

Public Interest Fellowships Vol. 1



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Types of Public Interest Fellowships	3
	1. Organization-based Fellowships	3
	2. Project-based Fellowships	4
	3. Firm-sponsored Fellowships	5
	4. Yale Law School Public Interest Fellowships and Travel Reimbursement Program	6
	5. Entrepreneurial Grants	8
	6. Other Options.....	9
Chapter 2	Finding the Right Fellowship for You	10
	1. Consider Your Goals	10
	2. Research.....	11
	3. Fellowships and Clerkships	13
Chapter 3	The Fellowship Application	14
	1. Information for all Types of Fellowships and Foundation Grants.....	14
	2. Information for Project-based Fellowships and Foundation Grants	14
	3. Components of the Application Package.....	16
	4. Strategies in Putting Together the Application Package.....	18
	5. Deadlines	18
Appendix A	Fellowship and Grant Resources	19

CHAPTER 1

TYPES OF PUBLIC INTEREST FELLOWSHIPS

The term “fellowship” covers a broad range of programs. This guide focuses on public interest fellowship programs that are intended to fulfill a specific purpose and provide a specified sum, which is awarded after law school graduation for a fixed time period, usually one or two years.

Fellowships are a gateway for entry-level public interest jobs. Although many organizations—such as public defender offices; federal, state, and local governments; and most legal services offices—hire entry-level attorneys as a matter of course, a fellowship is often the only path for new attorneys into larger, national nonprofit organizations. In addition, the national fellowships give smaller nonprofit organizations the opportunity to augment their staffs with talented new lawyers, and provide those lawyers with legal training and exposure to a particular practice and community that they could not otherwise have found.

Below is an overview of the different types of fellowships and examples of each. In addition to the fellowships mentioned in this chapter, there are many others that may be found on PSLawNet, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

1. Organization-based Fellowships

A number of nonprofit organizations administer their own fellowships. The organization determines the salary, duration of the fellowship, and the scope of the fellow’s work within the organization. Candidates apply directly to the organization, and the organization usually chooses the fellow without outside assistance. The fellowship is basically a temporary job with the organization, typically designed for new law graduates or attorneys with little experience in the practice area. There is no expectation that the fellow will continue working with the organization when the fellowship ends. Indeed, unless a staff position opens or the organization is able to find additional funding to increase its staff, the fellow is unlikely to remain.

There are dozens of organization-based fellowships, for which you rarely need more than a cover letter, resume, and references. Although the fellowships are competitive, the application process for them is relatively simple and familiar. You do not have to develop your own project for organization-based fellowships; instead the focus is on your commitment to the work the organization already does.

Examples:

- ***Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Fellowship*** (www.lccr.com/about_jobs.shtml): The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area has a one-year fellowship intended to enhance the fellow’s understanding of litigation-oriented, transactional, and other non-traditional practices of civil rights law, and to prepare her or him for a career of promoting social justice.
- ***Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellowship*** (www.bpichicago.org/pg.php): Business & Professional People for the Public Interest, in Chicago, offers a one-year fellowship that is renewable for a second year. The fellow works on matters such as transforming segregated public housing, improving public education, and increasing the availability of affordable housing.
- ***American Civil Liberties Union Fellowships*** (www.aclu.org/jobs): The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) funds a number of fellowships including:

- ***Brennan Fellowship***: This is a one-year fellowship at the ACLU’s national legal department in New York City. The fellow focuses on First Amendment cases.
- ***Karpatkin Fellowship***: The ACLU offers a one-year fellowship position in the legal department of its national office in New York City. The fellow works on a range of civil liberties issues with a primary focus on racial justice.
- ***Reproductive Freedom Project Fellowship***: The ACLU provides a one-year fellowship for a fellow to work as an integral part of the Reproductive Freedom Project’s litigation teams.

2. Project-based Fellowships

Some foundations fund fellowships for applicants who develop a specific project in conjunction with a sponsoring nonprofit organization. The funders commonly have particular limitations on the projects that they will fund, or have particular issues or types of projects that they prefer. The fellowship has a finite term. If the fellow and the organization wish to continue the project, they will be responsible for finding additional funding. The funders consider the individual applicant’s qualifications; the qualification of the sponsoring organization to house and supervise the project; and the feasibility and benefit of the project.

For project-based fellowships, you do not have to have a well-developed project in mind before you approach people. Even if you just have a general sense of the type of work you would like to do, find organizations and people in that field and ask them about project ideas. Many organizations have great project ideas and are looking for a fellow who matches the project. In fact, PSLawNet (discussed in more detail in Chapter 2) includes a “fellowship sponsor” category in its job postings, specifically designed for organizations with project ideas to identify candidates to sponsor for project-based fellowships.

Examples:

- ***Skadden Fellowships*** (www.skaddenfellowships.org): The Skadden Fellowship Foundation funds approximately 25 fellowships every year to provide civil legal services to underserved groups in the United States. This is a one-year fellowship with the expectation of renewal for a second year. Applicants must be completing law school or a judicial clerkship. Fellows are selected based upon their demonstrated commitment to the public interest, the quality of their project, and their academic performance. The application deadline is the first Monday in October and final selections are made in December.
- ***Equal Justice Works Fellowships*** (www.equaljusticeworks.org/programs/fellowships): Equal Justice Works (EJW) funds several dozen two-year fellowships annually, with the goal of providing legal services to underserved groups in the United States. Applicants must be students or alumni of schools that are EJW members, which includes Yale. Applicants must have a commitment to public interest law, as well as the skills and initiative to carry out the goals of their project. The application deadline is in mid-September and fellowships are awarded on a rolling basis.
- ***New Voices Fellowship Program*** (<http://newvoices.aed.org/home.html>): Administered by the Academy for Educational Development, New Voices is a national leadership development program that assists smaller nonprofit organizations and professionals entering fields related to human rights social justice. Eligible organizations are U.S.-based, and address key issues in fields related to justice and peace. This is a two-year fellowship.

