

CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW

CUNY LAW CLINICS

At CUNY Law, every student spends a full semester or more practicing law full-time. That's because transformation calls for more than lectures, readings, and hypotheticals.

It's experience that changes everything.

CUNY Law was founded to train practice-ready public interest lawyers that redefine who the profession serves, represents, and includes. Our students, alongside faculty and staff, bring a shared commitment to justice and distinct lived experiences, perspectives, and purpose. That collective knowledge shapes every clinic: how we advocate, who we partner with, and the strategies we pursue.

It's a purpose that continues to shape a clinical program consistently ranked among the best in the nation—one that evolves with movements, pushes legal boundaries, and creates new models for justice.

Here, experience is not only individual, it's collective: a culmination of what we each bring to the work and a curriculum built to prepare you practically, analytically, and relationally to practice law in service of human needs.

In classrooms, courtrooms, and community spaces, we learn from one another, cultivating the kind of lawyers the profession urgently needs.

That's what sets our graduates apart.

And it's why we believe experience changes everything.

Our students emerge with more than just legal expertise—they graduate having done the real, day-to-day work of social justice lawyering.

What you'll experience in our clinics

Create legal blueprints for economic self-determination

08 Community & Economic Development Clinic IH · E
Full-time Day: 12 credits • Part-time Evening: 10 credits

Fight surveillance and profiling before the U.S Supreme Court

10 Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility Clinic IH · 2S
Full-time Day: 16 credits

Secure clemency and challenge solitary confinement in NY's highest court

12 Defenders Clinic IH · E
Full-time Day: 12 credits • Part-time Evening: 10 credits

Advance autonomy, access, and justice for disabled New Yorkers

14 Disability Rights and Social Justice Clinic IH
Full-time Day: 12 credits

Litigate landmark federal civil rights cases alongside movement lawyers

16 Equality & Justice In-House & Practice Clinic IH · PC
Full-time Day: 12 credits

Fight family separation in a system that criminalizes poverty

18 Family Law In-House & Practice Clinic IH · PC
Full-time Day: 12 credits

Set new gender justice precedents in the U.S. and at the ICC

20 Human Rights & Gender Justice Clinic IH · 2S
Full-time Day: 16 credits

Defend migration as a fundamental human right

22 Immigrant & Non-Citizen Rights Clinic IH · E · 2S
Full-time Day: 16 credits • Part-time Evening: 10 credits

Turn conflict into resolution—without stepping into court

24 Mediation Clinic IH · E
Full-time Day: 12 credits • Part-time Evening: 10 credits

From the Southern border to the Bronx, we fought the deportation machine, challenged gang databases, and pushed back on surveillance and detention.

We defend migration as a human right.

We filed briefs on behalf of Muslim communities surveilled under the guise of security and won in a unanimous decision that holds the government accountable.

We bring movement lawyering to the Supreme Court.

We set international precedent documenting gender-based persecution, defending bodily autonomy, and advancing the recognition of violence against women and LGBTQIA+ people as crimes against humanity.

We redefine gender justice on the world stage.

EXPERIENCE CHANGES EVERYTHING

We value what our students already know.

Students bring skills forged in community: organizing tenant meetings, translating for families navigating systems, and standing in solidarity at protests. In clinic, those experiences sharpen legal instincts and build trust with clients and partners alike.

We challenge the criminalization of poverty and care.

From public benefits denials to family separation, we defended the right to raise children without state surveillance and fought to make education a path to justice, not a privilege.

We reimagine criminal legal defense.

We take on clemency sentencing and prison conditions. Our fights for individual justice and collective reforms have led to successful outcomes across courts, prisons, and policy.

BUILD COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE INTO ECONOMIC POWER

Legally form, structure, and support worker-owned-and-operated cooperatives and community land trusts

Provide policy support for partner campaigns on issues such as marijuana justice or reparations

Provide litigation support to tenants seeking essential repairs and an end to landlord harassment

Develop innovative housing policy in areas like tenant unions and collective bargaining rights, good cause eviction, and social housing

Challenge structural inequalities by building power in communities confronting the harms of racial capitalism and systemic exclusion.

