Clinical Program

CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION offers students the opportunity to learn theory and practice while providing much-needed legal assistance to under-represented individuals and organizations. Students represent clients with a wide range of legal issues and handle litigation, transactional and policy matters. While assisting their clients in investigating a case, students learn fact-finding, analytical and rhetorical skills. Applying legal issues to real-life circumstances deepens student appreciation and understanding of legal theory and doctrine – plus, they experience first-hand the challenges of professional ethics. They also learn to solve problems, make judgments and accept responsibility for matters that are of great importance to their clients.

The Clinical Program includes:
- Civil Legal Assistance Clinic
- Community Development Law Clinic
- Consumer Financial Transactions Clinic
- Domestic Violence Clinic
- Immigration Clinic
- Youth Justice Clinic

“The Youth Justice Clinic provided a great opportunity and forum to explore my legal interests, learn more about criminal law and criminal defense, and gain practical legal skills. I gained valuable research, trial advocacy, and client interviewing skills that can be transferred to any job in the future.”

—YOLANDA FAIR, CLASS OF 2013, YOUTH JUSTICE CLINIC

“I represented clients and counseled potential clients who had questions about housing, education and employment. I deposed witnesses, conducted discovery and negotiated a settlement. These are the kinds of experiences that you cannot have in a regular classroom but need to have to practice the law.”

—CHRIS HEANEY, CLASS OF 2013, CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE CLINIC

www.law.unc.edu/academics/clinic

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STUDENT REGISTRATION
Registration for the clinics is limited to third-year students. Students may not simultaneously enroll in a clinic and externship. For more information, visit www.law.unc.edu/academics/clinic
Civil Legal Assistance Clinic

In this two-semester clinic, students represent clients in civil matters related to employment, housing, education, and other areas of civil rights and poverty law practice.

- Successfully arguing that a special education student could not be suspended or expelled from school because the student’s behavior was a manifestation of her disability.
- Negotiating a favorable settlement for a worker who was not paid overtime wages he was owed.
- Assisting a client who withheld her monthly rent after the landlord failed to repair a leak in her bathroom ceiling that resulted in toxic mold.

Community Development Law Clinic

In this two-semester clinic, students provide corporate and transactional counsel to North Carolina nonprofit community development organizations.

- Providing legal advice to numerous student-run social enterprises in UNC’s Social Innovation Incubator.
- Assisting a neighborhood association in a historically African American community to form a 501(c)(3) corporation and to devise strategies for combatting gentrification and resulting land loss.
- Advising, negotiating and drafting documents on behalf of a spiritual retreat center regarding complex licensing, zoning and land use issues.

Immigration Clinic

In this two-semester clinic, students represent indigent clients in immigration cases. During the course of the year, students prepare claims and advocate on behalf of immigrant clients.

- Assisting and advocating for refugees applying for asylum, battered immigrants applying for relief and victims of crime eligible for U-Visas.
- Interviewing and counseling clients, collaborating with victims, working with interpreters and social services providers, to investigate and build successful immigration applications, gaining work authorization and lawful permanent residence.
- Handling North Carolina’s first successful U-Visa case, and assisting over 40 clients at various stages of the immigration process.

Domestic Violence Clinic

In this one-semester clinic, students represent low-income clients in civil matters aimed at assisting them in safely leaving abusive relationships.

- Appearing in court in civil protection order hearings with additional comprehensive representation extending to family law matters, including child custody and divorce, and other collateral matters.
- Working with a variety of service providers, including law enforcement, domestic violence and sexual assault agencies, and social services agencies to ensure holistic services.
- Working with immigrant and other non-English speaking clients to examine the difficulties these populations have in accessing the justice system, and assisting in immigration matters, where necessary.

Youth Justice Clinic

In this one or two-semester clinic, students represent children accused of crimes in delinquency and undisciplined proceedings. They also represent children in school discipline proceedings and work on related juvenile justice projects.

- Negotiating a favorable settlement for a worker who was not paid overtime wages he was owed.
- Examining treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth within the juvenile justice system.
- Writing an amicus brief for In re J.D.B, a N.C. Supreme Court case on the issue of juvenile Miranda warnings.
- Negotiating a deferred prosecution for a 12-year-old boy charged with assault, resulting in the absence of any delinquency adjudications on the boy’s record.
- Successfully arguing that a 15-year-old boy’s probation be terminated and case dismissed by obtaining and presenting positive supporting documentation from teachers and family members.

Consumer Financial Transactions Clinic

In this two-semester clinic, students represent low- and moderate-income clients on matters pertaining to credit and homeownership.

- Preventing senior citizens from losing their home in a foreclosure action by negotiating settlements with their mortgage companies.
- Drafting an amicus brief submitted to the N.C. Supreme Court in a case involving unfair lending practices by a national bank.
- Strengthening relationships with community partners providing housing counseling and lending to shared client populations.
- Educating state lawmakers about the impact of proposed legislation on N.C. consumers.

Special Note

Cases handled by the UNC School of Law Clinical Program are usually referred by partnering organizations or other community agencies.