

The Vietnamese American Bar Association of Northern California Public Interest Fellowship (2011)

Funding generously provided by the San Diego Foundation

This Fellowship Program will fund one law graduate who will work for one year to provide legal services to and advocacy for the Vietnamese American community and/or other underserved, underresourced communities. This year, the fellow will receive \$30,000. This is the second year that this fellowship will be awarded. The Vietnamese American Bar Association of Northern California (VABANC) Law Foundation will administer the Fellowship Program.

The objective of the Fellowship is to provide legal services on issues related to racial/ethnic communities in the law and to improve the quality of legal services delivered to underserved minority populations, including but not limited to the Vietnamese American community. The Fellowship will thus support a law graduate whose work will support underserved, underrepresented communities in an increasingly diverse state and nation.

Vision and History

In 1996, a small group of Vietnamese American attorneys met informally to discuss forming a Vietnamese American bar association. A steering committee was formed to organize and build interest and support. In January 1998, the Vietnamese Bar Association of Northern California inaugurated its first officers. From its inception, VABANC focused on community service and sought to support members from its communities in their public interest endeavors.

In 2002, VABANC launched its annual Scholarship Dinner to recognize outstanding Bay Area law students who demonstrated a commitment to serving the greater public interest. Since 2002, VABANC has awarded two to three scholarships per year to law students to recognize their achievements and commitments to serving their communities.

This fellowship builds on VABANC's goals of supporting a law graduate who will serve the greater community and whose work will achieve a richer and more inclusive vision of social justice in underserved communities.

Board Structure

The Board of the VABANC Law Foundation oversees the governance of this fellowship. Selection of the fellowship recipient will be conducted by Andrew A. Vu, Thanh D. Ngo and a representative from VABANC Law Foundation, in conjunction with the donors.

Fellowship Requirements

Qualifications for applicants:

- J.D. in hand at the beginning of the grant period¹ or awaiting bar results;
- Strong demonstrated interest and desire in working with the Vietnamese American community and/or social justice work with subordinated communities;
- Unique life experience or other experiences in overcoming personal adversity/challenges;

¹ The grant period is to begin either immediately (or at a date agreed upon by the fellowship recipient and VABANC Law Foundation), or beginning in the Fall of 2012 (i.e., qualified recent law graduates or current 3Ls are eligible to apply for this fellowship).

- Overall academic excellence.

Application

1. Official Law School Transcript
2. Two letters of recommendation
3. Resume
4. A proposal no more than 3 pages (12 point, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins) detailing the proposed public interest project, and describing which legal rights the applicant will be enforcing, and the project's relevancy in advancing the legal and civil rights of the Vietnamese American community and/or other underserved communities.²

Please send all materials (in one PDF document) to Quyen Ta at qta@kvn.com by **September 25, 2011 at 5 p.m.** Interviews will be conducted shortly thereafter. Please note that the recipient of the fellowship must be able to attend VABANC's Scholarship Dinner on October 7, 2011 in San Jose, California.

Any questions can be directed to Quyen Ta at qta@kvn.com.

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The Vietnamese American Bar Association of Northern California (VABANC) was founded in 1998 to provide Vietnamese American attorneys with a vehicle for the unified expression of opinions and positions on matters of concern to all Vietnamese American attorneys, to encourage and promote the professional growth of its members, and to advocate for civil and human right of the community at large.

VABANC has a strong sense of community responsibility. VABANC strives not only to meet the professional needs of our members, but also to use our resources and expertise to serve the public interest.

For more info please go to: <http://www.vabanc.org/>

² Please note that the applicant should have secured a host non-profit legal organization who will support his or her work and he or she should describe the legal organization's role in the project. Priority will be given to host organizations that are able to provide an additional \$8-10K in funding and benefits for the public interest fellow.