

THE NEED

California is experiencing an explosion in the number of individuals appearing before the Court without professional legal representation on a variety of matters from family law to housing. California courts report up to 90 percent self-representation rates in family law and housing-related cases.

In all, over 4.3 million California court users are self-represented. The majority of these individuals do not obtain legal representation because they cannot afford it.

Resources available to meet the needs of these self-represented individuals are sorely lacking. In fact, the ratio of un-represented litigants to legal aid attorneys in California is 10,000 to one.

Inability to resolve legal matters jeopardizes litigants' abilities to secure safe, affordable housing, to overcome barriers to employment, to obtain guardianships and to avoid domestic violence and elder abuse.

Each year, in the Bay Area alone, JusticeCorps members and fellows help over 30,000 self-represented litigants, providing assistance on almost 50,000 court forms. Language assistance is an important aspect of JusticeCorps' members' service. Members assist over 5,000 litigants in a language other than English annually.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Scan the QR code to let us know you are interested in learning more about JusticeCorps!

JUSTICECORPS WEBSITES

For Bay Area information and applications:
bayareajusticecorps.org

For LA and San Diego information and applications:
courts.ca.gov/programs-justicecorps.htm

JusticeCorps



The JusticeCorps program offers meaningful public service opportunities for students and college graduates interested in helping others while learning about the law and the court system.



JUSTICECORPS BAY AREA

JusticeCorps Bay Area will recruit over 70 students from the University of California at Berkeley, California State University East Bay, Santa Clara University, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, West Valley College, the San Mateo Community College District and Stanford University to work in self-help centers in the Superior Courts of Alameda, San Francisco, Contra Costa, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.



JusticeCorps recruits undergraduate and graduate students to serve in court-based legal access self-help centers serving individuals and their families who come to court without professional representation.

JusticeCorps also has full-time fellowship positions available for college graduates.



SELF-HELP CENTERS

All superior courts in California have a self-help center that can provide free legal help to people who do not have a lawyer. Each center provides different services which can include assistance with: family law, small claims, housing and restraining order cases.

Self-Help Centers provide “neutral” legal assistance. They are available to assist both parties in a case and do not tell litigants what they *should* do (legal advice). Litigants describe their legal issues and then Self-help attorneys, staff and JusticeCorps members explain their legal options. Because the litigants are acting as their own attorneys, they must choose the legal option they want to pursue. Next, staff and JusticeCorps members guide the litigant through the court process for their chosen option. This can include helping litigants to fill out court forms and explaining court procedures.

AS A MEMBER

Daily activities may include:

- Providing litigants with legal information
- Assisting litigants in completing legal paperwork
- In-Court assistance to litigants
- Providing litigants with referrals to appropriate legal resources
- Assisting in attorney-facilitated workshops
- Translation/Interpretation

JusticeCorps student members will:

- Commit to serve 300 hours in one academic year (approximately 8 hours per week)
- Receive an AmeriCorps education award of \$1,342 upon completion of term
- Receive over 40 hours of training (included in the 300 hour service requirement), including specialized training in specific areas of law.

JusticeCorps fellows will:

- Commit to a year of full-time service (1,700 hours)
- Receive an education award of \$10,000 upon completion of their term
- Earn a stipend of up to \$33,000, plus health and child care benefits
- Serve as a team leader for student members

Other special opportunities may include:

- Shadow days with Judicial Officers
- Career Days
- Courtroom observation
- Letters of recommendation upon request