



**Legal Aid NSW Judge Bob Bellar Legal Pathways
2025 Aboriginal Identified Graduate Program – FAQs**

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1. What are the essential requirements required for this role?

Candidates must:

- Be an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.
- Have sound academic grades in a LLB (or equivalent legal qualification) from an accredited body.
- Be eligible to hold a NSW Practising Certificate by the commencement **date of 24 March 2025**.
- Have less than 18 months post admission legal work experience.
- Be willing to undertake a Criminal Record Check and Working with Children Check

2. Is there an age limit for people who apply?

The minimum age to apply is 18 years of age. All applicants are selected on their demonstrated competence against the key accountabilities and capabilities outlined in the [Role Description](#). We do not discriminate based on age, gender, race, ethnicity or having a disability. We select candidates based on merit.

3. Can I be part way through PLT when applying?

Yes, as long as you have passed and completed all elements of PLT and have your NSW Practising Certificate issued **before your start date (24 March 2025)**. Legal Aid NSW reserves the right to refuse an offer if you have not met all of the essential requirements for the role.

Please note, as you are required to hold a practising certificate to undertake the Graduate role, you cannot undertake PLT while participating in the Graduate Program as you will need to be able to undertake the full role responsibilities of a legal practitioner in this role (i.e., conducting interviews, representation, giving advice to clients).

4. Does all my work experience after my course have to be as a legal practitioner?

No. We would like you to be clear in your application about the length of time you have worked in the capacity as a solicitor, paralegal, legal clerk/support role.

5. What skills are you looking for?

We seek to recruit people with talent, enthusiasm and a commitment to customer service. We want people to be committed not only to the ideal of social justice but also with the ability to deliver services to clients experiencing disadvantage. Voluntary and paid work experience is highly valued. Our staff and clients come from diverse backgrounds, and we value both professional and “life” experience. We are looking for teamwork, motivation,



problem solving ability, initiative and flexibility/adaptability, the ability to work well under pressure: both in the nature and the volume of the work we undertake and the capacity to develop advocacy skills. The Legal Aid Graduate program is a learning and developing program, please be open to receiving feedback and seeking development opportunities within Legal Aid and externally.

You will find a full list of capabilities and level required for this role in the attached [Role Description](#). Please refer to the information below for further information on applying for the role.

6. I am not eligible for the program. Are there any other programs available?

Under the Judge Bob Bellefleur Legal Pathways program, Legal Aid NSW also offers Practical Legal Placements to Aboriginal law graduates and cadetships to Aboriginal students who are studying law at university. These programs will be advertised on www.iworkfor.nsw.gov.au and through tertiary institutions.

For Aboriginal specific information regarding working at Legal Aid NSW, our Aboriginal network, career development opportunities and support systems please email aboriginalservices@legalaid.nsw.gov.au.

All other temporary and ongoing vacancies are advertised on www.iworkfor.nsw.gov.au.

7. How do I apply?

Please refer to the job advertisement for instructions on how to apply.

Please see resources below for tips on writing an application and how to apply the capabilities to your application:

- [Applying for a job | Find your next role in the public sector | Work for NSW](#)
- [Writing your application | Find your next role in the public sector | Work for NSW](#)
- [Capability application tool - Capability application tool \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

8. When do applications close and when will recruitment take place?

The job advertisement will set out the closing date. Your application must be submitted via IworkforNSW by the closing date. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

The recruitment process (interviews and assessments) will take place approximately between October - November 2024. You will be notified by December 2024 – January 2025 if you have been successful in earning a role or successful in entering our talent pool.



9. Do you need a copy of my academic transcript?

Yes, an academic transcript needs to be submitted for your application to be considered.

10. When will I start work if I am successful and is the start date flexible?

All successful applicants will commence on **24 March 2025**. This allows time to finish any travels, qualify as a solicitor, and complete any other studies you are currently undertaking full time. **If you are successful in gaining a placement on the program, you must be available to start on this day.**

11. How many placement positions are there and where?

In 2025, we will be offering **three** Aboriginal Identified positions. There will be opportunities in our Criminal, Family and Civil Law Practices, as well as Policy, in the Haymarket Office (Sydney CBD), or one of our metropolitan or regional offices.

During your application, you will be asked to select the office locations where you would like to work. Please only select locations that you can travel to. Please also note that Legal Aid NSW does not cover costs for interview travel expenses, accommodation, living costs or relocation costs.

A list of Legal Aid NSW office locations can be found [here](#).

12. What is the starting salary?

Graduates commence on a starting salary of \$84,663 pa plus superannuation and leave loading.

13. What is your rotation system for Graduates?

Graduates will usually undertake two (12 month) jurisdiction rotations between our Criminal, Family, Civil and Policy Divisions. Sometimes, you may rotate twice within a division (for example to get both Local Court and Indictable experience in Criminal Law).

14. Can I choose the practice area for my rotations?

In your application, you will be asked to provide us with your practice preferences. If you are interested in a particular specialist team, we encourage you to indicate this preference in your application. Below you will find information on the range of specialist teams Legal Aid has available.



Although we will endeavour to place you in a practice/team of your choice in the first or second year, please note that location, operational requirements, business priorities and the preferences of other applicants may impact on our capacity to offer you your preferred placements.

We recommend you apply if you are open and willing to work in any of our service delivery areas in our legal divisions.
All placements will depend on the capacity of the division and their requirements.

15. Legal Aid NSW practice areas and specialist units/teams

Legal Aid NSW provides legal services to disadvantaged clients across NSW in most areas of Criminal, Family and Civil Law.

Criminal Law

The Criminal Law practice assists people charged with criminal offences appearing before the Children's Court, Local Court, District Court, Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeal and the High Court.

