

2024 ILF International Fellows Program

The International Legal Foundation (ILF) is seeking lawyers with extensive criminal defense experience and legal aid institutional know-how to join its Natalie Rea International Fellows program and provide training and capacity building to local lawyers and legal aid providers in developing and transitional legal systems through day-to-day, case-by-case mentoring. In addition to defense-side expertise, lawyers with specializations or significant experience in youth justice, gender justice, civil and administrative legal aid, refugee and migrant issues, Sharia Law or progressive prosecution are strongly encouraged to apply.

Fellow positions are based on program need and funding availability. We are currently recruiting for in-country opportunities in Kenya, Myanmar, and Tunisia. We anticipate having future opportunities in Georgia and Nepal. Remote Fellow opportunities also exist to mentor our lawyers and work with our teams in Palestine (West Bank) and Afghanistan, but some relevant cultural or legal experience is required in order to successfully facilitate these remote positions.

The ILF's International Fellows program provides criminal justice professionals with the opportunity to have a direct and positive impact on their fellow lawyers abroad and in the process contribute to the development of justice systems around the world. Fellow positions are volunteer/pro bono positions, but transportation, housing and a small monthly stipend will be provided based on a minimum weekly hour commitment and fellowship duration.

Fellows are the backbone of the ILF's success in its program countries. Since 2001, over 100 Fellows from around the world have helped transform the role of local lawyers in Afghanistan, Tunisia, Palestine, Nepal, and Myanmar from passive participants in the criminal justice system to proactive advocates for their clients. As a direct result of these pro bono placements, clients languishing in detention have been released and many innocent accused have been acquitted. Fellows have helped local lawyers develop foundational defense skills and techniques, challenge unlawful policies and practices, and push litigation strategies that have improved the justice systems in all of the countries in which the ILF works. Fellows with managerial experience have supported the introduction of systems and procedures in ILF offices that facilitate quality services to clients and move towards local independence.

The need for talented lawyers to participate in the ILF's Fellows program is great and ever critical given the need to develop innovative strategies to address democratic backsliding and the criminalization of poverty and status around the world.

Program Details:

ILF staff work with Fellows prior to the start of their arrival in-country to prepare them on relevant law, practice and country context, as well as connecting new Fellows with prior Fellows and local staff. On the ground, Fellows will start immediately to work up cases with the lawyers, conduct legal discussions, and shadow lawyers at their court appearances. The mentoring also includes assisting lawyers as they interview clients, conduct investigations, write motions, prepare witness examinations, and practice oral arguments. In general, the ILF seeks to empower and build the capacity of local legal service providers by providing them with the skills and ability to deliver client-centered, rights-based, comprehensive and holistic representation to all clients.

International Fellows will also help plan and execute trainings with lawyers, paralegals, members of the local bar association and other justice sector stakeholders. They may also participate in meetings with government officials, other NGOs, and donors involved in rule of law projects, as representatives of the ILF. Fellows should be willing to work to develop the skills and capacity of managerial staff and other support staff and assist in developing supervision and office practices that improve operations and quality of legal representation. Through this process, International Fellows make pivotal, concrete contributions to the rule of law and legal aid reform.

Fellows work and live abroad for approximately 90 days, and will likely travel between several offices within a country over the course of their tenure. Interested candidates may suggest a preference for placement, though ultimately placements are dependent on current programming needs, and developmental stage of the relevant office.

Opportunities are ongoing, and applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Qualifications:

- 5+ years of experience practicing criminal defense and providing quality legal representation to indigent accused
- Expertise in youth justice, gender justice, civil and administrative legal aid, refugee and migrant issues, Sharia Law or progressive prosecution a plus
- Applied litigation skills to address systemic injustices or widespread violations of rights
- Experience training, supervising, or mentoring lawyers
- Experience managing a legal aid office or public defender training department desirable
- Arabic, Burmese, Dari, Georgian, Nepali or French language skills a strong plus

Local language skills are not required but would be an asset.

How to Apply or for more information:

If interested or for more information, please contact us at fellows@theilf.org. Applicants should send a thoughtful cover letter and resume. Qualified candidates will be contacted for interview.

About the ILF

Every day, millions of people are languishing in jails around the world because they cannot afford a defense lawyer. The ILF is a non-profit organization founded to address this global crisis in access to justice. For nearly two decades, the ILF has fought to guarantee high-quality legal representation for everyone arrested or detained. Around the world, we provide quality criminal defense services and build sustainable, effective legal aid institutions. Currently, we provide direct legal services in Afghanistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Palestine and Tunisia and offer technical assistance worldwide. For more information, visit www.theilf.org.