or federal government.
* Because PILA grantees are capped at earning $10,000 at their internship over the summer (in total, including their fellowship), positions that pay over $10,000 are ineligible. Grantees may accept partial grants; i.e., if a student receives a $7000 stipend from her employer, she may accept a $3000 PILA grant.

🗹 *Note:* PILA does not award fellowships for employment in for-profit organizations, political campaigns, judicial clerkships, or research positions with professors. If you have questions about whether your position is eligible, contact the PILA Disbursements Director.

**III. Selection & Waitlist Criteria**

The PILA Board will award fellowships based upon assessment of the following elements:

1. Commitment to public service

2. How the (accepted or expected) summer position furthers the applicant’s career goals

3. Quality and quantity of public service and *pro bono* hours completed beyond the minimum hours (15 for 1Ls, 35 for 2Ls) required for eligibility

🗹 *Note:* In the quantitative scoring of hours, *pro bono* hours are weighted as 1.5 public service hours.

4. Financial need (*optional*)

Applicants’ grade point averages and political affiliations will not be considered. PILA does not discriminate on the basis of age, citizenship, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or status as a veteran. PILA does not endorse any discriminatory practices of organizations for which PILA grant recipients choose to work during their fellowship summer, but any such practices do not affect the decision to award a grant to a student seeking work with that organization.

The percentage of applicants receiving grants changes each year due to fluctuations in funds and the number of applicants. Deliberations are strictly confidential.

**Waitlist:** Applicants who are not offered fellowships are put on a waitlist. PILA will let you know if you are in the top 20 on the waitlist. Whether we will be able to fund applicants on the waitlist is unpredictable because it depends on other students declining their grants. Most offers to fund students on the waitlist have occurred by the first week of May.

**IV. Elements of a Successful Application**

Applicants are chosen based on the strength of their interview, written application, and, if the applicant chooses to complete Part V, financial need.

I. Interview (25%)

* Applicants will have a 20-minute interview with 3 members of the PILA Board.
* The purpose of the interview is to get a greater sense of the applicant’s commitment to public service and chosen internship position(s), as well as how the position(s) further(s) the applicant’s career goals.

🗹 *Note:* Dress in interviews is casual.

II. Public Service and *Pro Bono* Hours Completed (25%)

* How PILA evaluates hours:
  + This part of the application is an objective score based on the number of *pro bono* and public service hours completed before the time the application is submitted. Anticipated future hours cannot be included.
  + In determining the score, *pro bono* hours are weighted more heavily than public service hours. One *pro bono* hour equals 1.5 public service hours.
  + Students are given a score that is “curved” based on the distribution of hours submitted by other applicants in the same year of law school.

🗹 *Note*: This weighting does not affect the minimum hours required for eligibility. Each applicant must have completed the minimum hours (15 for 1Ls, 35 for 2Ls) in actual, unweighted hours by the time the application is submitted.

🗹 *Note:* In 201, grantees performed na average of 87 hours of *pro bono* and public service hours. Remember, however, that the number of hours of public service and *pro bono* work is only 25% of the overall application.

III. The Written Application (50%)

A selection of the PILA Board (15 people) will individually read and score Part IV of each application. These materials are evaluated on the following criteria:

**B. Essay Question 1** (30%)

Rubric: Commitment to public service. *Indicators of commitment to public service can include*:

* Involvement in public service activities as an undergraduate, in prior careers, and/or as a volunteer
* Leadership roles and/or initiative in public interest pursuits, including *pro bono* projects and other law school activities
* Connection to past pursuits and proposed summer position(s) and longstanding commitment to particular issues
* Personal stories or reflections demonstrating your commitment to public interest and/or the particular position(s) to which you are applying

🗹 *Note*:Strong essays will not address each question mechanically, but will instead form a readable, authentic, and cohesive essay.

**C. Essay Question 2** (20%)

Rubric: How the position furthers the applicant’s career goals. *Indicators of how the position(s) further(s) your career can include*:

* Connections between the summer position(s) you are applying for and your identified career goals
* Explanation of how the position(s) will help you determine your career goals
* Discussion of what kind of clients you will (or expect to) work with this summer and how that fits with the kind of work you plan to do someday

🗹 *Note*:PILA understands that many students—both 1Ls and 2Ls—have not yet cemented their career goals. We strongly discourage students from exaggerating their commitment to a given career. We want to infer whether the applicant has started thinking strategically and seriously about possible career paths. Strong applications will show that the applicant is familiar with the typical career path and responsibilities of lawyers working at their summer job site. They will also indicate some reasons why this career appeals to them. In general, students who have taken steps such as meeting with the Public Service Center and Career Services, conducting informational interviews, attending alumni career panels, and seeking *pro bono* projects in the field will be able to provide the strongest answers.

IV. Financial Need (optional)

**Use of the financial need score:**

Each applicant has a “merit score” and, if you choose to complete Part V, a “financial need score.” The merit score, as explained above, is composed of a written application (75%) and an interview (25%).

