

Guide to a Post Graduate Fellowship

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Public Interest Fellowships for Graduating Law Students

Fellowships are generally defined as financial grants awarded to recipients who work to fulfill a specific purpose for a specific amount of time. There are a variety of public interest fellowships available to graduating law students who are interested in pursuing public interest law at graduation. Fellowships are generally one- to two-year opportunities designed to give recent law graduates experience in public interest practice.

Public interest fellowships are attractive for a number of reasons, including that they allow graduates to creatively pursue their passions and interests, while providing the training necessary to pursue permanent public interest or teaching positions and that they provide networking opportunities for developing strong professional contacts in the field. In addition, some fellowships serve as a point of entry for permanent employment. Some fellowships also provide loan repayment assistance.

Many post-graduate public interest fellowships require advance preparation, so students must begin thinking about fellowships early in their law school career. For more information on how to prepare and apply for these opportunities, please review the following information and then contact the Career Services Office and make an appointment with your JD Advisor.

Different Categories of Public Interest Fellowships

Project Based Fellowships

Organizational Fellowships

Education & Teaching Fellowships

Government Fellowships

Firm-Sponsored Fellowships

Project Based Fellowships

Project-based fellowships allow fellows to develop projects to serve unmet legal needs in a particular area of interest. Typically, applicants propose their own projects, often in conjunction with an existing organization. In some cases, applicants may apply for support to start a new organization. These fellowships are funded by a third-party organization, allowing the fellow to work -- usually on a specific project -- with a host organization

EXAMPLES:

Equal Justice Works Fellowships

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- Fellows work on issues such as domestic violence, homelessness, community economic development, immigration, civil rights, juvenile justice, employment rights, access to health care and consumer fraud.
- There are four components of an Equal Justice Fellowship: a project, a fellow, a host organization, and one or more sponsors.
- Students must find their host organization before they apply to Equal Justice Works. The fellowships require a two-year commitment and may take place anywhere in the country.
- **Applications are due in September of your third year** and are available starting in July.
- **For more detailed information, and application materials, please visit www.equaljusticeworks.org**

Skadden Fellowship Foundation

- Fellows provide legal services to the poor, elderly, homeless and disabled, as well as those deprived of their human rights or civil rights. Fellows have also worked on issues concerning economic development and community renewal.
- Fellowships are awarded for one year, with the expectation of renewal for a second year.
- Applicants must find a public interest 501(c)(3) organization to sponsor them before they apply for a fellowship
- **Applications are due in October of your third year or during a judicial clerkship.**
- **For more detailed information, and application materials, please visit <http://www.skaddenfellowships.org/>**

Organizational Fellowships

Organizational fellowships are positions within existing organizations, usually for a defined period of one to two years. Applicants do not need to develop their own projects, but instead work on special projects designated by the organization.

EXAMPLES:

Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program

- The Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship enables a diverse group of new public interest lawyers to gain invaluable experience advancing women's rights. Fellows work in Washington, DC with a variety of organizations involved in legal and policy issues affecting women, such as domestic violence, employment discrimination, sexual harassment, immigration, education, health care, homelessness, poverty, disability rights, civil rights, HIV/AIDS, and international women's human rights.
- For more information, visit <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/centers-institutes/wlppfp/index.cfm>

Juvenile Law Center Zubrow Fellowship

- The Zubrow Fellowship provides an opportunity to engage in a wide variety of advocacy efforts on behalf of children in the delinquency and dependency systems. Zubrow Fellows are involved in training, legislative efforts, litigation, policy work and some direct representation on issues ranging from the rights of dependent youth aging out of the

Washington University Law

foster care system to the needs of juveniles reentering the community from delinquent placements.

- The fellowship is a two-year fellowship.
- Applications are due in the early fall of your third year.
- For more information, and application materials, visit <http://www.jlc.org/about-us>

Education & Teaching Fellowships

Teaching fellowships are designed to offer graduates the ability to learn how to teach law in a clinical setting, or work on legal research projects.

EXAMPLES:

Georgetown Clinical Graduate Teaching Fellowships

- Georgetown University Law Center's fellowships offer new and experienced attorneys alike the opportunity to combine study with practice in the fields of clinical legal education and public interest advocacy. Each fellowship is associated with one of the Law Center clinical programs, and varies considerably from the others in purpose, requirements, and duties.
- Fellows typically enroll in a two-year program during which they are in residence at a specific Georgetown clinic. In at least one of their years in residence, fellows directly supervise J.D. students enrolled in the clinics, assist in teaching clinical seminars, and perform work on their own cases or other legal matters in representing their clinic's clients.
- Fellowships usually begin in the late summer with an intensive orientation designed to introduce fellows to clinical teaching methods. The orientation is part of a year-long teacher training course entitled Elements of Clinical Pedagogy. Upon completing the requirements for graduation, a fellow is awarded the degree of Master of Laws (Advocacy).
- For more information, and application materials, visit <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/academic-programs/fellowships/clinical-fellowships.cfm>

Government Fellowships

Government entities host fellows as well, including the U.S. Department of Justice, the EEOC, and the Department of Housing, to name a few. These are typically called "Honors Programs," and are available for students immediately after graduation or a judicial clerkship.

