



The Lawyers' Committee, the National Immigration Law Center and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., Announce First Generation Civil Rights Fellowship (FirstGEN) Partnership

For Immediate Release, November 12, 2013:

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Lawyers' Committee), the Washington, D.C. office of the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), are excited to announce a partnership to jointly expand and strengthen the First Generation Civil Rights Fellowship (FirstGEN) program for the summer of 2014.



FirstGEN is a 10-week summer program for undergraduate students who are the first in their immediate families to attend an institution of higher education and who are passionate about pursuing careers in social justice. Fellows gain hands-on experience working on civil rights matters as full time Public Policy and Social Justice interns while also participating in a parallel training program. FirstGEN creates a greater community of advocates by linking emerging leaders with existing ones and by creating a FirstGEN alumni network.

The Lawyers' Committee launched FirstGEN during the summer of 2013 to coincide with the Lawyers' Committee's 50th anniversary. The FirstGEN pilot program commenced with two exceptional inaugural fellows, Ms. Najaah Daniels and Ms. Tania Chairez. Ms. Daniels (pictured left) attends St. John's University in Queens, New York, as a Rhetoric and Public Address major (2015). Ms. Chairez (pictured right) attends the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, studying Marketing and Sociology (2014). Upon completing the inaugural program Ms. Chairez summarized her experience by writing, "Participating in the FirstGEN Fellowship at the Lawyers' Committee this summer was the best choice I could have made. This has truly been a refreshing experience that has rejuvenated my passion for social justice ..."



As partners, the Lawyers' Committee, NILC and CLINIC will each host two fellows and provide each with a \$1,000 stipend. On Fridays, for ten weeks, all six FirstGEN Fellows will meet to take part in FirstGEN's advocacy training program with sessions led by social justice leaders designed to highlight topics such as leading locally on voting rights and the Asian American Civil Rights movement, as well as trainings focusing on community organizing and fundraising.

The Lawyers' Committee, NILC and CLINIC recognize that first generation undergraduate students face daunting challenges not only to succeed in college but also to transition from college graduation to career launch. FirstGEN's training program aims to address these obstacles by focusing on relationship building, career mapping strategies, and meetings with leading advocates, while also ensuring Fellows gain unparalleled, hands-on policy and advocacy experience.

Barbara R. Arnwine, Lawyers' Committee's president and executive director, Marielena Hincapié, NILC's executive director and Jeanne M. Atkinson, CLINIC's executive director, have made this partnership possible, with Ms. Arnwine, herself a first generation college graduate, stating "Ensuring a talent pipeline to recruit and advance our leaders of tomorrow is absolutely necessary if we are to resolve the great social inequalities our nation faces each and every day." While Ms. Hincapié who grew up in a low-income immigrant family added, "Far too many low-income students lack the support system, connections, and opportunities to access higher education as a pathway out of poverty. This partnership will help open doors and provide the support our emerging first generation leaders need to succeed as civil rights and social justice leaders," and Ms. Atkinson remarked, "This is truly an exciting time to work together, across our organizations, to empower these committed and bright future advocates."

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the National Immigration Law Center and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. look forward to this new partnership and are excited to expand FirstGEN in 2014 and beyond.

You may learn more about FirstGEN by liking us at facebook.com/FirstGENFellows and following @FirstGENFellows on Twitter.

To view the FirstGEN application materials click [here](#).

About the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law:

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Lawyers' Committee), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, was formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. We are celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2013 as we continue our quest of "Moving America Toward Justice." The principal mission of the Lawyers' Committee is to secure, through the rule of law, equal justice under law, particularly in the areas of fair housing and fair lending, community development, employment; voting; education and environmental justice. For more information, visit www.lawyerscommittee.org.

About the National Immigration Law Center:

Founded in 1979, the National Immigration Law Center envisions a society in which all people—regardless of race, gender, income level, or immigration status—have the opportunity to live freely, work safely, and thrive in society. The organization's advocates and attorneys use a variety of tools, including policy analysis, litigation, education and advocacy, to achieve this vision. For more information about the National Immigration Law Center, visit www.nilc.org.

About the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.:

Embracing the Gospel value of welcoming the stranger, CLINIC promotes the dignity and protects the rights of immigrants in partnership with a dedicated network of Catholic and community legal immigration programs. For more information about the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., visit www.cliniclegal.org.

Lawyers' Committee Media inquiries Contact: To coordinate interview opportunities with the Lawyers' Committee, please contact Stacie Royster, 202-662-8317 or sroyster@lawyerscommittee.org.

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Non-media inquiries: If you have questions regarding the FirstGEN Fellowship program or are interested in serving as a partnering organization, guest speaker, or would like to financially support this program please contact Alejandro T. Reyes at 202-662-8321 or areyes@lawyerscommittee.org.