The first two-thirds (approximately) of the available grant money will be distributed based solely on applicants’ merit scores, with no reference to financial need. After two-thirds of the total funds are distributed, applicants are re-ranked, including a financial need score. Students’ financial need score is “curved” based on the distribution of all applicants’ need. High financial need cannot save an otherwise weak application, but it may boost the chances of an average application.

**Confidentiality of financial information:**

Once you turn in your application, your financial need form will be separated from the rest of your application. The financial need form contains no identifying information except an identification number. *Only* the PILA President and the Disbursements Director see these blind financial need forms to determine a financial need score. In deliberations, the rest of the PILA Board sees only the financial need score and no other financial information. All information discussed in deliberations is confidential.

**V. Definitions of *Pro Bono* and Public Service Hours**

**Public Service Hours**:Uncompensated hours during the academic year (including fall, winter, and spring breaks) spent volunteering in non-profit or governmental activities that directly benefit disadvantaged populations, the environment, animals, or the broader community beyond the university, including hours spent doing charitable work through a student organization.

🗹 *Note*:2L applicants may include public service (and *pro bono*) hours completed during their 1L year. 2L applications cannot count work done as part of a summer internship or job, even if it was unpaid and would otherwise qualify.

Examples of Hours That Qualify:

* Tutoring or mentoring disadvantaged populations
* Volunteer work with city agencies or local non-profits other than UVA (e.g., trail maintenance for Charlottesville Parks and Recreation; volunteering at the Humane Society; building for Habitat for Humanity)
* Soliciting donations for a charitable cause or event where a majority of the net proceeds go to charity (e.g., raising money for natural disaster relief or disease research)
* Charitable or educational work through a student organization (e.g., tutoring kids, election monitoring)
* Organization and coordination of activities that qualify as *pro bono* or public service hours (e.g., organizing for Alternative Spring Break)

Examples of Hours That *DO NOT* Qualify:

* Student organization activities that primarily benefit law students or others in the UVA community (e.g., planning student events, fundraising for an organization’s general fund, attending general meetings, PILA 1L Rep responsibilities, etc.)
* Partisan political activities (e.g., canvassing for a candidate, fundraising for a political party, lobbying)
* Time spent commuting to and from public service or *pro bono* work (but travel *on behalf of* your employer, e.g. to conduct an intake interview out of the office, *can* be counted)
* Hours completed prior to law school
* Double-counting hours as public service hours that are already counted on your application as *pro bono* hours
* Hours not completed by the time you turn in your application; however, if you are going on an upcoming Alternative Spring Break trip or have some other activities planned, please note that in the “Other Law School Activities” section.

If you are unsure about whether a particular activity qualifies as a public service hour, please contact Rory Erickson-Kulas (rfe2fz@virginia.edu), PILA Disbursements Director.

***Pro Bono* Hours**:Work that qualifies under the Public Service Center’s definition of *pro bono*:

1. Law-related work;

2. Supervised by a licensed attorney or law school faculty member;

3. For a nonprofit organization, government office or agency, or private law firm providing *pro bono* services to under-represented people or groups;

4. Not for academic credit or financial compensation; AND

5. Undertaken during the academic year (including winter break and spring break projects); *or*, for 2L and transfer applicants, undertaken during the summer before 2L year, provided that it was not done on behalf of a summer internship or job.

*Note*:The Public Service Center (PSC) maintains separate records of students’ *pro bono* activities. You must report your *pro bono* hours on this application even if you have already reported your hours to the PSC.

*If you are unsure whether a particular activity qualifies as a* pro bono *hour, please contact the Public Service Center.*

Calculating Your Hours:

**Example: 10 hours in September 2014 with Habitat for Humanity; 40 hours in January 2015 at Charlottesville Public Defender**

Unweighted Public Service **10** + Unweighted *Pro Bono* **40** = **Total unweighted hours 50**

🗹 *Note:* Total unweighted hours must be greater than 15 for 1Ls and 35 for 2Ls and transfers.

Unweighted Public Service **10**  + [Unweighted *Pro Bono* 40 x 1.5] **60**  = **Total weighted hours 70**

**VI. Amount of Fellowships and Cap on Summer Earnings**

PILA will award fellowships of about **$3500** for first-year students and up to **$6000** for second-year students. You may be required to pay taxes on the award. (PILA does not provide tax advice of any kind. Nonetheless, students should be aware that this is a non-tuition grant and manystudents will therefore have to declare it as income.)

The cap on earnings is $10,000. First-year students may earn up to an additional $6,500 pre-tax (for a total of $10,000) and second-year students may earn up to an additional $4,000 pre-tax (for a total of $10,000). Earnings that count toward this cap include payments in the form of salary or stipend from your public interest employer, as well as any outside fellowships or grants awarded for your work. Earnings from a second, non-legal job are *not* counted against the cap (e.g., working at a restaurant).

Grantees should inform the PILA Disbursements Director as soon as they become aware they will earn or have earned more than the cap. Any amount exceeding the cap will be deducted from the fellowships, or, if the grantee has already received the fellowship, the grantee must return the excess amount. *Promptly returning any amount exceeding the cap is extremely important as it allows PILA to award the funds to students on the waiting list*.