

Office of General Counsel Environmental Justice Law Fellowship Program

Environmental Justice Law Fellowship Program Summary

The Air District's Environmental Justice Law Fellowship program is a two-year program for new attorneys with a passion for environmental justice to work in the Air District's legal office focusing on equity and EJ-related issues. The Air District provides competitive pay and benefits, close mentorship, and an opportunity for the fellow to gain experience working on EJ issues in one of the premier air quality regulatory agencies in California.

Substance of the Fellowship Program

The Environmental Justice Law Fellowship Program provides new attorneys with experience in the Air District's equity and environmental justice work. Fellows work on matters in the Legal Division involving environmental justice issues, and they also provide legal support for the Air District's EJ-focused work being undertaken through the Environmental Justice and Community Engagement Office. Examples of the types of projects a fellow may work on include:

- Working with the Air District's AB 617 Community Emission Reduction Plan steering committees;
- Impact litigation in over-burdened communities to enforce Air District regulations against chronic violators;
- Legal work supporting the Air District's Community Advisory Council;
- Implementing initiatives to address cumulative impacts, disparate impact analyses, and other elements of civil rights compliance in the Air District permitting program;
- Drafting CEQA comments on projects proposing to locate in overburdened communities.



Applications due
November 16,
2026



"Environmental justice requires more than good intentions. It requires talented advocates who are ready to listen to communities, confront inequities and turn the law into meaningful protections. This fellowship gives emerging attorneys the opportunity to do that work and help create lasting change for Bay Area communities most affected by air pollution."

LYNDA HOPKINS

Chair, Bay Area Air District
Board of Directors



"We must stand undivided in rooting out the injustices of this world by starting right here at home. When is it okay for our children be poisoned just a little bit? It is statements such as this that call for our best and brightest to prove them all wrong. We will demand justice through the courts and organize in the streets."

ARIEANN HARRISON

Executive Director of the Marie Harrison
Community Foundation and member
of the Air District's Community
Advisory Council



Eligibility

The program is open to new lawyers just starting their legal career, including those who had prior careers before going to law school. The basic eligibility criteria are the following:

- New attorney with less than two (2) years of practice at the time of commencement of the fellowship.
- California bar license. Applicants who are not admitted to the California bar at the time of application, including law students, will be required to describe their plans for gaining admission in their application. Law school graduates who take the July bar exam following their graduation will be able to begin their fellowship while waiting for admission.

Selection Criteria

The Air District seeks to hire a fellow from or with a background in an EJ community to bring a community voice and community perspective into the heart of the Air District's legal office. The selection criteria include the following, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important:

1. Lived experience in an environmental justice community and/or facing environmental justice challenges;
2. Demonstrated interest in a career focused on equity and environmental justice issues, or on related issues with relevance to the intersection of environmental pollution, civil rights, and social justice;
3. Writing and critical thinking skills, as demonstrated by a writing sample;
4. Relevant practical experience, e.g., prior jobs (including but not limited to legal work or other relevant non-legal work before law school), internships, etc.;
5. Relevant law school and/or undergraduate coursework;
6. Academic record, e.g., grades, awards, honors, etc.

Compensation

An EJ Law Fellow admitted to practice will be compensated at the Staff Attorney salary level, which ranges from **\$163,151.18 to \$198,311.28** annually.

New law school graduates waiting to be admitted to the Bar can be hired at a Law Clerk salary level which ranges from **\$109,134.78 to \$132,654.00** annually. Once admitted to practice, the fellow will be compensated under the Staff Attorney position.

Mentoring

A key element of the program is to provide the fellow with close mentoring. The fellow will be paired with a formal mentor in a structured mentor-mentee relationship. The fellow will also complete an Individualized Development Plan, which is a list of learning objectives and employee-sponsored training that the fellow will complete within the two-year fellowship period.



Application deadline
November 16,
2026

To apply:
baaqmd.gov/ej-fellow

