Legal Clerkships – Spring, Summer & Fall 2020

Our Children’s Trust (OCT) is a nonprofit organization seeking law students interested in using the law to fight climate change. OCT works to secure the legal right to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate for current and future generations through its coordination of a global legal campaign. As a part of this strategic campaign, since 2011 OCT has supported youth in filing legal actions in every U.S. state, against the federal government in Juliana v. United States, and in different countries around the world. Through litigation, administrative petitions for rulemaking, and climate recovery ordinances, OCT supports youth advocating for science-based carbon emission reductions necessary to restore climate equilibrium on the planet.

Law clerks will directly support OCT’s legal efforts in local, state, federal, and/or international actions, including the constitutional and public trust climate case filed against the federal government by 21 young people in Juliana v. U.S. (D. Or. 2015). Law clerks will have the opportunity to work on a variety of projects, which could include assisting attorneys around the country and the world in their legal efforts; working with experts; conducting legal and evidentiary research; drafting legal memoranda; drafting, reviewing, and editing complaints, briefs, motions, discovery requests, and declarations; preparing for oral argument and trial; and assisting with document review.

OCT relies heavily on law clerks for support, placing a premium on careful, accurate, and self-directed work. Positions can be full time or part time, and can be completed remotely or in our office in Eugene, Oregon. Preference will be given to students who can commit to working full time during the Summer or at least 15 hours per week during the Spring and Fall.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for a law student to be part of a cutting-edge legal strategy and work with some of the top attorneys and scientists from around the world to address the climate crisis. Here’s how three law students described their experience working with OCT:

“Working at Our Children’s Trust is challenging, engaging, and most importantly, deeply meaningful. The work was incredibly varied, and each week brought unparalleled opportunities to learn about the legal process and develop practical skills. I don’t think there is another legal internship where in just ten weeks I could have researched complex civil procedure questions, conducted document review, learned about the legal system of Sri Lanka, drafted a section of a brief to the Ninth Circuit, supported discovery efforts in preparation for trial, and more. The attorneys at Our Children’s Trust truly valued the law clerks and ensured that each assignment was meaningful to the case and our professional development alike.”

~1L, Georgetown University Law Center

“It’s so easy to wake up in the morning, hear some awful news about climate change, and then go about your day like the world is not on fire. At Our Children’s Trust, you get to wake up, hear the news, and then be a part of groundbreaking litigation that could go a long way towards putting out that fire. As a legal experience, this internship is second to none. Interns get a lot of responsibility from day one, and also the feedback and support necessary to learn. Any law student interested in impact environmental litigation should apply!”

~1L, Harvard Law School

“My clerkship at Our Children’s Trust was a truly rewarding experience. Over the course of the summer, I had the opportunity to work on substantive projects for both state and federal litigation. I am grateful for the interesting and challenging work that I was assigned, and my research and writing skills grew tremendously throughout the summer. The legal team at Our Children’s Trust is inclusive and dedicated to their clerks. I was always encouraged to take on projects that sparked my interest, and I felt supported in completing those projects. I couldn’t have asked for a better summer experience!”

~1L, University of Oregon School of Law
Compensation: Law clerks are unpaid; however, Our Children’s Trust is willing to support law students in securing outside funding or academic credit for their work. OCT is an equal opportunity employer and committed to fostering diversity and inclusiveness among our staff and law clerks. People of color, women, LGBTQ+, and people of different faiths and national origin are encouraged to apply.

- Successful candidates from diverse backgrounds are eligible for OCT diversity fellowships, which carry a $6,000 stipend.

To Apply: Email the following application materials to susan@ourchildrenstrust.org:

- Cover letter
  - Include description of why you are interested in working for OCT and on climate change.
  - Include amount of time you are able to commit to the clerkship and whether you will be seeking academic credit.
  - Indicate whether you would like to be considered for a diversity fellowship, and, if so, what diverse background(s) and/or experience(s) you bring to your work.
- Resume
- List of three references (at least one legal) with email addresses and phone numbers
- Law school transcript (unofficial version OK) (only required for current JD students)
- Short writing sample (no more than 7 pages)

Please merge all of the above into one PDF and save with the file name: “[First and last name]-[law school name].” Please put “Law Clerk” and the time period you are applying for (e.g., “Summer 2020”) in the subject line of your email. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.