- **Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowships** (www.soros.org/initiatives/usprograms/focus/justice/programs/justice_fellows, click *Guidelines*, then *Advocacy Fellowship Guidelines*): Open Society Institute offers 18-month fellowships for projects that address criminal justice issues. The projects may be implemented in conjunction with large or small nonprofit organizations.
- **Yale Law School Fellowships**: See separate section on page 6.

3. Firm-sponsored Fellowships

Law firms have developed a variety of public interest fellowship models. In all of them, the fellow is paid by the firm for a period of time while he or she engages in public interest work. The models are: 1) a law firm places a fellow with a designated public interest organization for a fixed period of time, with or without a commitment to work with the sponsoring law firm; 2) a law firm has the fellow work within the firm exclusively on pro bono matters; and 3) a public interest law firm hires a fellow to work essentially as an entry-level associate for a specific term.

Examples:

Model 1—Law Firm Places Fellow with a Public Interest Organization:

- **Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson Fellowship** (www.ffhsj.com— select *About Us* then *Fellowships & Externships*): 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 NAACP Legal Defense Fund (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.

Model 2—Law Firm Hires Fellow To Work Exclusively on Public Interest Matters at the Firm:

- **John J. Gibbons Fellowship in Public Interest and Constitutional Law** (www.gibbonslaw.com/about/index.php?view_page=3): Gibbons PC hires one fellow each year for this program which is centered in Newark, NJ. As associates of the firm, fellows work on public interest and constitutional law projects and litigation. At the end of this two-year fellowship, fellows have the option to remain at the firm with full seniority and follow through on projects begun during the fellowship. There is no obligation to continue with the firm.
- **Hunton & Williams Pro Bono Fellowship** (www.hunton.com/firm/firm.aspx?id=5116): Hunton & Williams has two fellowship positions for attorneys whose time is devoted only to pro bono work. Each fellowship lasts for two years. One fellowship is based in Richmond, VA (and recruits on even-numbered years), and the other is in Atlanta, GA (and recruits on odd-numbered years).

Model 3—Public Interest Law Firm Hires Fellow:

- ***CMS&T International Human Rights Fellowship*** (www.cmht.com/careers.php): Cohen, Milstein, Sellers & Toll, a DC public interest law firm that handles major complex plaintiff class actions, offers a two-year fellowship in international human rights litigation. Fellows will participate in all facets of CMS&T's international human rights litigation practice, under the guidance of the firm's litigators.
- ***Thomas Emerson Fellowship at David Rosen & Associates***: Fellows will work at this New Haven firm on cases involving wrongful death and other serious tort cases, as well as equal rights, individual liberty and access to justice. Fellows are also given the opportunity to work on legal projects of their choice. Fellowships are generally for one year, with a possibility for two-year fellowships. The next available fellowship year will be 2011. CDO will publish information as soon as it is available.
- ***Relman Civil Rights Fellowship*** (www.relmanlaw.com/recruit.html): Relman & Dane PLLC, a DC public interest law firm, specializes in fair housing, employment discrimination, police accountability, and public accommodations litigation. The firm offers a one-year litigation fellowship.
- ***Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger Fellowship*** (www.smwlaw.com/hiring): This San Francisco law firm focuses on environmental and land use law and offers a two-year fellowship in which the fellow works as a junior associate on a variety of cases.

4. Yale Law School Public Interest Fellowships and Travel Reimbursement Program

Yale Law School has offered a variety of public interest fellowship programs for a number of years, and has instituted a public interest interview travel reimbursement program. There are also Yale University online resources that list sources of funding: the student grants and fellowships database at <http://studentgrants.yale.edu>; the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale at www.yale.edu/macmillan/flash.htm; and the Office of Fellowship Programs at www.yale.edu/yalecollege/academics/fellowships/index.html.

a. Fellowships Open Only to Yale Law School Graduates and Students

- ***Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship Program***—The Heyman Fellowships allow recent Yale Law graduates to work closely with high-level leaders in the federal government for one year. Appropriate positions include high-level, substantive work with the sponsoring office, agency, or commission. Positions that are not considered include judicial clerkships, entry-level positions, and work for political campaigns. Two to three fellowships are awarded each year. The fellowship carries a stipend of approximately \$44,000 plus health benefits. For information, contact Robyn Acampora in CDO at (203) 432-7224 or robyn.acampora@yale.edu, or Associate Dean Megan Barnett at (203) 432-4614 or at megan.barnett@yale.edu.
- ***Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowship***—This fellowship provides funding for a post-graduate year in public interest law, and is open to any graduate of Yale Law School, regardless of year of graduation. For the 2010-11 year, the program will fund seven fellows. Their projects address issues relating to immigration, the environment, poverty, labor law, and the experience of prisoners during and after incarceration. For information, contact Hope Metcalf, director of the Liman Program, at (203) 432-9404 or hope.metcalf@yale.edu, or visit the Liman Program's

website at www.law.yale.edu/liman. Including the 2010-11 awards, the Liman Program has supported 70 Fellows at more than 60 public interest organizations around the country.