We provide [legal advice](#), [minor assistance](#), [duty appearances](#) and [case representation](#) at courts throughout the State.

Our specialist services include:

- Children's Legal Service
- Drug Court
- Prisoners Legal Service
- Walama Unit
- High Risk Offender Unit
- Indictable Appeals
- Indictable Crime
- Local Court Crime
- Supreme Court Bails
- District Court Appeals



Civil Law

The Civil Law practice helps resolve legal issues that impact on people's everyday lives such as debts, unpaid fines, discrimination, tenancy issues, Centrelink disputes and more. Our focus is on helping people to resolve legal issues as early as possible.

We provide free [legal advice](#) in a wide range of areas, help at some [courts and tribunals](#), and [grants of legal aid](#) for matters which are eligible under our [policies](#).

Community workers play a critical role in connecting people to legal assistance services. The *Law for Everyday Life* DVD explains how you can spot a civil law problem and where help is available. We also provide [training](#) in civil law for front-line staff, and [education sessions for the public](#).

Services provided by the civil law practice include:

- Generalist Civil
- Children's Civil Law Service
- Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities
- Housing
- Consumer law including credit, debt and mortgage matters
- Human Rights Team
- Government Law
- Refugee Service
- Mental Health Advocacy Service
- [Coronial Inquest Unit](#)
- Employment Law
- Respect at Work Legal Service
- Disaster Response Legal Service
- [Homeless Outreach Legal Service](#)
- Elder Abuse Service
- [Sexual Assault Communications Privilege Service](#)
- [Work and Development Order Service](#)
- Prisoners Civil Law Service



Family Law

The Family Law practice helps adults and children resolve their family disputes and to achieve safe and workable care arrangements for children. We provide [legal advice](#), [minor assistance](#), [duty services](#), [family dispute resolution](#) and [case representation](#) in commonwealth Family law matters, including child support matters, and in state care and protection matters across NSW.

Services provided by the family law practice include:

- Generalist Family
- [Child support](#) service
- Care and protection
- Early Intervention Unit
- [Independent Children's Lawyer](#)
- Family Law Service for Aboriginal Communities
- Domestic Violence Unit
- Family Dispute Resolution Service; and
- Independent Children's Lawyer Program

Policy

Legal Aid NSW also has a number of internal teams that focus on law reform and public policy issues that affect Legal Aid NSW and its clients. Through contributing to the process of law reform and public policy development, Legal Aid seeks to influence and bring about systemic change to improve the lives of our clients and people experiencing disadvantage in NSW.

- [Strategic Law Reform Unit](#)
- [In House Counsel](#)
- [Community Legal Education](#)
- [Client Eligibility Unit](#)
- [Private Lawyer Quality Standards Unit](#)



16. What sort of training is there?

The majority of training will be on the job training, supported by a supervisor and a buddy within your practice jurisdictions. There will also be more structured training which will involve orientation, corporate training, and legal practice training including CPD and formal internal and external training sessions. We currently employ a significant number of legal experts in-house and also run business training courses to support people in managing their work environment and caseloads.

17. What support is available while I complete the program?

- **Aboriginal Staff Network (ASN)**

Legal Aid NSW provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through the Aboriginal Staff Network. The network consists of all Aboriginal staff within Legal Aid NSW that meets regularly.

All staff are invited to attend network meetings, and managers are encouraged to release their staff to attend. The network meetings are an important opportunity for networking, career development and to discuss issues relevant to staff within their respective locations.

- **Aboriginal Services Branch (ASB)**

The ASB manages the graduate program and is available to provide support and guidance to managers and graduates, in relation to all aspects of the program. Such issues can include those covered in this guide, or any issues that arise during the placement. The ASB will meet regularly with graduates and their managers and can also provide advice on cultural support if needed.

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

EAP is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week, one-on-one telephone counselling session with a licenced counsellor. This confidential service is provided at no cost to Legal Aid employees.

All employees are entitled to 6 free sessions, you may choose to utilise your 6 sessions for any of the general EAP services which includes the following: General Counselling, Nutrition & Lifestyle Assist, Money Assist, Legal Assist, Conflict Assist, Family Assist and Career Assist.

Legal Aid NSW also offer Aboriginal staff cultural support and clinical supervision through Yamurrah.



18. Will I get a permanent (ongoing) contract at the end of the Program?

No, however as you approach the end of the graduate program, we will encourage and support you to apply for any vacant roles or talent pools available to be eligible for selection in Criminal Law, Family Law or Civil Law recruitment.

19. Can I apply for other roles while in the Program?

The program is in high demand, with Legal Aid NSW providing extensive resources to support the participants. Upon acceptance into the graduate program, you are expected to fully engage in and successfully complete the two-year Graduate program. Due to these reasons, participants are not encouraged to seek opportunities that would start before the Graduate Program finishes.

20. What opportunities exist after I finish the program?

Any organisation likes to retain its best talent and Legal Aid NSW is no different. We encourage you to apply for the talent pools at Legal Aid during the second year of your rotation. If suitable vacancies arise when you finish the program, you may be offered a further contract. The type of contract that will be offered to you (e.g., temporary, ongoing) would depend on the vacancies available at the time and the operational needs. If you move on at the end of the program, we will support you to get where you want to be, just as we will be if there is an opportunity for you to stay on with us.

The program opens additional career possibilities across the entire organisation. Legal Aid experience is highly regarded externally, and we have a strong alumni and highly respected figures within the legal field that have moved into practice at the bar, private practice as solicitors, appointment as Magistrates, employment as DPP prosecutors and a range of senior positions in other government agencies.

Most importantly you will have had the opportunity to build on your practical skills, your confidence and reflect on what legal practices you found the most rewarding and make informed choices about your future career goals.

