

APPLICATION TO WORK ON INNOCENCE PROJECT CASES

The mission of the Illinois Innocence Project (IIP) at UIS is to: to assist the wrongfully convicted by providing resources for investigation and research to those who are in prison but who are actually innocent of the crime(s) for which they were convicted; to develop policy proposals to prevent the conviction of innocent persons in the future and to encourage meaningful reforms toward preventing such convictions in the future; and educate the public and students about wrongful conviction of the innocent. The services of the Illinois Innocence Project are particularly critical because in Illinois convicted individuals who are not facing the death penalty have no public resources provided to prove their innocence as they seek post-conviction relief following their direct appeal.

Students and volunteers have the unique opportunity to engage in case research, prison visits, and court appearances with lawyers working on a case and/or to engage in case investigation. They will learn how to access, review, and interpret information critical to determining whether the individuals are actually innocent. Some can work on legislative proposals or police training. And others can work on promotional and development materials. All work is performed under strict guidelines of confidentiality and trustworthiness.

Students/volunteers should be able to work with the Project for at least one year and enroll in a class on wrongful convictions, and participate in a variety of service-learning and internship opportunities for the Project as part of their degree requirements. Students will learn about the nature and causes of wrongful conviction and how to examine specific innocence cases in which IIP is engaged. Previous IIP students have indicated that their preconceived notions about the criminal justice system were challenged and often changed; some students have even altered their career goals due to this experience.

The IIP office is located in the University of Illinois at Springfield Center for State Policy and Leadership, but students and volunteers from University of Illinois College of Law, the Southern Illinois University School of Law, and the Northern Illinois University College of Law are able to work off-site in places as arrangements for document security and supervision are made.

IIP is an active participant in the Innocence Network founded and developed out of the work of Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld of Cardozo Law School. Scheck and Neufeld established The Innocence Project in 1992 that has exposed widespread wrongful convictions of the innocent through the use of DNA testing, achieving over 360 DNA exonerations during as of 2018. The Illinois Innocence Project reviews cases that turn on DNA testing along with non-DNA cases that involve other factors common in wrongful convictions, such as eyewitness misidentification, false confessions, ineffective counsel, unreliable forensic evidence, and/or prosecutorial or police misconduct.

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To Applicants:

1. Working for the IIP requires a commitment of at least 10-15 hours/weekdays. Generally, the Springfield Office is open weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Some individuals may work after hours when they have shown experience working with IIP files and a sense of trust has been built. Individuals who cannot work during office hours and who may want to work with IIP on projects other than case work, such as helping with our annual fundraising event, will be assessed on a case by case basis.
2. Please provide a letter of interest with this application, describing why you are interested in working with IIP and any specific skills you think you can bring to this experience.
3. All individuals who work with IIP are encouraged to take/sit-in the LES 488/ECCE class: "Conviction of the Innocent". It is regularly offered on Monday or Tuesday evenings.

Your name:	Major/minor:
E-mail address:	Anticipated date of graduation:

Relevant work and/or not for profit experience/Extra-curricular Activities:

Anticipated goals for the future (law school? Graduate School? Employment?)

1. Identify any courses/other preparation you have had that you think might have prepared you for case research; e.g., courses on legal research, communications, writing, etc. and experiences relevant to other IIP work, such as Policy and Education:

2. Identify any employment or internship experiences you have had that you think might have prepared you for innocence work/case research/not-for-profit experience.

3. Reminding you that working for the IIP requires a commitment of at least 10-15 hours/weekdays and generally, the Springfield Office is open weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., explain limitations you have on time you can commit to IIP.

4. Do you perceive you have any conflicts that may hinder or prevent you from assisting in specific criminal cases? e.g., you are/were a law enforcement officer; you work(ed) for a State's Attorney; you have/had access to confidential information that might impact on specific cases. Explain.

5. We understand this might be private information that you do not want to share: If you are comfortable, please explain any experiences or encounters you, or your immediate family members or closest friends have had with the criminal justice system and your impression of that system as a result of those experiences.

6. Identify any issues, questions, or concerns that you have about working on innocence case(s).

Include the name and contact information for at least one reference that is familiar with your skills in this area.