- ***Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for International Human Rights, The Robert L. Bernstein Fellowships in International Human Rights***—The Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for International Human Rights awards Bernstein Fellowships annually to enable two or three YLS graduates to devote a year to full-time human rights advocacy work. YLS alumni are eligible for the fellowship for five years after graduation. The fellowship carries a stipend of approximately \$44,000. For information, see www.law.yale.edu/intellecualife/bernsteinfellowship.htm or contact schell.law@yale.edu.
- ***Robina Foundation Human Rights Fellowships***— The Robina Foundation Post-Graduate Fellowships in International Human Rights enable two or three Yale Law School YLS graduates to devote up to a year to full-time human rights work, particularly foreign and international judicial clerkships, internships with international tribunals or with international or national human rights agencies, and independent human rights research. YLS alumni are eligible for the fellowship for five years after graduation. The fellowships, supported by the Robina Foundation, carry a stipend of approximately \$44,000. For information, see www.law.yale.edu/intellecualife/RobinaFellowship.htm.
- ***YLS Public Interest Fellowships (YPIF)***—This new fellowship program supports recent Yale Law School graduates for one year of full-time public interest work. The proposed plan for the fellowship year must be one of the following: 1) legal project designed by applicant in partnership with a sponsoring organization; 2) existing project with a host organization; 3) staff attorney at a public interest organization; or 4) unpaid foreign or international court clerkship or international prosecution internship. The fellowship provides each recipient with a stipend of approximately \$44,000. To the extent possible, applicants are encouraged to apply for the other fellowships, including those offered by Yale and by other institutions or foundations. For information, contact Associate Dean Sharon Brooks at (203) 432-7646 or at sharon.brooks@yale.edu.
- ***Mary A. McCarthy Fellowships in Public Interest Law***—Current students may apply for McCarthy Fellowships to support summer or immediate post-graduate public interest work in the United States. Projects in areas of particular interest to Mary McCarthy (mediation and rights of women, immigrants, prisoners, or criminal defendants) are preferred, but not required. Typical grants range from \$3,000 to \$6,000, although larger grants have been awarded. For information, contact Marilyn Drees in CDO at marilyn.drees@yale.edu.

b. Fellowships Open to Any Law School Graduate

- ***Initiative for Public Interest Law at Yale***—provides start-up money for projects that protect the legal rights and interests of under-served communities. The organization typically grants one-year fellowships of up to \$30,000 to support these projects but will occasionally provide partial grants of \$5,000 to \$20,000 to individuals who have secured funding from other sources. The organization raises money to fund innovative public interest projects by young attorneys and graduating law students who may have difficulty obtaining money from traditional funding sources due to the unconventional approach or unique population that their projects will serve. The Initiative's mission is to fund cutting-edge legal projects whose successful execution has the potential to serve as a model for public interest organizations around the country. For more information, please contact the Initiative at initiativeforpublicinterest@gmail.com.

- **Robert M. Cover Fellowship**—The Cover Fellowship Program seeks to attract attorneys who are interested in clinical law teaching and have at least five years of practice or equivalent experience. Each fellowship lasts for two years and one new Cover Fellow is selected each year. The Fellows have time for research and writing, and they work with one or more civil clinics, which include immigration, housing, transactional, and general civil law. Funding: approx. \$46,000 per year. Contact: Kathryn Stoddard Jannke, Office Manager, The Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization; Tel: 203-432-4800; Fax: 203-432-1426; Email: kathryn.jannke@yale.edu; Website: www.law.yale.edu/academics/coverfellowships.htm.

c. Travel Reimbursement for Interviews in the Public Interest

In an effort to support our students who are pursuing public interest work, YLS has developed a public interest interview travel reimbursement program. The fund will provide limited travel reimbursements for second- and third-year students who must travel to conduct a necessary public interest interview. The Law School will reimburse reasonable travel expenses, up to a per student maximum of \$400. No hotel or food expenses will be reimbursed, and all travel expenses must be economical. Before traveling, students must contact Juliann Davis in CDO at 203-432-1676 to learn the requirements for reimbursement.

5. Entrepreneurial Grants

You can also try to fund your public interest project the same way that public interest organizations have been funding projects for decades—apply for foundation grants. Keep in mind that foundations face legal limitations on their ability to give grants to individuals. They can give funds for educational purposes and, under certain circumstances, give charitable donations to needy individuals. Generally, they give grants to nonprofit organizations. Realistically, then, to compete for grants, you should find a nonprofit organization to be your fiscal sponsor and submit the grant proposal. If you are applying for project-based fellowships, you may be able to expand your fellowship application with the sponsoring organization to meet grant proposal criteria. Check out the Foundation Center website at www.fdncenter.org under *For Individual Grantseekers* for helpful tips and resources on identifying organizations and funding.

As an alternative, you can form your own nonprofit organization to apply for grants. Creating and operating a tax-exempt nonprofit organization is a significant responsibility, which you will have to shoulder on top of implementing your project. It may be an option if you have already nurtured this project while a student, have found no suitable sponsoring organizations, and are deeply committed to continuing the project. For example, in the past ten years, Yale law students have come together, with assistance from the Nonprofit Organizations Clinic, to form successful nonprofit organizations to run a charter school and to offer training for low-income mothers to become licensed child-care providers.