EXAMPLES:

U.S. Department of Justice Attorney General's Honors Program

The Honors Program is the Department's entry-level recruitment program and is the only way the Department hires graduating law students. Students apply in their third year for an entry-level position following graduation. Organizations that typically participate in the Honors

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Program are: the Antitrust, Civil, Civil Rights, Criminal, Environment and Natural Resources, and Tax Divisions; the Federal Bureau of Prisons; the Executive Office for Immigration Review; the U.S. Trustees' Office; and select U.S. Attorney's Offices.

- For more information about the Honors Program, visit <http://www.justice.gov/careers/legal/index.html>

Presidential Management Fellows Program

The Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMF) is a competitive program that recruits law graduates and those from other disciplines to work in executive branch agencies. Attorney positions for PMFs are extremely rare, and students should not apply to the PMF Program if their goal is to be placed in an attorney position. Most often, law students selected as finalists for the PMF obtain appointments in positions such as policy analyst, budget analyst, tax law specialist, or other non-attorney positions.

- For more information, visit: <http://www.pmf.gov/>

Firm-Sponsored Fellowships

Firm-sponsored fellowships are defined positions within a law firm or a split-time position, whereby a fellow spends a portion of his/her time working at the sponsoring firm and a portion working at a designated non-profit agency.

EXAMPLES:

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson Fellowship

- The fellow works as a litigation associate at the New York firm for two years. Then, the fellow serves as a staff attorney at the Mexican- American Legal Defense & Education Fund (MALDEF) in Los Angeles or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense Fund (NAACP LDF) in New York for two years. The fellow may, but is not required to, rejoin the firm at full seniority. In some cases, the fellow may continue on the MALDEF or LDF staff.
- For more information, visit <http://www.friedfrank.com/index.cfm?pageID=49>

Relman & Dane Civil Rights Fellowship

- The Relman & Dane Civil Rights Fellowship offers a new attorney the opportunity to litigate important civil rights cases with experienced practitioners at the firm.
- For more information, visit <http://www.relmanlaw.com>

Preparing and Applying to Public Interest Fellowships

[How Do I Find Out About Possible Fellowships?](#)

[How Do I Get Started?](#)

[What Do Most Fellowship Applications Require?](#)

Washington University Law

How Do I Keep Track of All of the Fellowship Deadlines?

How Do I Find Out About Possible Fellowships?

Law School's Symplicity Job Bank (search under "Fellowships") [Symplicity Login](#)

Join the Fellowship Distribution List (email careerservices@wulaw.wustl.edu and let them add you to the group)

PSJD Resource Center. Most comprehensive resource for exploring and locating public interest fellowship opportunities. http://www.psid.org/resource_center

The Comprehensive Fellowship Guide: The Ultimate Resource for Law Students & Lawyers (hard copy located in the CSO)

How Do I Get Started?

Particularly for project based fellowships, you need to engage in self-assessment by asking yourself some questions.

- What, specifically, do you want to be doing? Individual representation? Advocacy? Coalition-building? Policy development? Impact litigation?
- What is the need for your project? Who is the community to be served? How is your project distinct?
- What measurable outcomes/goals do you want to achieve?
- How does the project fit with your longer-term career goals?
- Who do you need to get on board or to develop relationships with for your project to succeed?
- What in your background/interests prepares you to do this project? What is your particular passion for or connection to this project?
- With whom do you want to work? From whom will you learn? Who will be a good co-worker/mentor?

In addition to answering these questions, you should review summaries of projects that fellowship sponsors have funded in the past. Then think about the subject areas that interest you the most. Spend some time researching the cutting-edge issues in the area. This research should include not only library-based research (e.g., law review articles), but also consultation with faculty members and practicing lawyers.

Once you have developed your project, you must identify the organization(s) that may be interested in having you work with them if you obtain a fellowship. The best place to start is with an organization with which you have previous contacts, perhaps through an internship or summer job. Another approach is to use alumni or faculty contacts. The sponsoring agency does not have to be a "big name;" however, funders are concerned with whether the sponsor is qualified to house and supervise your project (in addition to scrutinizing the feasibility and overall benefit of your project).

What Do Most Fellowship Applications Require?

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Most fellowship programs require personal statements/essays by the applicant, recommendations from professors and/or former employers, writing sample and transcripts. Many also require a statement from the sponsoring organization.

How Do I Keep Track of All of the Fellowship Deadlines?

This can be one of the most challenging parts of the fellowship process because so much of the work on your application should be done far in advance of any deadlines. Make sure to check each fellowship application carefully and, if you are applying to multiple fellowships, maintain a separate calendar with important dates and deadlines. PSJD maintains a comprehensive fellowship calendar that should bookmark and consult frequently. PSJD Fellowship Calendar http://www.psid.org/deadlines_calendar