



The James W. Cooper Fellows Program is administered by the Connecticut Bar Foundation. The Foundation's primary purpose is to ensure that the state's legal system is available to all, regardless of power or resources. To fulfill this mission, the Foundation administers grants to legal service organizations that represent those who cannot afford private counsel and funds law school scholarships based on financial need.

In addition, the Foundation administers programs with the James W. Cooper Fellows that enhance public understanding of the rule of law in a democratic society and promote improvements to our laws and legal institutions.

Who was James W. Cooper?

The Fellows Program is named in honor of James W. Cooper, who was a prominent New Haven attorney, senior partner of Tyler, Cooper & Alcorn, and tireless advocate and supporter of legal aid. He served as President of the Connecticut Bar Foundation from 1973 to 1975, the Connecticut Bar Association from 1957 to 1958, and the New Haven County Bar Association from 1948 to 1949, and was a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. In 1982, Attorney Cooper was the recipient of the Charles J. Parker Award for distinguished contributions to legal services for the poor. Among his many lasting contributions to the betterment of our legal community were his efforts towards the establishment of what is now the New Haven Legal Assistance Association. Attorney Cooper left a generous bequest to the Foundation that made the Fellows Program possible.



James W. Cooper

What is the James W. Cooper Fellows Program?

In 1994, the Connecticut Bar Foundation established the James W. Cooper Fellows Program as a formal means to recognize and honor attorneys who have shown a commitment to excellence through charitable, community, professional, and public service activities. The Foundation recognizes Fellows at an annual reception in their honor and publicizes their selection.

The Fellows sponsor programs that explore topics of timely importance to the legal community, enhance public understanding of the judicial system, and address matters concerning the administration of justice in Connecticut. The long-term objective is to develop the highest ideals of the legal profession.



James T. (Tim) Shearin, Hon. Janet C. Hall, William H. Clendenen, Jr.

Each Fellow has the opportunity to participate in the activities of the Fellows Program and may recommend new programs to the Foundation.

What Does it Mean to Become a James W. Cooper Fellow?

Nomination to the James W. Cooper Fellows Program may only be raised by an existing Fellow. By approving your nomination, the Board of Directors has recognized your professional distinction, based on evidence provided by your nominator, of devotion to the welfare of the community and advancement of the legal profession.

You are invited to join a network of distinguished attorneys, representing diverse backgrounds and practice areas, who agree on the importance of professional integrity and promoting the cause of justice in our community.



Justine Rakich-Kelly and Moy Ogilvie

As a Fellow, you will have the opportunity to continue your commitment to the profession as an ambassador of the Foundation's efforts to provide everyone in Connecticut access to justice, and as a driving force in programming that enhances public understanding of the law and promotes improvements to our legal system.

Making a Difference

During 2025, Fellows helped support the administration of programs including:
(click on hyperlinks to learn more about each program)



[Constance Baker Motley Speaker Series](#)

[Fellows Roundtables](#)

[Statewide High School Essay Contest](#)

[The History of Women in the Legal Profession Committee](#)

[Pels Homelessness Prevention Fund](#)

[Anthony M. Fitzgerald Award for Excellence](#)

[The 6th Hon. Mark R. Kravitz Symposium](#)

[The History of Attorneys of Color Committee's projects](#)

[Understanding Human Trafficking Series](#)

[Access to Justice Legal Aid Symposium](#)



Take the Next Step

As an approved nominee, we hope that you will choose to join the James W. Cooper Fellows Program. To do so, please complete an Acceptance Form online [here](#), and begin making a difference today!



Attorney Anika Singh Lemar
Board Chair
Connecticut Bar Foundation



Hon. Barry F. Armata
Fellows Chair
James W. Cooper Fellows