Examples:

- **Echoing Green Foundation Public Interest Fellowships** (www.echoinggreen.org): Echoing Green offers two-year fellowships to social innovators who develop an independent and autonomous project in a public service area such as the environment, arts, education, civil and human rights, and community economic development. The proposed project may be domestic or international. The fellowships are not limited to law-related projects.
- **Ashoka Fellowships** (www.ashoka.org): Ashoka offers fellowships around the world to social entrepreneurs who have new ideas to effect social change.

6. Other Options

In addition to pursuing the options above for funding short-term post-graduate opportunities, think about imaginative ways to seek out funding. The following examples can serve as encouragement for you to consider every possibility, even remote ones, and, most important, never to forego a project that you believe is worthwhile:

- A graduate who started a nonprofit educational organization as a law student was unable to find a single source of funding to cover her project. By combining a fellowship and several smaller grants, she was able to secure sufficient funds.
- Some students have successfully combined their enthusiasm for public interest work with a law firm position, in one case by winning agreement by the firm to pursue a public interest project with reduced pay for a year, and in another by negotiating higher percentage of pro bono work at regular salary.

CHAPTER 2

FINDING THE RIGHT FELLOWSHIP FOR YOU

It is important to give yourself enough time to line up all the elements necessary for your fellowship applications, as some of the earliest fellowship deadlines fall soon after classes start in September. Use your second year, particularly spring and summer, to take stock of yourself, learn about nonprofit organizations and fellowships in areas that interest you, and line up recommenders. If you are applying for project-based fellowships, that is the time to develop your project in conjunction with a sponsoring organization.

Investigate summer opportunities, including jobs with public interest organizations and pro bono options with private sector employers. Take particular note of organizations that offer fellowships or are willing to sponsor fellowship candidates. Consider establishing a relationship with one of those organizations by spending all or part of your summer at one of them. If you are interested in organizations where you have not worked, get in touch with them. Be aware that some larger organizations which regularly sponsor candidates for project-based fellowships solicit resumes and interview potential candidates during the summer before the application deadline.

1. Consider Your Goals

Before you get caught up in researching organizations and designing projects, think about what you want to accomplish and what the experience will mean for you—now and as part of your future career. If you assess your interests, goals, and plans initially, it will be easier to find a fellowship or design a project that is a good match. You will also be prepared to respond to all the “whats,” “hows,” and “whys” awaiting you in the fellowship applications and interviews. The classic investigative formula provides a useful framework for your self-assessment:

- Who** will be your clients? Children, immigrants, homeless women?
will be your coworkers? Law professors, government workers, lawyers?
- What** kind of work do you want to do? Counseling, education, advocacy?
areas of law interest you?
do you want to accomplish?
- When** do you plan to start? Immediately after graduation? After clerking or practicing law?
do you plan to stop? Is this the beginning of a lifelong devotion to a particular issue or group? Is it the first step in a path toward government service, academia, public policy, or other work in the private sector?
- Where** in the world do you want to work?
do you want to spend your day? In a courtroom, a classroom, an office?
- Why** are you doing this?
does it interest you?
is a particular organization a good fit for you?

- How** do you like to work? As part of a team or independently? Juggling multiple projects or focusing on one until completed?
- will you make an effective contribution?
- can a fellowship help you accomplish your goal(s)?

2. Research

You are about to make a significant investment of your time, talent, and professional reputation in an organization, so it is important for you to make an informed decision. Once you have determined your goals, start gathering information to identify fellowships and nonprofit organizations that might fit your criteria. Appendix A lists online resources and books that assist in the search for fellowships and grants, as well as offer advice for preparing applications. It also lists websites for organizations that offer fellowships and have not posted their positions on PSLawNet, the database which is described below.

Fellowship funders are similar to other employers. They are looking for a fellow who closely connects with the goals, purpose, and personality of the chosen organization. If you can articulate your goals from self-assessment and incorporate the goals of the fellowship funder from your research, you can effectively demonstrate your fit with and potential value to the organization.

a. PSLawNet

The natural starting point for your research is the online Public Service Law Network or PSLawNet. It maintains a large and growing searchable database of fellowships and sponsoring organizations for project-based fellowships, as well as public interest organizations of interest to lawyers and law students. The database is available to students and alumni of subscriber law schools, including Yale, at www.pslawnet.org.

In the database, click on “Search Opportunities.” Under “Job Type,” PSLawNet includes four searchable fellowship categories:

- *Fellowship-Law Related* is for legal issues not necessarily involving direct client service.
- *Fellowship-Legal* is for advocacy or direct legal services.
- *Fellowship-Nonlegal* is for issues not strictly “legal,” such as public health or international relations, but for which a law degree can be helpful.
- *Fellowship-Sponsor* is for organizations seeking candidates for project-based fellowships.

You can tailor your search by various criteria:

- *Job Location* allows you to search by city, state, country, or metropolitan region.
- *Practice Areas* allows you to limit your search to specific legal topics, listed alphabetically. Keep in mind that the person inputting the fellowship information may not have exactly the same idea about practice areas as you do, which means that you could miss opportunities if you start with a narrow search.
- *Job Title* and *Keyword* give you the chance to search the text for specific words, which can be helpful in adding flexibility to a “Practice Area” search.

Keep in mind that you can also find basic information about organizations by clicking on “Search Organizations.” In the “Contact Information” section, organizations can put a link to their website.

