

# UIC JOHN MARSHALL LAW SCHOOL



## Student Professional Development Fund Guidelines

### Purpose

The Student Professional Development Fund (PDF) has been established to defray a portion of travel costs and other expenses incurred by UIC John Marshall Law School students who participate in professional activities that are not otherwise funded by the law school.

### Funding Priorities

Although a student may submit an application for a variety of **legal or law-related professional development** activities, the PDF will give priority to the following:

1. Students serving on the planning committee for academic or professional conferences.
2. Students engaging in pro bono or leadership projects.
3. Students whose professional development activity directly relates to a board position on a UIC John Marshall Endorsed Student Organization (ESO).
4. Students delivering papers or presentations at academic or professional conferences. If the Fund is used to support a paper or presentation, the paper or presentation should indicate that funding was provided by the Law School.
5. Students interviewing for federal judicial clerkships or state-level supreme court judicial clerkships when the interview is more than 150 miles from campus.

Please note that allocations for advocacy-team travel, costs associated with bar study, meal-only events, or costs associated with securing or performing a job or internship (other than as noted in #5 above), will not be made from the PDF.

### Eligibility

A student must be registered at the law school during the semester the funds were or are to be used. Summer registration is not required if the student was registered for the prior spring semester and has not yet graduated. At the time of application and at the time when funds are used, the student must be in good academic standing and not on probation, and must not be subject to any Honor Code or Student Code of Professional Conduct investigation or discipline.

### Funding Limits and Criteria

The PDF was not established to cover the entire cost of a student's activity. In most cases, awards will be limited to \$500 or up to one-half of the total reimbursable trip costs as permitted by law school policy, whichever is higher, although awards may be larger or smaller depending on the number of applications received and other factors, including the quality of the student's application, academic record, financial need, and the merit of the proposed activity. A student may submit multiple applications in a single year, although a student typically will receive funding only once a year. In no circumstance may a student receive more than \$1,500 from the PDF in a single fiscal year.

Awards from the PDF are issued as reimbursements following the professional development activity. Reimbursable expenses may include conference fees, training materials, travel and housing expenses, and/or presentation supplies. No membership fees, personal expenses, food, or beverages will be covered. Student awardees are responsible for collecting and submitting all pertinent receipts and required documents; failure to do so within the timelines stated in the award letter will result in a forfeiture of the award.

### **Selection Process**

Applications will be reviewed by a Committee that will include the following (substitutions or additions may be made by the Dean):

- Assistant Dean for Student Life & Leadership, Chair
- Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Director, Student Activities & Leadership Development
- Director, Career Services Office
- Student Life Coordinator
- One SBA Officer

The Committee will make recommendations to the Dean, who will make the award decisions. The Committee may make its recommendations based solely on the applications; it may also choose to interview any or all applicants, and to request additional materials from applicants. The Dean may also seek supplemental information about the applications. The Committee will announce awards within 30 days of each application deadline.

### **Award Administration**

The award will be in the form of a reimbursement of expenses and pursuant to law school travel policies and procedures. Any other arrangement must be approved, in writing, by the Dean. Once awarded, the student may not change the project for which an award was made. Students who are granted a PDF award must submit a reimbursement request within one month of the conclusion of the professional development activity, but no later than the end of the fiscal year for events that take place in the summer.

## Application Instructions

- Students must complete an online application:  
[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=1OX3NqtyR0mMNIAKnsOy6C12\\_JRrrTpLnaL0xEkGU4BURFlaOTVaTFQ5WU1JS0JJQzZGS0I5RkcxUS4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=1OX3NqtyR0mMNIAKnsOy6C12_JRrrTpLnaL0xEkGU4BURFlaOTVaTFQ5WU1JS0JJQzZGS0I5RkcxUS4u).  
The application will require submission of professional activity information, budget information, and a short personal statement about how the activity is likely to impact the student's professional development.
- Group applications are not permitted. Each student seeking funding must submit her or his own application, including a unique personal statement.
- The PDF Committee will consider applications three times per year:
  - The fall application deadline is September 15;
  - The spring application deadline is February 15;
  - The summer application deadline is June 15.

The project or trip that is the subject of the application need not be limited to the semester in which the student applies, but must take place within the fiscal year. For example, a student could apply by September 15 for a conference that takes place in April of the same academic year; a student could also apply by June 15 for a conference that took place in November of the same academic year.

Students who will be unable to participate in a professional development activity without financial assistance from the Professional Development Fund should apply by the earliest possible application deadline so information on a potential award is known prior to registration for the event. Students who are applying for funding for an activity that has already transpired must have access to all of the required documentation listed below, including receipts and a photo taken at the professional activity.

- Students who are granted a PDF award must submit a reimbursement request within one month of the conclusion of the professional activity, but no later than the end of the fiscal year. Electronic submission of reimbursement requests is preferred. The reimbursement request must include all four of the following items:
  - Receipts totaling or exceeding the amount of the award.
  - A 2-3 page reflection essay. For the essay, **identify and describe one** important concept, research finding, theory, or idea that you learned at the professional activity. **Reflect** on why this idea is important to your field of study or your personal learning. Finally, **apply** this idea to your own life by exploring how it will help you become a practice ready lawyer or a more innovative professional. Your essay may be used for Law School publicity, so use graduate-level writing and consider a professional audience.

- A brief description of someone you met at the professional activity and how she or he will/might be able to assist you in your professional development. (E.g., a session presenter, someone you networked with at a reception, someone who asked questions about your presentation or made recommendations about future career paths.)
- A photo of yourself at the professional activity. Consider posing with a keynote speaker, by an entrance banner, or holding a program from the activity. Photographs may be used in Law School presentations or publications.