2016 Ella Baker Summer Internship Program Announcement

The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) is a non-profit legal and educational organization dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Founded in 1966 by attorneys who represented civil rights movements in the South, CCR is committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change. In 2012, CCR launched the Bertha Justice Institute (BJI) to deepen our work training the next generation of “people’s lawyers.” The BJI houses all of CCR’s training initiatives including: post-graduate fellowships, internships, conferences, CLEs, leadership institutes and movement strategy sessions.

THE ELLA BAKER PROGRAM

CCR created the Ella Baker Summer Internship Program in 1987 to honor the legacy of Ella Baker, a hero of the civil rights movement, and to train the next generation of social justice lawyers. Our program uses a combination of theory and practice to train talented and committed law students on how to work alongside social movements, community organizations, and impacted individuals. Through our program, interns gain practical litigation experience and sharpen their theoretical understanding of the relationship between social change, organizing and lawyering.

The Ella Baker Program is sponsored by the Bertha Foundation which hosts law students and emerging lawyers at legal organizations across the world. As a result, Ella Baker Interns are connected to a global community of social justice law students and lawyers through the Bertha Legal Network.

INTERN ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Interns work under the direct supervision of attorneys and are given high-quality assignments and periodic feedback. Interns also participate in weekly educational seminars. Topics range from litigation skills, theories of social change, and guest lectures by noted local organizers & activists. Interns’ responsibilities may include: legal research & writing for domestic and international litigation, factual investigation, client & witness interviews, policy/legislative research, and participation in client and community meetings. In addition, students are provided opportunities to attend court proceedings, community and client meetings, view films about social justice issues, and attend other law related panels and events.

INTERNSHIP SITES

Students in the Ella Baker program are hosted at four sites. Each site offers students the opportunity to work at a legal organization where collaboration with social movements and community organizations is emphasized. CCR has stitched these sites together in a single program to expose students to the unique opportunities and challenges of social justice lawyering in different cities, institutions with unique and varying political histories and contexts. In 2014, students will be placed at one of the following sites:

1) New York City, NY (12-14 Interns)
Ella Baker interns work at the Center for Constitutional Rights and are supervised by CCR’s attorneys. Students gain experience working on cases in CCR’s three docket areas: Government Misconduct/Racial Justice, Guantanamo Global Justice Initiative and International Human Rights. Students conduct legal research and writing, factual investigation, background research and legislative/policy advocacy. In the past, students have worked on cases involving solitary confinement, discriminatory policing practices, social and economic rights, immigrants’ rights, U.S. detention and targeted killing practices, universal jurisdiction over international
human rights abuses, gender and LGBTI justice domestically and internationally. Students also have the opportunity to work with CCR’s Education and Outreach Department on various advocacy campaigns. Students at this site experience the unique opportunities and challenges of doing social justice lawyering at a national organization.

2) New Orleans, Louisiana (4-6 Interns)
Ella Baker interns work in the legal department for the New Orleans Workers’ Center for Racial Justice and the National Guestworker Alliance. The legal department provides strategic legal advice and representation to three membership groups and their members: three grassroots membership organizations: the Congress of Day Laborers, Stand With Dignity, and the National Guestworker Alliance. Legal work focuses on forcing employers and federal, state, and local agencies to comply with existing laws, to develop better law and policy in the vision of low income workers and communities, and to promote new forms of bargaining with employers, the state, and on global supply chains. Our current work includes federal impact litigation and law reform cases, strategic immigration and detention work, administrative advocacy, policy analysis and advocacy reports, and campaign research and support. Practice areas include workers’ rights, housing, civil rights, and immigration.

3) Miami, Florida (4-5 Interns)
Ella Baker interns work at the Community Justice Project, Inc. and are supervised by CJP attorneys. Community Justice Project believes lawyers create social change by supporting the campaigns of grassroots organizations directed by communities of color most affected by social injustice. Interns in Miami will work on a varied caseload, including litigation, campaign strategy, community outreach/education, direct representation, human rights advocacy and policy advocacy. Students’ work will relate to local campaigns led by client organizations including those to: combat police brutality and racial profiling; dismantle the school to prison pipeline; preserve low-income mobile home parks; confront “slumlords” in low-income housing; and improve working conditions for taxi-drivers. Students may also contribute to human rights advocacy related to racial discrimination and police violence in the context of the broader Movement for Black Lives. Among the organizations we represent are the Dream Defenders, Miami Workers Center, Power U Center for Social Change, and New Vision Taxi Drivers Association. Students at this site experience the unique opportunities and challenges of utilizing a community lawyering approach in one of the most economically unequal cities in the U.S.

