

“Social justice should be the underlying goal of all humanity.”

-Alan V. Lowenstein, Institute Founder



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do social justice.

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice Seeks Applicants for Paid Summer and Term Internships

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice seeks dedicated, highly qualified law and/or graduate students for summer and term internships. Term internships are part-time. Please submit inquiries or applications (comprised of a cover letter, resume, transcript (official or unofficial), three references, and a writing sample) to recruitment@njisj.org. Please indicate if you want to intern for course credit.

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice Legal Program

Established in 1999 by Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein, the Institute's cutting-edge racial and social justice advocacy seeks to empower people of color by building reparative systems that create wealth, transform justice and harness democratic power—from the ground up—in New Jersey.

Known for our dynamic and independent advocacy aimed at toppling load-bearing walls of structural inequality to create just, vibrant and healthy communities, we are committed to exposing and repairing the cracks of structural racism in our foundation that erupt into earthquakes in communities of color.

The Institute advocates for systemic reform that is at once transformative, achievable in the state and replicable in communities across the nation.

The Institute's programmatic focus rests upon three interconnected pillars:

1. Economic Justice
2. Criminal Justice Reform
3. Democracy and Justice

Internship Overview

Students interning with the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice will work across our three pillars of work (economic justice, criminal justice reform, and democracy and justice), with close supervision and guidance from Institute attorneys and staff. Detailed descriptions of each of these pillars follow below. Most of the students' work will focus on research, writing, and policy analysis, with the opportunity to assist with Institute legislative and policy advocacy, and the planning of Institute meetings, conferences, and community events (virtual and in-person, permitting public health guidance). This is a general but not comprehensive list of the opportunities of the internship as the Institute's work also encompasses the development of pilot legal and policy reform projects, public education and mobilization. All interns are eligible for an Institute-funded stipend. The Institute will provide necessary documentation so that interns may arrange for academic credit through their universities or for pro

bono hours for their law school or state bar association. Prior to the start of your internship, please notify the Human Resources department and the Programs team if you are seeking academic credit or pro bono hours, so we may plan accordingly. All of our internships require a minimum commitment of 10 weeks, and up to 12 weeks, depending on each intern's availability. We generally only accept law school and graduate students for our internship program but may consider undergraduates on a case-by-case basis.

Economic Justice

New Jersey has one of the largest and most stark racial wealth gaps in the nation. Under our economic justice pillar, the Institute works to ensure economic justice for residents in our divested, urban communities through expansion of access to (1) quality employment opportunities that promote long-term security, (2) housing in safe and healthy neighborhoods, and (3) wealth development opportunities, so that all people can realize their full potential. Closing the racial wealth gap in New Jersey is at the core of our current work as our economic justice initiatives identify and promote meaningful policies that will close the staggering wealth disparities in our state. In addition, the initiative integrates a reparative justice framework into its work, directly harnessing our understanding that discriminatory policies and exclusion for people of color have been central to the creation of the economic inequalities that we see today. From the periods of slavery to redlining to predatory lending that disproportionately targeted Black and Brown people during the Great Recession and continues today, our economic and social policies have erected barriers to financial opportunity for people of color. Therefore, our work aims to rebuild our social and policy systems with intentionality, informed by research evidence to redress past and current harms, while expanding future opportunities for all, particularly Black communities and other communities of color. Through our model of research and analysis, the production of reports and policy briefs, and advocacy for policy and legal change, our work unlocks opportunity, promotes economic mobility, and dismantles structural and racial inequality in New Jersey.

Criminal Justice Reform

Through our criminal justice reform pillar, the Institute is working to create a rational and effective criminal justice system that (1) strengthens communities by treating people, particularly communities of color and the most vulnerable among us, fairly and equitably; (2) provides alternatives to incarceration, particularly for youth; (3) protects constitutional rights; (4) ensures racial equality; and (5) transforming policing and public safety. The Institute is a member of the Independent Monitoring Team overseeing reforms to the Newark Police Department in response to a federal consent decree entered into between the Department of Justice and the City of Newark. Through this work, the Institute monitors reforms concerning community policing and bias-free policing while also serving as the primary community liaison between the monitoring process and the Newark community. Even as we implement reforms to create accountable policing, the Institute is simultaneously rethinking the entire institution of policing and is working toward reducing law enforcement's footprint in our communities, with a focus on what community members need to feel – and be – safe and protected. The Institute is also a leader in youth justice reform in New Jersey, spearheading the 150 Years is Enough Campaign, a statewide coalition that seeks to ensure fair outcomes for youth involved in the justice system. The campaign employs a multi-pronged approach that aims to (1) promote racial equality and fair treatment for all youth at all points of contact with the justice system; (2) end youth incarceration; and (3) invest funds into community-oriented alternatives to incarceration.

Democracy and Justice

Our democracy and justice pillar seeks to make the promise of democracy real in New Jersey by expanding the right to vote, reducing barriers to participation, and ensuring that communities of color are afforded equal representation in the redistricting process. The Institute lead a campaign to restore voting rights to all people in New Jersey with a criminal conviction. The Institute also leads efforts to reduce barriers to participation, including championing early in-person voting, same day registration and expanded automatic

voter registration. The Institute also engaged with the 2021 legislative and congressional redistricting processes to ensure racial equity and public participation.

Interning in Newark

For individuals who are looking to gain substantive skills and develop their professional networks while advancing social justice, Newark is a great place to be. It is less than 30 minutes by train from Manhattan, Hoboken, Jersey City, and Montclair. Newark itself is galvanized by its young and dynamic local leadership and boasts an admirable and effective spirit of collaboration among nonprofit organizations, law firms, and local government officials. The Summer Intern Program at the Institute is hybrid, consisting of 2 days in-office and 3 days of remote work. Summer interns will also have the opportunity to attend in-person events over the course of their time at the Institute.

The NJISJ is an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage applications from all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, and veteran status.