



Community Lawyering

Introduction, Syllabus & General Information

Spring 2025

Community Lawyering is a process through which advocates contribute their legal knowledge and skills to support initiatives identified by directly impacted people and community groups that enhance their power. The Shriver Center's Community Lawyering training brings a new mindset to legal aid and public interest law advocacy and provides concrete steps to build and sustain strong relationships with and among community members. In this course, you will learn how to activate issues identified by the community, support a successful advocacy campaign and facilitate community leadership.

Course Structure (all activities are online):

- In Week 1, participants attend one webinar (1 hour) and complete a number of self-paced activities (1.25 hours) via the course site.
- In Weeks 2-6, participants attend interactive live sessions and small group activities where they have opportunities to apply new knowledge to prepared scenarios, share challenges with other participants and faculty, and practice specific community lawyering skills.
- Participants complete weekly between-session assignments. They also participate in weekly peer support meetings to share experiences applying new content and skills in their work with communities.
- **Time Commitments:** This training involves a significant time commitment. Since the training takes place over 6 weeks (see table below for details), it is essential that you clear your schedule for the scheduled sessions so you can participate in all activities. This is particularly important since many of the activities involve small groups and paired exercises that require involvement of all participants.

SCHEDULE (All activities online)

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
March 10 – 14	March 17 – 21	March 24-28	Mar 31-Apr 4	April 7 – 11	April 14 – 17
2.25 hours	6 hours	6 hours	6 hours	6 hours	5 hours
Week 1 Webinar	Large + Small Group Sessions	Large + Small Group Sessions	Large + Small Group Sessions	Large + Small Group Sessions	Large + Small Group Sessions
Tues, Mar 11	Tues. Mar 18 Thur. Mar 20	Tues. Mar 25 Thur. Mar 27	Tues. Apr 1 Thur. Apr 3	Tues. Apr 8 Thur. Apr 10	Tues. Apr 15 Thur. Apr 17
(12:30-1:30 ET; 9:30-10:30 PT)	(12:30-3:00 ET; 9:30-12:00 PT both days)	(12:30-3:00 ET; 9:30-12:00 PT both days)	(12:30-3:00 ET; 9:30-12:00 PT both days)	(12:30-3:00 ET; 9:30-12:00 PT both days)	(12:30-3:00 ET; 9:30-12:00 PT both days)
Intro Survey (10 mins)	Application of Skills & Concepts (1h)	Application of Skills & Concepts (1h)	Application of Skills & Concepts (1h)	Application of Skills & Concepts (1h)	

- Send your questions re: assignments or course site to: coursehelp@povertylaw.org

Week 1: March 10 – 14, 2025

Live Session: Tuesday, March 11th / 12:30 – 1:30 ET 9:30 – 10:30 PT	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Community Lawyering: Introduces community lawyering – what it is, why an essential approach for legal aid and public interest law advocates to use, how it relates to mission, and potential impacts we can have as a result of these approaches. 	1 hour
ON YOUR OWN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro survey (10') • Readings & Videos (55') 	65mins

Week 2: March 17 – 21, 2025

Live Sessions: Tuesday, March 18 th / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Community Lawyering Stories	2.5 hours
Break	
Community Lawyering – Case Example 1: Experienced community lawyer shares story from their practice that exemplifies community lawyering values and practices.	
Break	
Community Lawyering Tools: Relationship Building & Issue Selection – PART 1. Introduces the case scenario that participants will work with throughout the remainder of the course and specific tools that advocates use to turn large “problems” into discrete actionable “issues”.	
ON YOUR OWN	
Readings + Application of Week 2 – Day 1 Content & Skills	30 mins

Live Sessions: Thursday, March 20 th / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Community Lawyering – Case Example 2: Experienced community lawyer shares story from their practices that exemplifies community lawyering values and practices.	2.5 hours
Break	
Community Lawyering Tools: Relationship Building & Issue Selection – Small Group Application	
Break	
Community Lawyering Tools: Relationship Building & Issue Selection – Small Group Application (cont'd)	
Week 2 Evaluation & Preparation for Week 3	
ON YOUR OWN	