On the publicly available portion of the website you will see a link to Postgraduate Fellowships in the left sidebar menu. This section contains:

- *Application Deadline Calendar* is a list of deadlines for fellowships, along with application deadlines for organizations seeking candidates to sponsor for project-based fellowships.
- *Information and Resources* includes an overview of the different types of available fellowship opportunities, as well as links to additional recourses (including this guide).

b. People Resources

Talk with people who might be familiar with the organization or the fellowship, including current and former fellows, former applicants, faculty members, CDO's public interest counselor or other counselors, and individuals in government or other organizations who work on the same or related issues. Your fellow law students and YLS alumni can be terrific, convenient resources. For alumni, search YLS Career Connections and see Appendix B, which lists fellowships obtained by YLS graduates. You can also build on your YLS network by seeking out people in the field who have different academic affiliations. They share your enthusiasm for this work and are likely to be glad to help.

Equally important is contacting the director of the fellowship program and current staff members at the organization. In addition to helping you get in touch with former fellows, they can be excellent sources of information about the fellowship application process, qualifications for applicants, and the characteristics of previously successful proposals. By making a strong favorable impression at the earliest stage, you could cultivate support for your candidacy through the process.

c. Additional Resources

CDO maintains a job posting system that you can check for listings of fellowships and sponsoring organizations. You can access the system through the CDO website. In addition to the search function, you can also receive emails regarding listings that meet criteria that you set up in the system.

After you identify organizations that interest you, whether you are applying for an organization-based fellowship or looking for an organization to sponsor your project, read everything you can find about them. Check each organization's website, and look for its recent annual reports and newsletters to get a sense of its current focus and work. Use Lexis-Nexis, Westlaw, or a web search engine to find newspaper and magazine articles about the organization or its staff members. To read a variety of recent successful fellowship applications, see Volume II of this guide, *Public Interest Fellowships: Sample Applications*. You can also see more EJW samples at www.equaljusticeworks.org/programs/fellowships/examples.

d. Assess Potential Organizations

As you talk with people and read, be sure to elicit information that answers these questions:

- Is the organization well run? Will you be able to do the work you want, with adequate supervision?
- Is the organization financially stable?
- Is the organization appropriately staffed? Will the people you meet now still be there to mentor you in a year or two?
- How well do the organization's values and goals match your own?
- For organization-based fellowships, what are the nature and purpose of the fellowship, along with the important qualifications?

With respect to sponsoring organizations, find out:

- How familiar is the organization with the project-based fellowship application process?
- Is a staff member available to work with you on the application?
- How closely does your project fit with the organization's mission and current activities? Does the organization have a specific idea for a project already?
- How enthusiastic is the organization about you and your project? Do they plan to sponsor a number of candidates and if so, where do you rank?
- Is the organization willing to pursue additional funding alternatives with you?

3. Fellowships and Clerkships

If you are thinking of applying to fellowships and clerkships, your approach will depend on the types of fellowships in which you are interested and the organizations' policies. Organizations that offer their own fellowships may be less affected by your decision to apply concurrently for a fellowship and clerkship. They can interview more candidates to compensate for some of them accepting clerkships and withdrawing from the fellowship pool. For organizations that sponsor candidates for project-based fellowships, losing a candidate could shut them out of the fellowship cycle. Those organizations may refuse to support a candidate who is also seeking a clerkship, or be inclined to support another candidate more enthusiastically than you.

Talk with potential sponsoring organizations about whether and how you would fit into their plans if you also apply for clerkships. Some organizations may be willing to sponsor a clerkship applicant who has developed her or his own project, but less willing to sponsor someone for a project that the organization has developed to meet its core mission. Ask whether the organization will sponsor multiple candidates for similar projects. If so, find out how the organization would rank the candidates.

Consider the timing of your applications. Determine whether it makes more sense for you to focus on fellowships first and then clerkships, or vice versa. If you decide to apply sequentially, take into account your level of enthusiasm for each option, your strengths and weaknesses as an applicant, and time limitations or restrictions on applicants for different fellowships.

Even if you apply to fellowships and clerkships in the same year, you may be able to time your applications based on the hiring schedule of the judge and the fellowship deadlines. For example, you could apply to judges that select clerks at the start of the clerkship hiring season and, if unsuccessful, apply for fellowships with later deadlines. In the alternative, you could apply to fellowships with early deadlines and, if unsuccessful, apply to judges who hire later in the season or have unexpected openings, as well as recently confirmed judges.

The Judicial Clerkship Committee of the National Association for Law Placement conducted a study in 2003 that addressed these issues. To check out the full report, "The New Face of Fall Hiring: The Effects of the New Judicial Clerk Hiring Plan on Other Hiring Practices," go to www.nalp.org/assets/47_clerkrpt.pdf. For detailed information on the law clerk hiring plan, visit www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/lawclerk.nsf/Home?OpenForm.

CHAPTER 3

THE FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION

If a total stranger asked you for thousands of dollars, what would you want to know before you gave it to him or her? That is the essence of the fellowship application. The format and specific requirements of various fellowship programs differ, but all seek basically the same information. The art of composing a fellowship application lies in making a compelling presentation of the essential information within the specific restrictions of a given application. As you go through this process, our public interest counselor Akua Akyea is available to review your application materials.

1. Information for All Types of Fellowships and Foundation Grants

a. Are you qualified?

Funders consider your experience and your academic background. As you might expect, different funders emphasize different types of qualifications. Law firm funders, for example, tend to use the same criteria as they would for associate hiring. Some nonprofit organizations are more interested in practical experience, such as work with a clinic or public interest organization, than in academic credentials. Careful research, including conversations with former fellows and the funder's staff, can give you some insight into how your qualifications would be viewed, and what you must emphasize.

b. Are you committed to the organization and the work?

