



Strengthening Public Defenders.
Transforming Public Defense.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Gideon's Promise 2022 Law School Partnership Project Fellow Spotlight

Welcome Jasmine Smith to the Gideon's Promise Community

Atlanta, GA – April 4, 2022 – Non-profit organization, Gideon's Promise trains public defense professionals to improve the quality of legal representation in communities across the nation. Gideon's Promise is excited to announce a class of six new fellows through our Law School Partnership Project (LSPP). This program provides law students with the opportunity to begin their career as a public defender and criminal justice reformer on the front lines of the effort to realize equal justice in America.

Jasmine Smith, from the University of California, Irvine School of Law, states "I chose to pursue work in a challenging, under-resourced jurisdiction because I know that it would be challenging and provide a unique experience; and I am often one to enjoy unconventional paths. I am also a person that goes with the flow and is adaptable which is something that I felt would mesh well with [my new office]."

Our fellows will be placed in offices that serve under-resourced communities. Jasmine Smith will be joining our partner office, the Cuyahoga County Public Defender Office, in Cleveland, Ohio, this fall.

Jasmine is thrilled to have the opportunity to work at the Cuyahoga County Public Defender Office. She explains, "First, I grew up in northeast Ohio in both Summit and Cuyahoga County, so being close to home and being able to work in a culture that I grew up in for a change, was appealing to me. Since I left high school, I've lived in New York and California for the past 11 years and have had a lot of experience in [New York/California] with jobs, internships, school, and volunteering, but I wanted to return home to serve my home community. Secondly, I got a really laid-back and down to earth vibe from the office, which is really important to me, especially in a line of work like this. [The staff] were people that I could see myself working with immediately. Lastly, I will miss the SoCal sunshine, but I am more than excited and ready to return to the pace and quality of life that Cleveland offers."

She was inspired to join the LSPP program because it will provide her with community and opportunity. She explains, "One reason I chose to apply for the Gideon's Promise LSPP program is that I felt it was a great opportunity to interview at multiple places and get a feel for different offices. I understand that it is not just about getting a job or offer but about making sure the office is the right fit for me as well. I also knew that it was a great opportunity to join a defined community and have a slightly more atypical experience as a new public defender than if I had been hired independently." We are delighted that Jasmine Smith will be bringing her strong excitement and passion to the Cuyahoga County office.

The Gideon's Promise Law School Partnership Project offers recent law school graduates opportunities to immediately make a difference in public defender offices across the country by placing fellows in places that have the greatest need. The application for the 2023 Law School Partnership Project program is now live. To learn more about Gideon's Promise or apply for the LSPP program, please visit our website www.gideonspromise.org.

About Gideon's Promise

Gideon's Promise is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to transform the criminal justice system by building a movement of public defenders who provide equal justice for marginalized communities. Founded in 2007 by Jonathan Rapping and Ilham Askia, the organization has grown from a single training program for 16 attorneys in two public defender offices in Georgia and Louisiana to a national enterprise with over 1,500 participants in approximately 45 public defender offices annually across 27 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The organization's initial three-year program for new public defenders has expanded into a comprehensive program model that supports public defenders at all levels of their careers.

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