

# **EXTERNSHIP PROPOSAL**

## **NEVADA LEGAL SERVICES, INC.**

October 1, 2001

### I. OVERVIEW

This semester-long externship will place students in the offices of Nevada Legal Services (NLS), a Nevada non-profit corporation, which provides civil legal assistance to low-income Nevadans throughout the state. Although NLS would look to future placements in its Reno and Carson City Offices, the initial externships will be located at the firm's Las Vegas Office. The proposed externships will teach students substantive law and lawyering skills which will be valuable in future practice. Just as importantly, the experience will engender a sense of community responsibility which will ultimately shape the future practice of law in the Las Vegas community and elsewhere.

The externships will deal with all aspects of civil practice. The students will interview prospective clients, conduct factual and legal research, write legal memoranda and pleadings, develop case strategies and prepare and conduct administrative and court hearings. There will be careful supervision by the Directing Attorneys of the NLS offices who offer scores of years of law practice.

The substantive law priorities of NLS are:

- 1) Employment Law - Unemployment Compensation, Worker's Compensation, Fair Labor Standards Act, federal taxation and contracts;
- 2) Public Benefits Law - Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Food Stamps and Medicaid/Medicare;
- 3) Housing Law - Public Housing and private landlord/tenant; and
- 4) Immigration Law - Self-petitioning by battered spouses and children, adjustment of status, selected deportation, work authorization and naturalization..

NLS anticipates fashioning externships from any one or combination of these areas of law. It should be noted that much of the practical work undertaken in these priorities involves administrative law which affords law students increased opportunities to appear before agency hearing tribunals, an ever growing part of civil legal practice.

## II. ACADEMIC COMPONENT

A. Classes - Under the direction and supervision of the NLS Directing Attorneys, the externs will participate in classroom work for two hours each week. While the classes will teach the substantive law in which the students will engage, such as housing or public benefits, the main focus of the classes will be lawyering skills which the externs will apply directly in practice. These anticipated curriculum will include:

- 1) Client Interviewing;
- 2) Case Strategizing;
- 3) Factual Development;
- 4) Pleading Preparation;
- 5) Memorandum Preparation;
- 6) Witness Preparation;
- 7) Negotiations;
- 8) Hearing Procedures;
- 9) Case Presentation; and
- 10) Appellate Analysis.

In addition, students will attend weekly seminars conducted by the Externship Director along with students engaged in other non-judicial externship placements. This course component will focus on professional ethics, writing skills, time management, career choices, reflective lawyering and limited lawyering skills training.

B. Journals - The externs will maintain a weekly journal and timesheet, which they will submit to the Externship Director. The log should include a description of the student's work, a record of the hours worked and a discussion of substantive and procedural legal issues, professional responsibility issues and lawyering skills and values as they arise in the context of the field work.

C. Work File - The externs will maintain a file of all written work submitted to the NLS Directing Attorneys which will, in turn, be submitted to the Externship Director. The Externship Director will protect all confidential client information.

D. Paper - At the end of the externship, the externs will write a self-evaluation or other paper as directed by the Externship Director. The paper may not be used to satisfy the Advanced Legal Writing requirement. The length of the paper will be determined by the Externship Director depending on the credits to be awarded.

### III. GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Eligible Students - Students must have completed at least 45 hours of academic work, including all first year courses and be in good academic standing. Professional Responsibility is a pre or co-requisite. All student participation is subject to an interview with NLS.

B. Field Placement Requirements - NLS is designing this program primarily for 6 to 7 credits requiring at least 22 ½ hours per week (3 full working days of 7 ½ hours each) in the fall and spring semesters and 37 ½ hours per week (5 full working days) for the summer term (264 hours for 6 credits). The Externship Director, in consultation with the NLS Directing Attorneys, must approve the number of credits for each student placement. Students will not be required to be on-site during the exam period.

C. Supervision - The Directing Attorney of the specific NLS Office will be the primary “Field Supervisor”. Field Supervisors will confer with the Externship Director on a regular basis and provide evaluations of each extern. Field Supervisors will participate in training from time to time and, upon invitation, may receive adjunct faculty status upon approval of the faculty. The Externship Director will not provide direct case supervision due to the potential of a conflict of interest.

### IV. STUDENT PRACTICE CERTIFICATION

A. Court Appearances - Externs may be certified under Nevada Supreme Court Rule 49.5 as deemed appropriate by both the NLS Field Supervisor and the Externship Director.

B. Administrative Hearing Appearances - Externs will be able to appear in administrative hearings as permitted by the agencies involved. Such appearances will be determined by the NLS Field Supervisor and the Externship Director.

### V. EVALUATION

A. NLS Field Supervisors will evaluate the work of each student by:

- 1) Conferring regularly with the student and Externship Director throughout the placement;
- 2) Reviewing and observing the student’s work and conducting feedback sessions with the student; and

3) Evaluating the student's overall work performance at mid-semester and at the end of the placement.

B. The Externship Director will evaluate each student's work by:

1) Conferring regularly with the NLS Field Supervisor;

2) Reading and responding to the student's daily logs;

3) Conducting at least one individual conference with the extern during the placement and at the end of the placement;

4) Conducting at least one site visit;

5) Reviewing the student's written work contained in the student's work file;

6) Reviewing the student's require paper; and

7) Evaluating the student's participation in the classroom component of the externship.