One of the easiest ways to demonstrate your commitment is to work with the organization during the summer or school term, as an intern or through a clinical program. If you worked with the organization before law school, that would also be advantageous. An organization that already knows your work and has seen your commitment will be favorably disposed to fund you, or to provide strong support for your project proposal.

Even if you have not worked at the organization, you can demonstrate your interest in the organization's work through other experience or academic projects related to the same legal issues or client population. Often the most compelling applications show the direct connection between the candidate and the community that they wish to serve. Consider focusing on communities with which you have already had contact—through previous work experience, through high school or college volunteer experiences, or as you were growing up.

2. Information for Project-based Fellowships and Foundation Grants

a. Is the project consistent with the funder's purposes and priorities?

Make sure that you apply to funders who support the work you want to do. Organizations must make programmatic decisions about the range of issues and the types of work that they will support. They cannot fund everything. Carefully examine the fellowship materials and learn the funder's preferences, biases, and project/organization restrictions from former fellows, prior successful fellowship applications, or organization staff. Otherwise, you may be wasting your time.

You must clearly explain the ways in which your project satisfies the funder's goals and falls within its funding parameters. Use language from the fellowship description or from the organization's mission

statement as a guide. Common project restrictions are: the project must be for civil legal services only; it must be a domestic U.S. project; the project must be located in a specified geographical area; the sponsor must be tax-exempt under I.R.C. § 501(c)(3); or the project must be limited to certain legal subject matter.

b. Is there a significant need?

You must convince funders that you have identified a genuine problem and that it is a problem you can solve. Your description of the need must be realistically limited in scope and focused on the community that you wish to serve. For example, violence in high schools is a significant national problem, and you are not going to solve it during a one- or two-year fellowship. Decreasing violence in high schools in Alameda County, California, on the other hand, may actually be feasible during the fellowship term.

Anecdotal evidence of a problem can be compelling. People are more likely to understand and empathize with an individual's story than to be moved by a statistical chart. In addition, funders will want data, particularly about the specific community that you seek to serve. For example, if you want to work with Alameda County high schools, simply citing national statistics about high school violence will not be particularly persuasive. Look for information from government agencies, academic or foundation studies, and reports of organizations within the community. Articles from newspapers, magazines, and other journals are also useful.

c. Does your project offer a feasible way to meet the need?

Funders will examine your plan in relation to your stated project goals. Your plan should include a timeline with descriptions of specific tasks and benchmarks for progress. The timeline and tasks will demonstrate the project's feasibility. The benchmarks will give the funders a better understanding of how you propose to measure your success and reach the goals.

d. Will the project have support within the community you seek to serve? Does it fit well with other programs?

To ensure participation and improve the likelihood that the project will flourish after the fellowship ends, community organizations and the people that you will serve should favor it. Demonstrate your knowledge of the community and its leadership by identifying supporters. Be able to explain how other groups can support your efforts and your project can complement their work. For example, you may be able to augment educational activities at the local community center by holding a weekly class, or get referrals from a local homeless shelter.

e. Is the project discrete and not duplicative?

Fellows are not intended as substitutes for regular staff. Funders need assurance that you are primarily responsible for and are the principal worker on the project. You must communicate that you are not just another lawyer working on someone else's cases. Your project cannot overlap too greatly with the work of another organization or another part of your sponsoring organization. One aim of the fellowship is to fill a gap in legal services. If the work is already being done, it is hard to justify paying a fellow to replicate it.

f. Are you and the organization capable of pulling this off?

Your sponsoring organization is as critical to the success of the application as you are. Funders will scrutinize the match between your project proposal and the sponsoring organization's work, as well as the

organization's reputation, staffing, financial stability, and effectiveness in advancing its mission. Research multiple organizations in the same field or local community, to improve your chances of finding a good match and being able to demonstrate enthusiastic support.

Organizations which have successfully sponsored fellows in the past may offer a simpler avenue for finding a sponsor. Their familiarity with the fellowship application process can be helpful. In addition, they have proven their value to funders in the past. Of course, there is no guarantee that previously successful organizations will have the same success with fellowship applicants in the future, but they can be a useful starting point. Fellowship funders have records of previously funded projects, fellows and organizations. Many, such as the Skadden Fellowship Foundation and the Equal Justice Works Fellowship Program, publish online and paper reports summarizing the fellowships. In addition to indicating the types of projects recently funded, the reports show which organizations have been funded and how often.

First-time sponsoring organizations are selected every year. If you choose a sponsoring organization that has never hosted a fellow, just bear in mind that you must highlight the organization's accomplishments, stability, and proficiency, such as specific statistics of clients served or project goals met, or special expertise of staff. In addition, you should show that the organization will be able to train and supervise you effectively. Show that you and your sponsoring organization will be an effective team.

3. Components of the Application Package

Different fellowship funders request somewhat different sets of application materials. Many organization-based fellowships require the same materials as any other job application: cover letter, resume, law school transcript, writing sample, and recommendation letters or a reference list. Project-based fellowships and foundation grants require additional documents—a personal narrative and a project description—in which you can use your answers to the questions discussed in the previous section.

Your application materials must be free of errors. The application package must conform to all requirements and restrictions, such as word or page limits. Materials must be clear, complete, and responsive to the fellowship aims. Your documents must be consistent with those submitted by your sponsoring organization; for example, you and your sponsoring organization should describe the goals of your project similarly. Expect to spend more time putting your application package together than you originally estimate, and build a cushion into your schedule.

a. The Personal Narrative

You may be asked to provide an essay about your public interest experience or qualifications. In the absence of a specific request, use your cover letter to highlight your commitment and qualifications. Whatever the format, your primary goal is to convince the funder that you possess the talent, skills and dedication that define an ideal fellow. Your narrative lets the funders see the person behind the application and get a sense of the energy and commitment behind the credentials.