4) Boston, Massachusetts (2-3 Interns)
Ella Baker interns in Boston work with the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), and are supervised by IJDH attorneys. IJDH and its Haiti-based affiliate, the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI), have over 17 years of demonstrated success enforcing Haitians’ human rights, in Haiti and abroad. IJDH works in four areas: 1) impact litigation that opens the doors of Haitian, international and U.S. courts to precedent-setting human rights cases; 2) documentation that provides public officials, human rights advocates and grassroots activists the reliable information they need to speak up for human rights in Haiti; 3) transnational grassroots advocacy that compels governments and powerful institutions in Haiti and abroad to respect Haitians’ human rights; and 4) systemic capacity building that develops a corps of Haitian human rights lawyers and advocates trained to fight for sustainable change in their country. Interns will likely work primarily on groundbreaking litigation and advocacy seeking accountability from the United Nations (UN) for introducing cholera to Haiti. This work is done in collaboration with the BAI, and interns may have an opportunity to travel to Haiti for 1-2 weeks to work directly with the attorneys and apprentices at BAI. Due to the dynamic and fast-paced nature of legal work in Haiti, interns must demonstrate language proficiency in French or Kreyol; however, students with proficiency in both languages are preferred.
PROGRAM DATES

The internship will begin on Monday June 6, 2016 and end on August 12, 2016. Interns are expected to work 40 hours per week for a minimum of ten weeks. All students will be asked to attend an Orientation and a Final Debrief in New York City. The location for the orientation/debrief are TBD. Housing will be provided for students selected to work at our non-NYC worksites for the orientation and final debrief session.

*Depending on your worksite location, the program end date may vary.*

INTERN QUALIFICATIONS

- First year or second year law student;
- Excellent legal research and oral/written communication skills
- Experience and/or a demonstrated commitment to social justice, organizing and/or social movements;
- Familiarity with issues surrounding of racial justice, gender justice, civil rights, international human rights, national security law
- Site specific requirements
  - Miami - Proficiency in Spanish a plus
  - Boston - Fluency in either Kreyol or French required (both are preferred)

COMPENSATION

Because we have limited resources, CCR strongly advises applicants to make every effort to secure their own summer funding. Possible sources include: your law school; local Bar Foundation; Equal Justice America, etc. However, if a student can demonstrate they diligently sought alternate funding but were ultimately unsuccessful, CCR will provide the student with a summer stipend.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

You must complete an online application at [www.ccrjustice.org/berthajusticeinstitute](http://www.ccrjustice.org/berthajusticeinstitute). In addition to completing the online form, you must upload the following documents as a single PDF in order for your application to be considered complete:

- Cover Letter (please be sure to include information about your site preferences)
- Resume
- Three references with contact information

Note: If granted an interview, applicants may also be asked to submit a short legal writing sample.

APPLICATION DEADLINES & TIMELINE

2L applicants must upload their applications by **October 23, 2015**. 1L applicants must upload their applications by **December 18, 2015**. After receipt of application materials, interviews will be offered to suitable applicants and may be conducted in person, over the phone, or via SKYPE. Selected interviews for 2L applicants will be held from November 9-20 and 2L students will be informed by mid-December if they were selected. Selected
interviews for 1L applicants will be held from January 18-27, 2016 and 1L students will be informed if they were selected in early February.

WHY IS THE INTERNSHIP NAMED AFTER ELLA BAKER?

Ella Baker devoted her adult life to social change. During the Depression she organized consumer cooperatives and wrote, taught, and lectured on consumer affairs for the Federal Works Progress Administration. In the 1940’s she traveled throughout the South, often alone in dangerous segregated areas, organizing chapters of the NAACP. She was an early executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, led by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ella Baker strongly believed that community members and young people could make significant changes in their lives. She said, "My theory is, strong people don’t need strong leaders." She seldom appeared on television or in the news stories, explaining that, "The kind of role that I tried to play was to pick up pieces or put together pieces out of which I hoped organization might come." Many consider her greatest influence to be with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). As an advisor to SNCC members who were generations younger, she rarely intervened, although her advice was often sought. She said, "Most of the youngsters had been trained to believe in or to follow adults if they could. I felt they ought to have a chance to learn to think things through and to make decisions."

The Center for Constitutional Rights is proud to honor her life and memory with the Ella Baker Summer Internship Program. It is our hope that many young people will be inspired to follow in her footsteps.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have specific questions about the Ella Baker Program, please contact:

   Mr. An-Tuan Williams
   Center for Constitutional Rights
   Bertha Justice Institute Associate
   awilliams@ccrjustice.org

For more general information about CCR and our partners, please visit:
- Center for Constitutional Rights: [www.ccrjustice.org](http://www.ccrjustice.org)
- New Orleans Workers Center for Racial Justice: [www.nowcrj.org](http://www.nowcrj.org)
- Community Justice Project of Florida Legal Services: [www.floridalegal.org/cjp](http://www.floridalegal.org/cjp)
- Bureau des Avocats Internationaux: [http://ijdh.org/who_we_are/bai](http://ijdh.org/who_we_are/bai)