You'll facilitate collective ownership through worker cooperatives and community land trusts and support tenants resisting displacement in the CED clinic, which centers community-led organizing for economic, racial and social justice and self-determination.

You'll build skills in creative transactional lawyering: structuring alternative institutions, developing democratic and restorative governance, and working with housing justice organizations to advance tenant rights, benefits and protections.

In clinic, you'll support housing justice and anti-displacement work through innovative policy and affirmative litigation and help redress structural inequities via creative transactional law grounded in community-led organizing.

PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

- CannaBronx
- Mondragon Corporation
- Mothers on the Move
- New York City Community Land Initiative
- NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives
- Safety Net Project of the Urban Justice Center
- The Action Lab



DURATION
One Semester (Fall)

CREDITS
Full-Time Day: 12 credits
Part-Time Evening: 10 credits

TYPE
In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLINIC

ADVOCATE FOR COMMUNITIES TARGETED UNDER THE GUISE OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND COUNTER TERRORISM

Lead federal litigation challenging discriminatory surveillance programs

Draft federal court pleadings challenging government overreach

Interview and represent individuals facing citizenship denials and travel restrictions

Transform how civil rights law confronts national security overreach through precedent-setting litigation and community advocacy.

You'll work on complex federal cases that become breakthrough litigation while learning to protect religious and civil rights.

For fifteen years, CLEAR has developed innovative legal strategies that challenge surveillance, discriminatory policing, and rights violations targeting Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities. In *Tanvir v. Tanzin*, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that CLEAR clients coerced onto the federal No Fly List to pressure them into spying on their own communities had the right to seek money damages under the Religious

Freedom Act. The landmark decision established accountability for coercive government practices and set a precedent for protecting vulnerable communities.

PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS
 American Civil Liberties Union
 Brennan Center for Justice
 CAIR
 Center for Constitutional Rights
 Movement for Black Lives
 Open Society Foundations
 Pillars Fund



CREDITS	Full-time Day: 16 credits
DURATION	Two Semesters (Fall and Spring) 8 credits each
TYPE	In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners

CREATING LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY (CLEAR) CLINIC

CONFRONT MASS INCARCERATION BY REIMAGINING PATHWAYS TO FREEDOM BEYOND TRADITIONAL CRIMINAL DEFENSE

Develop innovative legal strategies with formerly incarcerated advocates

Build campaigns for systemic reform of parole and sentencing

Challenge parole denials through administrative appeals and litigation

Transform the carceral system through direct representation and systemic advocacy, confronting racial injustice from over-policing communities of color to punitive parole and clemency practices.

You'll work directly with movement leaders and formerly incarcerated advocates to challenge carceral systems through innovative legal strategies—from clemency petitions to impact litigation—while developing critical skills in client-centered advocacy and systemic change. With 1,800+ requests for assistance from incarcerated individuals, the Defenders Clinic's work confronting mass incarceration is just beginning.

You'll learn to challenge injustice at every turn, beginning with a critical examination of criminal legal and carceral systems, their

histories, and day-to-day operations along with the actors working within them. Then, you'll put that knowledge to work by seeking pathways to freedom for those affected by those systems, including through clemency applications, parole preparation and litigation, compassionate release requests, and resentencing.

PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

- Bronx Defenders
- Craig Newmark School of Journalism
- Prisoners' Legal Services
- Release Aging People in Prison Campaign
- Parole Prep NY



<p>PREREQUISITE 4-credit Spring Seminar</p>	<p>DURATION One Semester (Fall)</p>
<p>CREDITS Full-Time Day: 12 credits Part-Time Evening: 10 credits</p>	
<p>TYPE In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners</p>	

DEFENDERS CLINIC

ADVANCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS, AUTONOMY, AND SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Challenge discrimination and ableism in housing, immigration policy, the family regulation system, access to medical care, eligibility for community based-services and more

Represent individuals in guardianship termination proceedings to restore their civil rights

Advocate for the sexual and reproductive rights of people with disabilities

“We discuss disability through the lens of race, ethnicity, gender, and class inequality. I want students to understand that taking the DRSJ Clinic engages with various aspects of law because disability touches every issue.”

