THE JACOB BURNS COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL WASHINGTON, D.C.
GW Law offers students a legal education premised on “law in action” in Washington, D.C., the center of the most dynamic legal and policy activity in the United States.

The law school is located just four blocks from the White House, across the street from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and close to major international organizations, nonprofit institutions, courts, and government agencies. This proximity allows our students to gain practical experience in externships at these nearby institutions. In addition, our students benefit from a world-renowned faculty, a broad curriculum featuring more than 275 elective courses, strong academic and personal support, and a wide variety of expert lecturers and visitors.

The GW Law experience is dynamic, rigorous, and practical. Simply put, there is no better place to study and participate in the engaging life of the law.
The Jacob Burns Community Legal Clinics at GW

GW Law was one of the first law schools in the nation to embrace clinical education. For more than 40 years, students in the Jacob Burns Community Legal Clinics have been learning to become lawyers while providing critically needed legal services to the Washington, D.C., community. Through expert instruction and close faculty supervision, our students help people in need of assistance to solve real legal problems.

In the process, students develop professional skills and values that prepare them to succeed in various kinds of law practice. They internalize transferable skills such as case planning, collaboration, strategic judgment, and ethical decision making. They learn how to draw lessons from their casework experiences that help them to grow as professionals. Students carry these vital skills with them into law practice.

Each clinic is designed around specific learning goals that help clinic students to perform meaningful legal work with real impact on people's lives. Clinical learning methods entail interactive classroom instruction in law, lawyering, and the legal system; close supervision from clinical faculty in all aspects of students' case preparation and performance; and individualized feedback to students throughout their clinical experience. Our students learn to be counselors and advocates by advising new nonprofit organizations, assisting elderly people to obtain the health care benefits they need, seeking legal protection for victims of domestic violence, helping low-income workers to recover wages they are owed, and handling many other types of legal matters.

In recent years, our students have successfully obtained political asylum for clients from many lands, secured legal remedies for victims of human trafficking and police misconduct, and argued a winning case before the Maryland Court of Appeals that changed how criminal trials are conducted across the state. The active learning methods that enable students to engage in these and many other important legal matters distinguish the clinical experience from other kinds of experiential education. Year after year, the clinics offer students rich experiences and vivid insights into the legal profession and their place within it.

“Working with actual clients in the clinics helps you see how law applies in the real world. You’re seeing, for example, exactly how wage and labor employment laws affect people. Helping your client settle a wage dispute claim may make the difference in whether they can afford food that month.”
— Rosanne Niforos, 3L
An Overview of Our Clinics

The clinics are led by Phyllis Goldfarb, Jacob Burns Foundation Professor of Clinical Law and Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs. Dean Goldfarb has years of expertise as an advocate, professor, administrator of clinical education, author, and speaker. In addition, she has represented clients on a pro bono basis, including death row inmates and one of the Framingham Eight who was incarcerated for killing her batterer.

Domestic Violence Project
Under the direction of Professor Joan Meier, students work as domestic violence lawyers with nonprofit agencies, pro bono organizations, and governmental entities.

Family Justice Litigation Clinic
Under the direction of Professor Laurie Kohn, students represent clients in D.C. Superior Court cases involving custody, child support, divorce, and protection from abuse.

Federal, Criminal, and Appellate Clinic
Students work under the supervision of Professor Anne Olesen to represent clients before the Maryland Court of Special Appeals in direct appeals from criminal convictions.
Health Rights Law Clinic
Students are trained to advise, counsel, and assist Medicare recipients and seniors. The clinic is led by Professor Suzanne Jackson.

Immigration Law Clinic
Professor Alberto Benítez supervises students as they represent asylum applicants and individuals involved in deportation and removal proceedings.

International Human Rights Clinic
Founded by Professor Arturo Carrillo, the International Human Rights Clinic litigates human rights cases before U.S. and international tribunals such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which is located three blocks from the law school.

Law Students in Court
A joint effort of D.C. law schools, the project enables GW students to provide civil and criminal representation to low-income clients in the District of Columbia.

Neighborhood Law and Policy Clinic
With the guidance of Professor Jessica Steinberg, students address the civil legal needs of indigent people in D.C. in cases related to housing, public benefits, and parole, as well as the legal needs of ex-offenders re-entering the community.
Public Justice Advocacy Clinic
Under the supervision of Professor Jeffrey Gutman, students represent low-income clients before D.C. courts and administrative tribunals, primarily in employment-related cases involving unpaid wages and appeals from denials of unemployment benefits.

Small Business and Community Economic Development Clinic
Students in the clinic provide start-up legal assistance primarily to microbusinesses and small nonprofit organizations. Professor Susan Jones directs the clinic.

Vaccine Injury Clinic
The only clinic of its kind, the Vaccine Injury Clinic represents young children and adults who seek compensation for vaccine-related injuries and death. The clinic is directed by Professor Peter Meyers.

For more complete descriptions and information about the Jacob Burns Community Legal Clinics, please visit our website at www.law.gwu.edu/gwl/clinics.
Other Opportunities

Animal Law Litigation Project
Students gain litigation, lobbying, policy, and general advocacy skills working at local organizations on behalf of animal welfare. Professor Joan Schaffner supervises the project.

Jacob and Charlotte Lehrman Foundation Scholarship
One third-year student is chosen annually by the clinical faculty and staff to serve as student director of the Jacob Burns Community Legal Clinics.

Friedman Fellowships
These two-year, graduate clinical fellowships allow experienced attorneys to pursue an LLM degree while assisting in the instruction and supervision of law students involved in the Jacob Burns Community Legal Clinics.
Contact Information

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Admissions Information

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LLM and SJD Admissions
Graduate Programs Office
202.994.0715
For U.S. law school graduates: grad@law.gwu.edu
For non-U.S. law school graduates: igpo@law.gwu.edu

www.law.gwu.edu/gwl/clinics

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