

Clinical Programs & Externships



MAINE
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SCHOOL OF LAW
LAW

Train here. Go anywhere.

Train here. Go anywhere.

Clinical Programs & Externships

At the University of Maine School of Law, students don't just learn how to think like lawyers. They learn the skills they will need to work as lawyers. Experiential education has been at the heart of a Maine Law education since the school opened its doors in 1962. Through our legal aid clinics, externship placements, and practice-focused coursework, Maine Law's goal is for students to be "practice-ready" at graduation. This is achieved through a variety of programs and initiatives:

The Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic is one of the oldest law school clinical programs in the nation. Established in 1970, the Clinic provides free legal aid to more than 600 low-income individuals and families every year. It is a defining program of Maine Law, providing practical skills training for students and helping to fulfill the school's commitment to social justice. All legal services are provided by law students who are enrolled in one of four clinical courses: **General Practice, Prisoner Assistance, Juvenile Justice, and Refugee and Human Rights**. Students represent real clients in real cases. From intake meetings to filing court documents and standing up before a judge, student attorneys handle all aspects of client relations and case management, under the close supervision of faculty who are leaders in their fields.

In the Externship Program, students spend a semester working in a government

agency, nonprofit organization, or corporate in-house legal department for academic credit. Externship placements are available in virtually every practice area and geographic location, and they provide Maine Law students the opportunity to develop essential professional skills while making valuable contacts. Students have worked alongside seasoned lawyers in cities and towns throughout Maine, at the epicenter of government in Washington, D.C., and as far away as Alaska. In addition to Maine Law's general Externship Program, students can also participate in a **Judicial Externship**, which matches students with judges in federal and state courts.

In our classrooms, Maine Law professors employ problems-based methods and skills training techniques throughout the curriculum. Learning opportunities such as drafting and simulation exercises are staples within our courses, from the building block offerings of the first year through the upper level courses. We also continue to add new offerings, such as Health Care Law & Ethics, and eDiscovery, Cybersecurity & Forensics to meet the demands of a changing job market.

Please read on for more information about experiential learning at the University of Maine School of Law.

To learn more

For more information about the clinical programs, externships, or experiential learning opportunities at Maine Law, please contact us at lawadmissions@maine.edu or at 207-780-4341.

• **Online:** mainelaw.maine.edu/clinics-and-centers

• **Facebook:** [MaineLawCLAC](#) and [UMaineLaw](#)

• **Twitter:** [@UMaineLaw](#) and [@UMaineLawDean](#)

General Practice Clinic



Students in the General Practice Clinic regularly brief and argue cases before Maine's highest court.

“The Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic offers law students an unparalleled opportunity to experience real trial practice at its most involved level. Students, judges, and most important, people in desperate need of legal services, benefit from this terrific program.”

– *Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley, '80, Maine Supreme Judicial Court*

Each student in the General Practice Clinic maintains a caseload and represents several low-income individuals in various areas of the law.

Student attorneys interview and counsel clients, develop case theories; conduct discovery; negotiate with opposing parties; prepare cases for court; and conduct hearings; trials; and appeals. Students regularly brief and argue cases before the Maine Supreme Judicial Court and participate in hundreds of matters before Maine’s federal, state and probate courts, and administrative agencies.

Student attorneys take on a wide range of case types in the General Practice Clinic, from criminal defense to family law to civil rights. For criminal cases, students might represent clients charged with crimes such as drug trafficking, assault, or robbery. Within the realm of family law, students help solve disputes involving parental rights and responsibilities, divorce, guardianship, protective custody, and other matters. For civil matters, students have the opportunity to represent consumers, victims of financial exploitation, or a family trying to keep their home. The legal issues are very real, and they are not only life-changing for the clients but also for the graduates of our program.