PROFESSOR NATALIE M. CHIN, DRSJ CLINIC DIRECTOR

Challenge discriminatory policies through an intersectional framework that recognizes disability rights as inseparable from racial, economic, and gender justice.

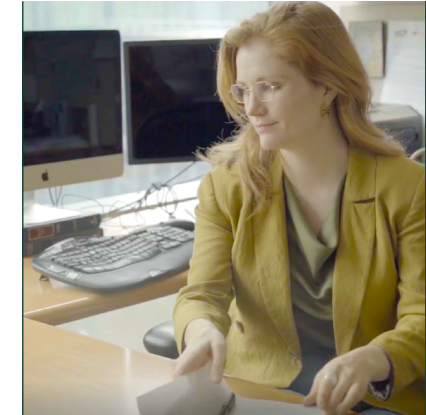
You’ll examine how ableism shapes not only disability law but the entire legal system and develop the skills to challenge it. From your first week, you’ll explore how ableism is tightly woven into systems of racial, gender, and economic injustice.

Guided by an anti-ableist, intersectional framework, you’ll work directly with clients

and communities to confront systemic exclusions through both individual advocacy and broader legal reform.

PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

- Disability Rights New York
- HEARD
- Mental Hygiene Legal Service
- National Center for Law and Economic Justice
- Self-Advocacy Association of New York State



TYPE In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners	DURATION One Semester (Fall)
	CREDITS Full-Time Day: 12 credits

DISABILITY RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CLINIC

PRESS BEYOND THE PERCEIVED BARRIERS OF LAW TO FIGHT AND WIN CIVIL RIGHTS VICTORIES

Litigate civil rights cases, conduct discovery, and draft and argue motions in court

Join campaigns led by civil rights lawyers and advocates in the field

Design cutting-edge constitutional lawsuits to address social injustice

“The Equality & Justice Practice Clinic has allowed me to develop my writing skills, understanding of procedure, and exposed me to an area of labor law that’s only learned on the job.”

BRENDA VALLADARES '25

Join the fight for equality and justice through high-impact legal advocacy both in and out of court.

In our in-house track, you’ll litigate groundbreaking federal civil rights cases—such as a landmark Fourth Amendment suit against a Texas police department—and co-counsel with lawyers at organizations like the NYCLU. In our practice track, you’ll secure full-time externships with leading civil rights, social justice, or labor organizations, using litigation as a tool for power-building and transformative change.

PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

- Center for Constitutional Rights
- Legal Aid Society
- National Police Accountability Project (NPAP)
- NYS Civil Rights Bureau



TYPES

In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners

Practice clinic combining classroom learning with field placements at advocacy organizations

CREDITS

Full-Time Day: 12 credits

DURATION

One Semester (Fall)

EQUALITY & JUSTICE IN-HOUSE & PRACTICE CLINIC

Defend parental rights against discriminatory child welfare practices

Develop reunification strategies with formerly incarcerated parents

Draft pleadings and motions in high-stakes family court proceedings on behalf of domestic violence survivors, LGBTQIA+ families, and others

CHALLENGE THE SYSTEMIC RACISM AND CLASSISM DRIVING STATE INTERVENTION INTO THE LIVES OF FAMILIES

Challenge the discriminatory policing of family life in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods.

You'll support clients through one of three dockets: direct representation, community support, or complex litigation. Through our in-house clinic, you'll represent parents and families with a focus on challenging racialized surveillance and separation. In our practice clinic, you'll work with advocacy organizations representing survivors of domestic violence, LGBTQIA+ families, children and youth, incarcerated parents, and families in a variety of legal contexts.

You'll build the skills to defend family autonomy through litigation, policy advocacy, and movement-aligned strategies. In the classroom, you'll study family law

doctrines including divorce, custody and visitation, child dependency and protection, parental defense in abuse and neglect proceedings, paternity and child support, and law-related juvenile justice and intimate partner violence.

PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

- Advocates for Children
- Children's Law Center
- Day One New York
- Sanctuary for Families
- Sylvia Rivera Law Project
- The Door Legal Services
- Urban Justice Center's Domestic Violence Project & Immigrant Legal Services
- VOLS Incarcerated Mothers Law Project

TYPES

In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners
Practice clinic combining classroom learning with field placements at advocacy organizations

CREDITS

Full-Time Day: 12 credits

DURATION

One Semester (Fall)

FAMILY LAW IN-HOUSE & PRACTICE CLINIC



SHAPE HUMAN RIGHTS & GENDER JUSTICE

Shape International Criminal Court policy on gender persecution

Challenge the criminalization of pregnancy outcomes in the U.S. and globally

Document human rights violations through field investigations and present evidence before UN treaty bodies and special rapporteurs

Vacate criminal convictions arising as a result of trafficking

FROM U.S. COURTS TO GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS

Advance global gender justice through cutting-edge legal advocacy.

In the HRGJ Clinic, you'll use human rights law to dismantle gender discrimination, confront gender-based violence, and challenge reproductive oppression—both in U.S. courts and on the international stage. By engaging in landmark cases and policy initiatives, you'll transform how the law protects survivors and advances human rights worldwide.

The HRGJ clinic engages with human rights work at every level. Recent work includes advancing international legal standards through groundbreaking projects like documenting gender persecution in

Afghanistan, fighting reproductive rights violations across borders, supporting LGBTQIA+ defenders in crisis regions, and working to promote reproductive justice and combat criminalization of trafficking survivors.

PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

- MADRE
- OUTright International
- If/When/How
- Pregnancy Justice
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- CUNY's Institute for Gender, Law, and Transformative Peace
- Women Enabled International Law Project



TYPE In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners	DURATION Two Semesters (Fall and Spring, 8 credits each)
	CREDITS Full-Time Day: 16 credits

HUMAN RIGHTS & GENDER JUSTICE CLINIC

CONFRONT DISCRIMINATION FROM DETENTION TO DEPORTATION IN COMMUNITIES & AT THE BORDER

Navigate the affirmative immigration system through U-Visa, TPS, and naturalization cases and sentencing

Litigate before immigration courts, administrative agencies, and federal appeals courts

Advocate for asylum seekers in credible fear interviews and removal proceedings

Challenge deportation and detention at the intersection of criminal and immigration law

Challenge how citizenship status and discriminatory policies are weaponized to deny fundamental rights through one of the nation's pioneering immigration clinics.

You'll learn to combine strategic litigation with movement lawyering—from advocating for those seeking refuge to fighting unlawful surveillance of non-citizen communities. Challenge the growing legal divide between citizens and non-citizens in the U.S. through the exploration, development, and implementation of ideas and strategies.

You'll build the skills needed to defend immigrants against detention and deportation through individual client

representation, community lawyering, and policy projects.

PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

- ACLU of New Mexico
- The Black Alliance for Just Immigration
- Families for Freedom
- Immigrant Defense Project
- Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
- Make the Road
- NY-NJ Abolish Ice Coalition
- New York Immigration Coalition

CREDITS
Full-Time Day: 16 credits
Part-Time Evening: 10 credits

DURATION
Two Semesters
(Fall and Spring, 6 credits each)

TYPE
In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners



IMMIGRANT JUSTICE & NON-CITIZEN RIGHTS CLINIC

EXPAND ACCESS TO MEDIATION FOR COMMUNITIES TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE OUTSIDE TRADITIONAL LEGAL SYSTEMS

Develop culturally responsive resolution strategies where marginalized voices are heard and validated

Facilitate multi-party discussions in Small Claims Court

Guide parties through federal discrimination claim resolutions under Title VII and ADA

Explore how alternative dispute resolution can create powerful opportunities for communities facing systemic barriers in traditional legal systems.

You'll mediate employment discrimination and Small Claims Court cases while learning how skilled facilitation can help achieve meaningful resolutions outside the courtroom, preserving both community resources and self-determination. Cases from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enable you to become the peacemakers that help avoid the economic, social and emotional cost of litigation.



TYPE In-house clinic with client representation and advocacy work with communities and external partners	DURATION One-Semester (Fall)
	CREDITS Full-Time Day: 12 credits Part-Time Evening: 10 credits

MEDIATION CLINIC

MEET ALONDRA

She is a full-time 3L student working at a placement through the Family Law Practice Clinic. She balances family caregiving and a commitment to mutual aid with her hands-on clinic work.



