



Foundation *for* Opioid Response Efforts

Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE) Announces \$1.4 Million Grant to Equal Justice Works to Launch National Legal Fellowship Program

Funding to Train Lawyers and Support Free Legal Services for People Impacted by the Opioid Crisis

NEW YORK (March 21, 2024) – The [Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts \(FORE\)](#) today announced it is awarding a grant of \$1,361,005 over 30 months to [Equal Justice Works](#) to launch a national Opioid Crisis Response Legal Fellowship Program that will address the legal consequences of the opioid crisis. The program will provide intensive education on opioid crisis-related issues to a cohort of early career lawyers who will provide free legal representation to low-income individuals and families affected by the opioid and overdose crisis.

“The opioid crisis cannot be fully addressed without multidisciplinary interventions, including legal assistance,” said Karen A. Scott, MD., MPH, President of FORE. “Lawyers have a critical role in helping people with opioid use disorder and their families handle a myriad of challenges, however access to free legal aid is severely limited. We are pleased to partner with Equal Justice Works in this important initiative that will infuse the legal aid field with the experience necessary to address issues related to the opioid crisis.”

The two-year Legal Fellowship Program will support six public interest lawyers placed in legal aid organizations in states where the need for legal services for people impacted by the overdose crisis is highest. The Fellows will provide direct representation to individuals and families who are low income and are affected by the opioid crisis. They will also begin to build a network of legal expertise to help inform policies that can holistically address issues faced by communities impacted by the crisis.

In addition to providing legal representation for people with opioid use disorder who may be involved with the criminal legal system, lawyers can provide a wide range of assistance, including advocating for the rights of people with opioid use disorder to receive evidence-based treatment and recovery services, access stable housing, obtain financial and medical benefits, and keep families safe and together.

Equal Justice Works has a proven record of selecting Fellows across a diversity of races, genders, incomes, and educational backgrounds who go on to have meaningful

impact throughout their careers, with over 85% staying in public interest law after completing their fellowships.

“We thank the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts for their generous grant,” said Verna Williams, CEO of Equal Justice Works. “FORE’s support will mobilize six Equal Justice Works Fellows to address critical legal needs frequently arising from opioid use disorder, such as child custody matters, housing, healthcare, and employment. Through the Opioid Crisis Response Program, we can accelerate education, collaboration, and provision of direct services to help promote recovery and stability for individuals, families, and communities.”

This latest grant builds on funding Equal Justice Works received from FORE in 2021 to support a two-year Fellow, [Emily Neely](#), at Legal Aid of West Virginia, where she provided mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution to low-income families impacted by the opioid crisis.

About Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE)

FORE was founded in 2018 as a private 501(c)(3) national, grant-making foundation focused on addressing the nation’s opioid crisis. FORE is committed to funding a diversity of projects contributing solutions to the crisis at national, state, and community levels. FORE’s mission is to support partners advancing patient-centered, innovative, evidence-based solutions impacting people experiencing opioid use disorder, their families, and their communities. Through convening, grantmaking and developing informational resources, FORE seeks to bring about long-term change. To date, FORE has awarded 104 grants to 91 organizations, totaling \$41.9 million. Follow us on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Equal Justice Works

Equal Justice Works is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that creates opportunities for lawyers to transform their passion for equal justice into a lifelong commitment to public service. As the nation’s largest facilitator of opportunities in public interest law, Equal Justice Works brings together an extensive network of law students, lawyers, nonprofit legal aid organizations, and supporters to promote a lifelong commitment to public service and equal justice.

Source: Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE)

Contact: Myrna Manners, Manners Dotson Group, 718-986-7255,
mmanners@mannersdotson.com