Juvenile Justice Clinic

“The Juvenile Justice Clinic both forced and allowed me to leap outside of my comfort zone to learn the skills necessary to be a fierce and effective advocate and to truly understand the meaning of the phrases ‘due process under the law’ and ‘justice for all.’”

– Gabrielle Bérubé-Pierce, '14, *Disability Rights Maine*



Students in the Juvenile Justice Clinic work with at-risk youth on a number of levels. The primary focus is the direct representation of juveniles with pending delinquency matters in state courts. Student attorneys appear in Juvenile Court each week with their clients for proceedings such as arraignments, detention hearings, plea negotiations, and trials.

On behalf of their clients, student attorneys work closely with social service agencies, other legal aid providers, schools, and community representatives. The goal is to implement personalized, holistic solutions for each juvenile. Such programs are designed to keep young people out of jail and on track to completing their education.

The “Tuesdays at the Teen Center” project connects Maine Law students with homeless teenagers at the Preble Street Teen Center for legal advice, resource referral, and sometimes direct legal representation. Some students get involved in the development of juvenile justice policy at the state and national levels. For example, students recently have had success in challenging a policy of some county sheriff departments, which requires children to be handcuffed and shackled during transportation to and from juvenile court, and to remain in shackles during their court proceedings.

Prisoner Assistance Clinic



Martha Mickles photo

“I knew I had rights but had nobody to represent me. It felt so good to have a lawyer for this, and I’m really happy about this program. Thank you very much for helping me keep my sanity in this fight for my rights with my son. I am overwhelmed with joy.”

– *Client, Prisoner Assistance Clinic*

Prisoners have family, consumer, and other civil legal matters, many of which arise from the circumstances of their incarceration. These court matters have an impact not only on the lives of the prisoners, but on the lives of their sons, daughters, parents, and other family members who never committed a crime.

The Prisoner Assistance Clinic places an emphasis on interviewing, counseling, and providing “unbundled” legal services to prisoners. Student attorneys provide prisoners the information, forms, and advice they need to represent themselves in civil proceedings. For some matters in Southern Maine courts, the Clinic provides full representation when a prisoner is not able to advocate for himself or herself. The program is popular with students, corrections staff, and prisoners alike.

Clinic students travel to the Maine Correctional Center in Windham every week to meet with prisoners. Most of the matters involve family law, such as parental rights and child support, and probate-related proceedings, including guardianship. But students also assist prisoners with other legal matters, ranging from tort defense to bankruptcy. Students also help disabled prisoners apply for Social Security to ensure they receive assistance and medical treatment when they are released.

Refugee and Human Rights Clinic

“The stakes are incredibly high in almost all of our cases, and the students are saving lives.”

- *Clinical Professor Anna Welch, Refugee & Human Rights Clinic*



Nadra Edgerley photos

Elizabeth Valentine '14, Judi Irakoze, Clinical Professor Anna Welch, and Amber Attalla '16.

In the Refugee and Human Rights Clinic, student attorneys assist low-income immigrants through a broad range of cases and projects. The course targets a critical gap in access to justice – providing direct legal representation to immigrants and refugees seeking political asylum and similar protections under federal law, while training future attorneys on how to best serve the legal needs of immigrants.

Clients include, for example, asylum applicants who have fled human rights abuses in their home countries and are seeking refuge; immigrant survivors of domestic violence; and abandoned or abused children seeking legal status in the U.S. Under faculty supervision, student attorneys not only develop their substantive knowledge of immigration law and human rights laws and norms, but they also build core legal skills relevant to the general practice of law.

Clinical work for students includes: interviewing clients and witnesses and preparing testimony; working with interpreters and translators; conducting factual and legal investigation and marshaling of evidence; analyzing and presenting human rights documentation; developing case strategies; writing legal briefs; and appearing in administrative hearings. Students also have opportunities to collaborate with local nonprofit organizations and community groups on a range of advocacy projects.

