

Public Interest Law Loan Forgiveness Fund

The Ideal of Public Service and the Reality of Bills to Pay

All of the USC School of Law graduates will have the opportunity to make the world a better place through the practice of law. Those who want to focus on this goal by practicing public interest law face the twin obstacles of the high cost of legal education and the lower salaries of public interest law positions. The Public Interest Law Loan Forgiveness Fund (PILLFF) is an economic helping hand for graduates practicing public interest law.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Does the job I am doing count as employment in the field of public interest law?

A. If you are doing legal work, if the job requires the Juris Doctorate degree, and if your employer is a tax-exempt organization or government entity of South Carolina or its political subdivision, then your job qualifies, unless it is a judicial clerkship.

Q. Do I have to be a member of the SC Bar?

A. Yes

Q. Suppose I want to move out of the public interest field after a year or two. What happens to the award?

A. You must agree to remain employed in the public interest field for two years after your initial assistance and for one year after any subsequent assistance. If you don't follow through, you may be required to repay all or some of the award.

Q. Does it matter how much income I'll have from my job and other sources?

A. Yes, all source of income are taken into account and evaluated along with debt burden in making award determinations

Q. Does the selection committee take into consideration my ability to receive loan forgiveness from other sources?

A. Yes, the selection committee will take this into consideration. If you choose not to apply for loan forgiveness from either your employer, the Federal government or the state, you should carefully explain your reasons on the application. We are aware that in some circumstances you may not be eligible or it may not be to your advantage to accept these programs

Q. Am I guaranteed PILLFF assistance if I meet all of the qualifications?

A. Unfortunately no. Because funds are limited, the PILLFF Committee will have to

Q. How much will I receive?

A. It depends on many factors including the number of applicants and the amount available to distribute

Q. How do I apply?

A. Read the Rules, complete and application and return by the deadline

Q. How often does the PILLFF Committee distribute funds?

A. At this time, once a year.

Q. How do I get an applications?

A. The Application and Rules are available on the USC School of Law Homepage at: www.sc.law/loanforgiveness
or contact the USC School of Law Pro Bono Program at 803-777-3405

Q. What is the deadline for the next award cycle?

A. June 30th of each year is the deadline for receipt of applications. Applications may be submitted at any time prior to June 30th but may require updated information.

Q Where do I send the application and required documentation?

A. Mail to: Pamela Robinson
USC School of Law
Main and Green Street
Columbia, SC 29208

Q. Who do I contact if I have questions?

A. Contact Pamela Robinson at 803-777-3405 or Robinspd@law.sc.edu