5:30 AM | UP EARLY.

Prep dinner for my family and review my clinic case notes while everybody wakes up and starts running around looking for things. This part of the day is always a little chaotic.

8:00 AM | SCHOOL DROP-OFF

and subway to my clinic placement with a legal services program. I use the ride to skim recent custody rulings—one of my clients is navigating a custody petition, and I want to be ready if the case shifts.

10:00 AM | JOIN A TEAM CHECK-IN

with staff attorneys and social workers. We talk through upcoming court appearances and community referrals. I join my supervising attorney for a client call to review her testimony and walk through what to expect in court. I'm finding it is important to slow down so people feel heard.

12:30 PM | QUICK FAMILY FACETIME

over lunch with my kiddo, who had music class and wants to tell me all about it.



1:30 PM | DRAFT A MOTION

to modify a custody order. I pull templates from the organization's shared drive, research, and flag questions for my supervising attorney.

5:00 PM | MEET W/ SUPERVISING ATTORNEY.

I leave with a new case citation and a stronger draft (and an even stronger coffee).



6:30 PM | DINNER

and the evening routine with my family. I try my hardest to spend this time fully present.

9:00 PM | READING AND REFLECTION

on trauma-informed lawyering and the ethics of representing children in contested custody cases. It's heavy. It's also why I'm here.

10:50 PM | FORCE QUIT ONE MILLION TABS.

I check on tomorrow's to-dos and see what I missed in my class's WhatsApp chat. In my head, tomorrow has already started.

MEET JAMIE

They are a 4L student in our Evening Program for part-time study. In the Community and Economic Development Clinic, they turn their passion for systems change and teamwork into real-world cooperative models.

9:00 AM | MEETING W/ MY CLINIC PARTNER

to prep a board training for a nonprofit that builds power amongst domestic workers. We're discussing how to explain fiduciary duties in plain language and talking through the training we're leading next week. Then took a pass through an operating agreement for a worker co-op client seeking to create a democratic workplace.

10:45 AM | LIBRARY SESSION

to draft sample resolutions for the nonprofit client's board meeting. I'm also toggling between policy memos, tax exemption filings, and WhatsApp messages from the co-op's organizing committee.

1:30 PM | CLIENT ZOOM

The co-op has questions about expanding. We talk through them, and discuss potential lease terms for a new brick and mortar location. I take notes, and flag a couple of zoning issues to research.

4:00 PM | REVISE KNOW YOUR RIGHTS SLIDES

We're presenting in three languages tomorrow. The training has to be accessible, but still legally sound. It's harder than it looks.

12:30 PM | LUNCH W/ CLASSMATES

outside in The Triangle. Someone's passing around samosas; someone else is venting about redlining maps. It feels like the right kind of law school conversation.

5:30 PM | GRAB DINNER

from the hot food bar at the grocery store next door and stop by an OUTLaws panel on trans-inclusive housing policy in NYC. I mostly listen, but I leave with new ideas and a note to follow up with someone about their clinic project.



6:15 PM | CLINIC SEMINAR

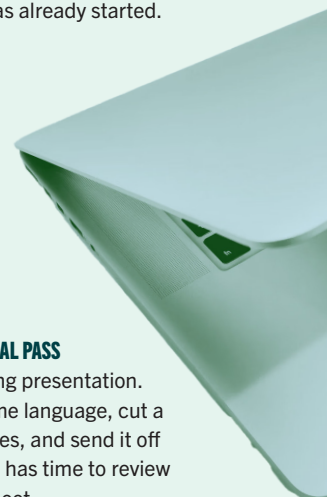
We're digging into legal tools that support community ownership—land trusts, limited equity co-ops, and the tension between public benefits and private restrictions. There's also a movement lawyering component to the discussion.

9:30 PM | BACK ON THE TRAM HOME.

Group chat lights up...clinic friends checking in, tweaking language for the training, sharing some good memes. It feels like we're building something together.

11:00 PM | FINAL PASS

at the training presentation. I tighten some language, cut a few sentences, and send it off so the client has time to review before we meet.



EXPERIENCE A DAY IN CLINIC



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