Client Stories

Joey – Juvenile Justice Clinic

Portland District Court appointed us to represent Joey, who had been charged with multiple assaults and property crimes at his father’s home. Although the evidence against Joey was questionable, the Court did not want to send Joey back with his father because of the constant chaos and police involvement at that house. Prior to our appointment, the Court placed Joey with his mother, but the Court was not comfortable with him staying there, based on her prior history. She had been investigated by DHHS a few years earlier, and Joey had been removed because of substantiated allegations of neglect.

The student attorney did a thorough investigation of the two homes, and looked into potential relative placements throughout New England. After many interviews the student attorney found an aunt who lived out of state, but had a very close and positive relationship with Joey. The student convinced the mother and father to provide the aunt with a Power of Attorney that allowed her to enroll Joey into a new school, as well as take care of his medical care and other needs. Based on Joey’s great performance in his new school and new home, the Assistant District Attorney agreed to dismiss all of his pending charges.

Jane – Refugee and Human Rights Clinic

In her home country in the Middle East, Jane was fed up with government corruption and impunity for human rights abuses. She stood up, advocated for change, and participated in pro democracy demonstrations. As a result, Jane was detained, beaten, and received threats against her life.

Students at Maine Law’s Refugee and Human Rights Clinic took Jane’s case. They spent countless hours documenting their client’s experience. They worked with expert witnesses to document conditions in Jane’s home country; they conducted multiple interviews with Jane and various expert and lay witnesses; they marshaled domestic and international evidence; and they researched and drafted a legal brief arguing that Jane was eligible for and deserving of asylum.

The Department of Homeland Security approved Jane’s asylum application and that of her four young children. With this approval, Jane may remain in the U.S. without fear of being targeted for death because of her political beliefs.



An asylum petition can take hundreds of hours to prepare.

Protection from Abuse Program

“There is nothing like learning to think on your feet in a high stress, high stakes situation with fantastic guidance and support.”

- *Student, Protection from Abuse Program*



Most students enrolled in Clinic courses also participate in the Protection From Abuse Program, where they represent victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking who are seeking civil protection orders. Student attorneys attend at least one or two days of the protection from abuse (PFA) docket calls in Lewiston District Court. The Clinic’s work in this program is highly valued by the courts, as the PFA proceedings are often very contentious and emotional.

With the assistance of counsel, most cases are settled without a trial. Clinic student attorneys work closely with court advocates from Safe Voices, a non-profit organization based in Lewiston-Auburn. This collaboration ensures that every client not only receives legal representation in his or her protection order case, but also receives the necessary support and resources to escape violence in the long-term. Furthermore, every Clinic student receives training on the dynamics of domestic violence as well as the legal remedies available to victims.

Externship Program

Another important component of experiential education at Maine Law is the Externship Program, which allows students to work alongside seasoned attorneys and judges for academic credit. Depending on the placement, students in the Externship Program handle advocacy, policy, regulatory enforcement, and transactional legal matters, and may have the opportunity to practice as a student attorney. Students in the Externship Program receive valuable feedback and mentoring from their placement supervisors, who are experienced judges and lawyers, and also from the Externship Professor and Director.

Recent externship placements include:

CORPORATE – TD Bank N.A.; Cianbro Corporation; WEX; Foreside Financial Group, LLC.

CRIMINAL – Offices of the United States Attorney and the Maine Attorney General; Federal Defender’s Office; various District Attorney offices.

ENVIRONMENTAL – Conservation Law Foundation; Maine Attorney General’s Office – Natural Resources Division; Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

HEALTH – InterMed P.A.; Mercy Hospital; Maine Medical Association, Consumers for Affordable Health Care; Penobscot Community Health Care; MaineHealth.

JUDICIAL EXTERNSHIPS – State District Court; U.S. Bankruptcy Court; U.S. District Court (Maine); U.S. Court of Appeals (First Circuit).

PRIVACY – International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP); Elsevier; RxAnte; Maine Attorney General’s Office – Public Access Ombudsman.

