

2025-2027 Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr. Civil Rights Fellowship

The **Cochran Fellowship** was named for Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., to honor his dedication and commitment to civil rights throughout his distinguished career. The goal of the Fellowship is to develop the next generation of civil-rights litigators by introducing lawyers early in their careers to all aspects of complex civil-rights litigation. We believe that people learn best by taking on responsibility in a collaborative team environment while receiving active supervision.

About NSBHF

Since its founding in 2000, NSBHF has been a national leader in civil rights litigation. Our development of now widely acknowledged legal theories in countless civil wrongful conviction lawsuits around the country has led to substantial recoveries for the firm's wrongful conviction clients and others.

By using civil discovery to gain insight into the misconduct behind wrongful convictions, founding partners **Barry Scheck** and **Peter Neufeld** (together with late partner **Johnnie Cochran**) were pioneers in this field. Building on this knowledge, partners **Nick Brustin**, **Anna Benvenuti Hoffmann**, **Emma Freudenberger**, and **Amelia Green** today lead the nation's premier civil rights trial practice, bringing in record-setting wins across the country, as well as important policy changes as a result of our work.

What To Expect As A Cochran Fellow

NSBHF's model is to focus on a small number of important cases, staff each with a team of talented lawyers, and commit enough resources to win against any defendant. For the Cochran Fellow, that means real experience and responsibility from day one. Fellows work on case teams supervised by one or more partners and a senior attorney at each stage of litigation: from pre-filing investigation to depositions, trial, mediation, and appeals. Given our national practice, fellows travel to work with the nation's top civil rights lawyers, litigating on the ground in places – such as Baltimore, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Mississippi – with histories of racist policing and other egregious police misconduct.

Former fellows have gone on to a variety of positions related to the criminal legal system, civil rights law, and litigation, including: State & Federal Public Defender; Clinical Law Professor; United States Supreme Court Clerk; Tenured Law Professor; Civil Rights Litigators within Federal and State Justice Departments; Civil Rights Litigators at Nonprofits and Private Firms.

A Typical Fellow Will Experience:

Pretrial Preparation & Trial

Fellows participate actively in all aspects of our high-profile and high-stakes trial preparation. Many fellows have examined witnesses and argued motions at trial.

Depositions

NSBHF proves misconduct in depositions. Fellows take their own depositions under a partner's supervision and second-chair depositions of lead defendants.

Substantive Legal Writing

Fellows are trained to be persuasive advocates, navigating complex legal doctrines and marshalling facts to help our clients win. Fellows work with partners to draft briefs in trial and appellate courts.

Factual Development

Fellows take the lead on case development from the ground up, reviewing police files and testimony to find contradictions and overlooked leads, crafting detailed federal complaints, and working with investigators around the country to track down and interview witnesses.

Client Advocacy

Fellows develop close relationships with clients from day one, acting as advocates to tell their stories. This includes Fellows working closely with our staff social worker to support our clients.

Expert Work

Fellows work closely with nationally renowned experts in the forensic sciences, false confessions, and psychology, among other fields.

Other Opportunities

Fellows travel and gain courtroom experience in different jurisdictions, argue motions, negotiate with opposing counsel, and manage discovery in federal court.

Mentorship

Fellows are provided meaningful mentorship within and outside the firm. Each Fellow is assigned dedicated time with founding partners Peter Neufeld and Barry Scheck to discuss career goals and gain introductions to thought leaders within the broader civil rights community. Fellows also are assigned a partner mentor to serve as a resource for all aspects of their practice. The partnership is committed to providing tailored feedback, especially on major assignments like substantive writing and depositions.

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Who Should Apply

We are looking for fearless advocates for our clients, whether at a deposition, in brief writing, or in the courtroom. Although many fellows are former judicial clerks, there is no clerkship requirement. We seek candidates who have demonstrated excellence in any number of ways, whether through clinical work, other social justice experience, or litigation experience at another law firm.

NSBHF is committed to serving its diverse clients and ensuring an office environment that is welcoming and respectful to people of all backgrounds. We strongly encourage applicants from all cultures, races, educational backgrounds, life experiences, socio-economic classes, sexual orientations, ages, genders, and physical abilities to apply. We welcome applicants with personal or family experiences with the criminal legal system and/or incarceration. Further, NSBHF supports the rights of job candidates and employees to engage in protest and political action on social justice and human rights matters, including in support of Palestine. As an equal opportunity employer, NSBHF supports non-discrimination in the firm's employment practices. Successful candidates are committed to holding officers accountable for their misconduct.

2025-2027 Fellowship Application Period

Applications for the 2025-2027 Cochran Fellowship are accepted between **Tuesday, October 1, 2024 and Friday, November 1, 2024** to start Fall 2025. For more information on the Cochran Fellowship and how to apply, please visit: <https://nsbhf.com/cochran-fellowship/>.

Please note: Interviews for the 2025-2027 Cochran Fellowship will take place in person with NSBHF arranging travel.

How To Apply

Please email fellows@nsbhf.com with the following documents in PDF format:

- Resume;
- Cover Letter (discussing your commitment to civil rights/social justice and your long-term goals);
- Transcript;
- Writing Sample; and
- List of References.

Compensation and Benefits

- Year 1: \$105,000 (gross) and Year 2 \$115,000 (gross);
- NSBHF Student Loan Repayment Assistance to enable talented lawyers to hold the fellowship regardless of financial means, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per month (gross);
- Comprehensive Medical and Dental Coverage;
- Relocation Assistance for Fellows moving to the NYC Metro area;
- Paid Time Off;
- 401(k) Plan;
- Wellness Program; and
- Charitable Contribution Match.