Focus on your previous experiences in public interest or any other previous work relevant to the substantive mission of the fellowship. Highlight experiences that drew you to your chosen project or community. Consider the broad range of your academic and life experiences, beyond law school and legal work. Use those experiences to emphasize your personal skills, such as patient listening or strong organization, as well as traditional legal skills. If your public interest history is relatively short, discuss the circumstances that turned your career goals toward the public sector and the reasons this particular work is meaningful to you.

b. Your Resume

Your resume can provide another opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to public service generally and your qualifications for a specific fellowship, particularly if you face a page or word limit on your personal narrative. Be less concerned about the oft-repeated “one-page rule” and concentrate on detailing public interest work and volunteer community service activities, even if it takes additional pages. Include relevant college activities and even significant high school service. The more detailed a portrait you can paint of long-standing commitment to aiding vulnerable, underserved groups, the stronger your application. Even if you cannot show a long history, you can still show your knowledge and commitment in the description of your activities. Give a full picture of your personal interest and expertise.

c. Recommendations

Many fellowship programs require recommendation letters or letters of support for proposed projects. Others ask for a list of references. Most will want at least one employer reference. Some will also ask for a recommendation from a law professor. In each case, the best recommenders can discuss your personal strengths and the quality of your work in detail and with enthusiasm. Your recommenders can also highlight specific characteristics or experiences that make you a particularly strong candidate for a given fellowship, especially since their letters are rarely subject to length limitations.

Talk with your references about your decision to apply for the fellowship and its importance to your career. Supply each recommender with a copy of your resume, a description of the fellowship, and an explanation of the type of work you will be doing or, in the case of a project-based fellowship, your project proposal. Let them know if there are any points you believe should be emphasized in their letters. If you have references who are not required to submit letters, give them a copy of your completed application package and let them know if or when they might be contacted. Keep your recommenders updated throughout the application process.

Fellowships requiring a sponsoring organization often request a letter of support from the organization. It is essentially an affirmation that, if you are selected, the organization will assist and support you in the implementation of your project. The support letter provides an excellent opportunity for the sponsoring organization to reinforce some areas of your project proposal or personal narrative. The sponsor can affirm the significance of the problem and emphasize the value of your project in addressing the problem. The sponsor should convey strong support for you, appreciation of how your project complements the mission of the organization, and clear understanding of the work to be performed. Funders evaluate the sponsor’s ability to provide appropriate training and supervision, along with the spirit of cooperation between you and your sponsor.

d. Project Description for Project-based Fellowships

For project-based fellowships, a project description or proposal is the heart of the application. The project description is the place to answer most questions and eliminate all doubts. It is a persuasive document, as well as a source of information. It must generate support for the target community, interest in your project, and confidence in you.

Make the problem concrete. Consider these two statements of purpose: “I propose to work on consumer fraud issues in Los Angeles” *versus* “I propose to develop new litigation strategies to expose and stop home equity fraud schemes against poor, disabled and elderly residents in Los Angeles.” Both sentences describe the same project, yet the latter is much more compelling. A vivid project statement of purpose or project summary will stay with readers and interviewers as they consider and discuss your proposal.

Make the plan realistic. Map out the components of the project and the timeline carefully. Indicate, where appropriate, the resources on which you will draw within the sponsoring organization and in the community.

Make the goals and the plan match. Include short-term and long-term objectives within the plan. If the goals are ill-defined, or are not clearly linked to the plan, then it will be hard to convince a funder to support that plan over others, no matter how significant the need.

4. Strategies in Putting Together the Application Package

Think creatively and strategically about the best way to convey all the important information within the limits imposed by the fellowship application. Experiences that do not fit within your personal essay, for example, might be detailed in your resume or described by one of your recommenders. Details about your project proposal could be included in your sponsoring organization's letter of support.

A required writing sample could reinforce your expertise in the fellowship subject area, if you can submit a brief, research paper, or other document which you wrote on that subject. Even if you have nothing precisely on point, a writing sample on another topic could still demonstrate related expertise or a commitment to public interest issues. In some cases, you or your sponsoring organization may be permitted to attach additional materials to your submissions, such as newspaper articles about the sponsoring organization, the community to be served, or the specific problem to be addressed. It is worth checking with the director of the fellowship program if the application materials are not explicit on the point.

As crucial as it is to think creatively through the fellowship application process, it is equally important not to go overboard. Make sure every page is relevant as well as supportive. Be sure that you do not pad your application with an excessive amount of material.

5. Deadlines

Fellowship deadlines are as early as September of the year before the start date. Deadlines are scattered throughout the fall and winter, and some fellowship deadlines are as late as April. The deadlines and application requirements can change from year to year. Sometimes the funder will make a change even after the current year's requirements are announced publicly. Deadlines may also be extended in hopes of attracting more applicants. Do not just rely on a brochure or website, such as the Application Deadline Calendar on PSLawNet, for accurate information. Recheck the deadlines and requirements with the funder.