Readings + Application of Week 2 – Day 2 Content & Skills	30 mins
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Week 3: March 24 – 28, 2025

Live Sessions: Tuesday, March 25th / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Week 3 Start-up & Action Learning Partners: Participants meet in small groups with their assigned “action learning partners” to review experiences applying new concepts and skills introduced during Week 2.	2.5 hours
Break	
Community Lawyering Tools – PART 2: Introduces power-mapping, a tool for identifying institutions and individuals who have power in relation to an issue identified by community groups, how these institutions and individuals are related to each other, what their networks look like, and how we can leverage these relationships to achieve the community’s desired result.	
Break	
Community Lawyering Tools – PART 2	
ON YOUR OWN	
Readings + Application of Week 3 – Day 1 Content and Skills	30 mins

Live Sessions: Thursday, March 27th / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Relationship Building Using One-to-Ones: Introduces practice of one-to-ones and framework for conducting a one-to-one.	2.5 hours
Break	
Relationship Building Using One-to-Ones – Small Groups	
Break	
Relationship Building Using One-to-Ones – Small Groups Debrief	

Week 3 Evaluation & Preparation for Week 4	
ON YOUR OWN	
Readings + Application of Week 3 – Day 2 Content and Skills	30 mins

Week 4: March 31 – April 4, 2025

Live Sessions: Tuesday, April 1st / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Week 4 Start-up & Action Learning Partners: Participants meet in small groups with their assigned “action learning partners” to review experiences applying new concepts and skills introduced during Week 3.	2.5 hours
Break	
Identity, Power & Difference: Participants examine issues of difference that arise within the community lawyering context and how to work effectively to respond to and address these.	
Break	
Identity, Power & Difference (cont’d)	
ON YOUR OWN	
Readings + Application of Week 4 – Day 1 Content and Skills	30 mins

Live Sessions: Thursday, April 3rd / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Start-up	2.5 hours
Strategic Communications – Part 1: Introduces framework for strategic framing and communication using VPSA model – Values, Problem, Solution, Action.	
Break	
Strategic Communications – Small Group	

Break	
Review & Discussion	
Week 4 Wrap-up & Preparation for Week 5	
ON YOUR OWN	
Readings + Application of Week 4 – Day 2 Content and Skills	30 mins

Week 5: April 7 – 11, 2025

Live Sessions: Tuesday, April 8th / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Large Group Check-in	2.5 hours
Break	
Policy Advocacy: Introduces policy advocacy as a tool for the community lawyer to supplement legal, organizing and media tactics to advance the community’s goals.	
Break	
Policy Advocacy: Participants use the policy advocacy action plan to develop a policy campaign to address goals identified in the case scenario.	
ON YOUR OWN	
Readings + Application of Week 5 – Day 1 Content & Skills	30 mins

Live Sessions: Thursday, April 10th / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Lawyers & Organizers Working Together. Introduces methodology and core practices that organizers use to build power and take action to address issues identified by impacted communities. Also explores opportunities and challenges that legal advocates and organizers face when working together.	
Break	

Lawyers & Organizers Working Together – (cont’d)	2.5 hours
Week 5 Wrap-Up & Preparation for Week 6	
ON YOUR OWN	
Readings + Application of Week 5 – Day 2 Content & Skills	30 mins

Week 6: April 14 – 17, 2025

Live Sessions: Tuesday, April 15th / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Week 6 Start-Up & Action Learning Partners: Participants meet in small groups with their assigned “action learning partners” to review experiences applying new concepts and skills introduced during Week 5.	2.5 hours
Panel presentations and discussion addressing community lawyering questions that have arisen during the training.	
Break	
Strategy Development – Part 1: Introduces a suggested approach for developing strategies to achieve community-identified goals.	
ON YOUR OWN	
Readings + Application of Week 6 – Day 1 Content & Skills	30 mins

Live Sessions: Thursday, April 17th / 12:30 – 3:00 ET 9:30 – 12:00 PT	Time
Strategy Development – Small Groups	2.5 hours
Break	
Action Planning & Close: Participants identify concrete steps for bringing community lawyering tools and approaches back to their organizations and communities.	
Break	

Action Planning & Close (cont'd)	
Wrap-up	