PUBLIC INTEREST – Disability Rights Maine; Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP); Legal Services for the Elderly; Pine Tree Legal Assistance.

CREATE YOUR OWN EXTERNSHIP – In addition to regularly offered externship placements, students can also create their own externships at any number of courts, agencies, or institutions.

A Student’s Experience: Rose Cox



For Rose Cox, externships paved the way to a full-time job after she graduated from Maine Law in 2015. As a student, she worked as a legal extern for TD Bank, N.A. and InterMed, PA.

“The invaluable skills and relationships that I gained during my externships at Maine Law allowed me to start my career in Compliance, which perfectly blends my interests in both business and law.”

Following graduation, Rose was hired as a Corporate Compliance Manager at TD Bank.

Externship Program – Semester in Practice

“The time that I spent as an extern at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in D.C. was an invaluable experience. My supervisors and colleagues were more than willing to connect me to the networks and contacts they had accumulated throughout their many years in government service. I was also able to explore a new, exciting, and diverse city and meet other young, ambitious professionals.”

– *Marpheen Chann '17*



Marpheen Chann '17

Maine Law’s Semester in Practice Externship Program allows selected students the unique opportunity to spend an entire semester working alongside a seasoned attorney. This is a full-time externship, which provides 12-14 credits for the semester.

Washington, D.C.

Maine Law has a wealth of alumni who are living, working, or are retired in the Washington metropolitan area. Only Massachusetts and, of course, Maine itself boast a higher concentration of Maine Law graduates. This makes D.C. the perfect location for a Semester in Practice experience for our students. Students who are selected to participate in this program spend an entire semester working with a federal agency.

Recent Student-Created Semester in Practice Placements in D.C. Include:

- > Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
- > Department of Commerce
- > Internal Revenue Service
- > National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- > Office of National Drug Control Policy, the White House

Recent Student-Created Semester in Practice Placements Outside of D.C. Include:

- > City of Bangor Legal Department (ME)
- > Community Advocacy and Legal Centre (Ontario)
- > Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia
- > U.S. Committee for Refugees & Immigrants (NY)
- > U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s New York City Office of Regional Counsel

Go anywhere . . .



Adam Swanson '12

And our students do go everywhere. Here are just a few examples of the opportunities our recent graduates have had as a result of their clinic or externship experiences:

Kate Kolosowski-Gager, '12, works as a Patent Examiner at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). She completed an externship at the USPTO during the summer between her second and third years at Maine Law.

Katie Narbus, '14, was a student attorney in the Refugee and Human Rights Clinic. Following graduation, she worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia before becoming an asylum officer for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in Boston.

Kevin Decker, '14, was a student attorney in the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic. Following graduation he clerked for the Hon. William J. Kayatta for the First Circuit. He now works as an associate attorney at Bernstein Shur.

Adam Swanson '12 is an Aroostook County native who returned to Presque Isle after graduation to open Swanson Law, P.A. During his time at Maine Law, Adam was a judicial extern with the Hon. Keith Powers of the Portland District Court. He was also a student attorney at the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic.

He has this to say about his experience: "The Clinic faculty, Jim Burke, Chris Northrop, Deirdre Smith, and Tina Schneider, were particularly influential. After practicing at the Clinic as a student attorney, I had the tools I needed to open my office. At Maine Law's Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic, I met with clients, negotiated with prosecutors, and had multiple trials. Having this experience with the guidance of Maine Law's Clinic faculty was invaluable."



To learn more

For more information about clinical courses, externships, or experiential learning opportunities at the University of Maine School of Law, please contact us at lawadmissions@maine.edu or by phone at 207-780-4341.

- **Visit us online** at mainelaw.maine.edu
- **Facebook:** [MaineLawCLAC](#) and [UMaineLaw](#)
- **Twitter:** [@UMaineLaw](#) and [@UMaineLawDean](#)