Appendix A

Fellowship and Grant Resources

Online Resources

A. Online Advice for Fellowship Applicants

CFDA–Developing and Writing Grant Proposals
www.aspe.hhs.gov/cfda/ia6.htm

CGU Writing Center
www.cgu.edu/pages/726.asp

The Chronicle of Higher Education

- *The Buck Starts Here* (February, 2005)
www.chronicle.com/jobs/news/2005/02/2005022101c.htm
- *Words Worth Their Weight in Cash* (April, 2005)
www.chronicle.com/jobs/news/2005/04/2005040801c.htm

Columbia Fellowships
www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/fellowships

Cornell Career Services–Applying for Fellowships
www.career.cornell.edu/fellowships/applying.html

Grant Writing Tips
www.gradschool.about.com/cs/grantadvice/a/grant.htm

B. Fellowship and Grant Portals on the Web

The Foundation Center
www.fdncenter.org

The Foundation Center has general information, resources and tips for individual grantseekers. Institutions and individuals can also purchase a short- or long-term YLS has a subscription to *Foundation Grants to Individuals Online*.

McMillan Center for International and Area Studies – Graduate Fellowships
www.yale.edu/macmillan/graduate.htm

Yale Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, McDougal Graduate Student Center
www.yale.edu/graduateschool/mcdougal

Yale Office of Fellowship Programs
(formerly the Office of International Education & Fellowship Programs)
www.yale.edu/ofp

C. Organization Websites Describing Specific Fellowships (Not Listed on PSLawNet)

Brookings Institution—Fellowship Opportunities
www.brook.edu/admin/fellowships.htm

Equal Justice Works Pro Bono Legal Corps, funded through AmeriCorps
www.equaljusticeworks.org

Fulbright Grants for Graduate Study Abroad
www.cies.org

German Marshall Fund of the United States Fellowship
www.gmfus.org/grants-fellowships

National Endowment for the Humanities: Grant Programs
www.neh.gov

National Security Education Program (Boren) Fellowships
www.borenawards.org

*New York University School of Education—National Academy of Education/
Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship*
www.naeducation.org

Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowships
www.rockfound.org/grants/grants.shtml

Social Science Research Council—Fellowships and Grants for Training and Research
www.ssrc.org/fellowships

World Learning/USAID—Democracy Fellows Program
<http://wlid.usaid.gov>

Books

Annual Register of Grant Support. New Providence, NJ: R.R. Bowker. 2010

Barbato, Joseph and Danielle S. Furlich. *Writing for a Good Cause: The Complete Guide to Crafting Proposals and Other Persuasive Pieces for Nonprofits*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. 2000

Barber, Daniel M. *Finding Funding: The Comprehensive Guide to Grant Writing*. Long Beach, CA: Bond Street Publishers. 2002

Bauer, David G. *The “How To” Grants Manual: Successful Grantseeking Techniques for Obtaining Public and Private Grants*. Westport, CT: Praeger. 2003

Bohlmann, Paul A. and Adonica Y.Lui. *The Harvard College Guide to Grants*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Office of Career Services. 2003.

Directory of Research Grants. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press. 2008

Foundation Center. *The Foundation Center's Guide to Grantseeking on the Web*. New York, NY: Foundation Center. 2003

Foundation Center. *The Foundation Directory*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. 2010

Foundation Center. *Foundation Fundamentals A Guide for Grantseekers*. New York, NY: Foundation Center. 2008

Foundation Center. *Foundation Grants to Individuals*. New York, NY: Foundation Center. 2009

Foundation Center. *Grantseeker's Guide to Winning Proposals*. New York, NY: Foundation Center 2008

Foundation Center. *Guide to Proposal Writing*. New York, NY: Foundation Center. 2007

The Grants Register: 2010. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers Ltd. 2009

Knowles, Cynthia R. *First-Time Grantwriter's Guide to Success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. 2002

Miner, Lynn E. and Jeremy T. Miner. *Proposal Planning and Writing*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. 2008

PSLawNet. *The Comprehensive Fellowship Guide—The Ultimate Resource for Law Students and Lawyers 2009-2010*. PSLawNet, 2009

Career Development Office

Robyn A. Acampora	Pro Bono and Information Manager
Akua Akyea	Director
Jeanine Dames	Director
Juliann Davis	Sr. Administrative Assistant
Marilyn F. Drees	Director
Amanda Hilton	Recruiting Assistant
Christine B. Severson	Director, Recruitment Programs and Administration
Nikitia M. Tillman	Alumni Services Coordinator
Kelly J. Voight	Executive Director

Telephone: (203) 432-1676
Fax: (203) 432-8423
E-mail: cdo.law@yale.edu
Website: www.law.yale.edu/cdo

Mailing Address: Career Development Office, Yale Law School,
P.O. Box 208330, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-8330

Physical Address: Rutenberg Hall, Room 184, 133 Wall Street,
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

CDO Publications: *Criminal Prosecution*
Entering the Law Teaching Market
Environmental Law
International LL.M. Career Planning Guide
International Public Interest Law
Introduction to Career Development
Judicial Clerkships in the U.S.
Law Firm Practice
Lawyers in Business
Opportunities with International Tribunals and Foreign Courts
Public Interest Careers
Public Interest Fellowships Vol. I
Public Interest Fellowships: Sample Applications Vol. II
The Fall Interview Program
U.S. Supreme Court Clerkships
Working on Capitol Hill

Yale Law School Nondiscrimination Policy

Yale Law School is committed to a policy against discrimination based upon age, color, handicap or disability, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, religious creed, gender (including discrimination taking the form of sexual harassment), marital, parental or veteran status, sexual orientation, or the prejudice of clients. All employers using the school's placement services are required to abide by this policy.