

Youth Justice Education Experiential Offerings

Clinics

The Youth Justice Education Clinic (“YJEC”) is a great opportunity for students interested in honing key civil litigation skills while advocating to obtain necessary educational rights and services for vulnerable children involved in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. YJEC offers two semesters of clinical experience, each semester includes a 2-unit course and a 2-unit clinic. Students must sign up for the full year to minimize the disruption for our clients in changing advocates. YJEC students will attend a 2-day orientation in August.

YJEC receives cases through referrals from the Center for Juvenile Law and Policy’s Juvenile Justice Clinic and from outside agencies. While enrolled in the courses and clinics described below, each YJEC student will work on multiple cases and be responsible for all aspects of each client’s education case, including client interviewing, counseling, and representing each client in applicable proceedings. In order to provide the most well-rounded and client-centered advocacy, YJEC also addresses client issues beyond special education needs, including the following: access to Regional Center services under the Lanterman Act, discrimination under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act, and access to education for foster, homeless, and probation youth under California and Federal law.

YJEC Special Education Advocacy Clinic

In the fall, YJEC students enroll in the YJEC Special Education Advocacy Clinic and Course, which focuses on teaching law students a knowledge base in special education law (Federal and California) and developing lawyering skills required to represent clients in school-based advocacy such as in Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) meetings. Students learn how to identify unaddressed special education needs from school records, request special education assessments, and advocate at IEP meetings. The course also focuses on training students on interviewing clients, counseling clients, negotiating with opposing parties, and other essential skills. This clinic and course fulfill the pro bono and experiential requirements for graduation.

YJEC Due Process and Litigation Clinic

In the spring, YJEC students enroll in the YJEC Due Process and Litigation Clinic and Course, which focuses on filing complaints against school districts to obtain remedies for YJEC clients who have experienced legal violations. YJEC students enrolled in the Due Process and Litigation Clinic may work on drafting and filing complaints with the California Department of Education or the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, which can provide individual relief for YJEC clients and address larger systemic problems. Students may also draft and file special education due process complaints and represent their clients at mediation or at a due process hearing before the Office of Administrative Hearings (“OAH”). Lastly, students enrolled in the YJEC Due Process and Litigation Clinic have an opportunity

for exposure to any ongoing YJEC litigation matters. YJEC students will learn the substantive law needed to complete their work, and will receive training in due process and litigation best practices and strategy. This clinic and course fulfill the pro bono and experiential requirements for graduation.

Requirements

Because many YJEC clients are served by both YJEC and the Juvenile Justice Clinics, ongoing teamwork and consultation is essential. Each YJEC student will also be required to meet weekly with the YJEC supervising attorney to review the YJEC student's work and ensure case development. YJEC students must be able to travel independently to meet with clients, investigate their cases, and attend applicable proceedings.

Successful YJEC students have an interest in youth advocacy, strong communication skills, and an interest in civil litigation. YJEC students must demonstrate the maturity to assume responsibility for representing children.

2023-2024 Application Information

During the spring recruitment period, interested students must submit an application for the YJEC Special Education Advocacy Clinic and YJEC Due Process and Litigation Clinic. To apply, students must submit a resumé and transcript, through their LLS Symplicity accounts (job postings under "clinics or practica"). Successful applicants will then interview with YJEC director Megan Stanton-Trehan, YJEC supervising staff attorney Vivian Wong, and YJEC social worker Cindy Galvan for final selection. Priority for enrollment will be given to students who have taken Education Law.

Practica

YJEC Education Policy Practicum

In the spring semester, students can also apply to the YJEC Education Policy Practicum concurrently with the YJEC Due Process and Litigation Clinic or as a stand-alone experiential course. The YJEC Education Policy Practicum seeks to expose law students to issues in education policy at the local, state, and national levels. Law students learn the major education policy issues affecting students, families, and schools in K-12 education today, like equity in funding and outcomes, accountability systems, special education and rights for students with disabilities, the needs of English Language Learner/Emergent Bilingual students, and addressing school discipline through restorative justice practices. The YJEC Education Policy Practicum focuses on the rights and needs of youth in the foster or juvenile justice systems, drawing on the experience and expertise of YJEC staff. Law students will attend local policy meetings and make public comment at a school board meeting, legislative hearing, or Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting. Students will engage in research and policy development, with their work culminating in a research paper and a policy project. This 2-unit



course fulfills the pro bono and experiential requirements for graduation OR the writing requirement for graduation. Interested students must submit a resume through LLS Symplicity.