

Post Public Interest Fellowship Employment Report Fellowships Conducted 2012-2014 September 2014

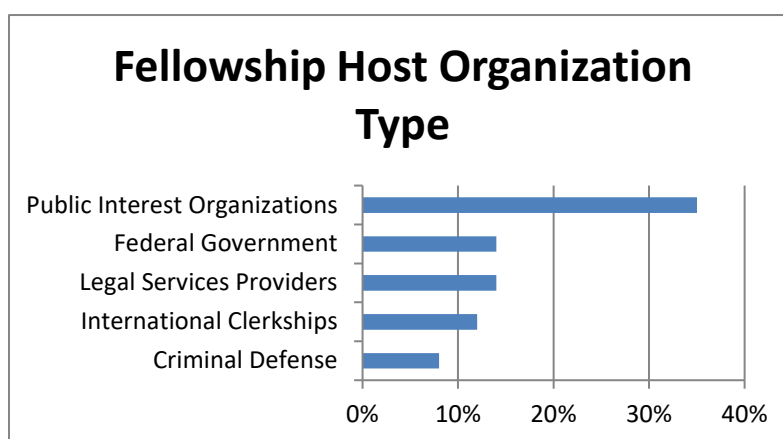
The Career Development Office surveyed the 74 graduates who had post-graduate public interest fellowships between 2012 and 2014 to learn about their fellowship experiences and their post-fellowship employment choices. The surveyed group graduated between 2008 and 2012 with the majority being in the classes of 2012 (45%) and 2013 (32%). CDO received survey responses from 77% of the 74 graduates. Through independent research, CDO verified first post-fellowship and current employment from the remaining graduates who did not respond to the survey.

Fellowship Timing and Types

The most common fellowships obtained by these graduates were the Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowship (24%), the Yale Public Interest Fellowship (15%), the Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship (11%), the Gruber Fellowship in Global Justice and Women's Rights (9%), the Robina Foundation Post-Graduate Fellowship in International Human Rights (8%), and the Skadden Fellowship (8%). The popularity of the Yale Law School fellowships demonstrates that these fellowships provide essential support to YLS graduates pursuing public interest careers.

Nearly three quarter (70%) of fellows began their fellowships in the year they graduated; 18% served as fellows one year after graduation; 8% served as fellows two years after graduation; 3% served as fellows three years after graduation; and 1% served as fellows four years out.

The most popular types of fellowship host organizations were domestic public interest organizations (35%), followed by the federal government (14%), legal services providers (14%), international clerkships (12%) and criminal defense organizations (8%)



Host Organization Selection

40% of fellows selected their host organizations based on a previous internship while 26% found their host organization through independent research. Peer recommendations accounted for 21% of host organization selections.

Fellowship Locations

The majority of fellows (80%) completed their fellowships in the United States. Nearly half (43%) of fellowship recipients completed their fellowships on the East coast with DC as the most popular destination, followed by New York City. 15% of fellows worked in California. Popular international locations included The Hague, The Netherlands and Strasbourg, France.

Fellowship Locations	
Washington DC area	22%
International	20%
New York City	16%
California	15%
Other (AK, CO, CT, FL, GA, LA, MI, MN, OR, PA TX, WA)	27%

Job Satisfaction

The vast majority of fellows (94%) indicated that they would recommend their placements to future fellows. 97% of fellows were “very satisfied” and “satisfied” with their overall fellowship experience. Some of the reasons they articulated were:

- Great place to develop legal skills: litigation, drafting legal documents, taking depositions, engaging in discover
- Great autonomy and respect; supervisors appreciate the fellow’s work and dedication
- Organization takes a serious approach to mentoring and young attorney development. The fellow was given a lot of responsibility which allowed the fellow to demonstrate their value to the organization
- Doing cutting edge legal work
- Working with a well-respected and well-connected organization
- Doing important substantive work that is truly needed
- Getting linked to a public interest community
- Exposure to the diversity of issues affecting specific communities
- Working with passionate, engaged, and dedicated advocates

Fellows who indicated they would NOT recommend their placements provided the following reasons:

- The organization’s work is very specific and may only interest a few others
- There was a lack of oversight and mentorship
- They do not recommend the organization as a whole but would recommend their specific supervisor
- Reservations about the organization’s legal ethics

Fellows are keen to share their knowledge. As their comments indicate, many would be happy to answer any questions from prospective applicants.

Skill Development

Fellowships are a gateway for many entry-level public interest jobs. They provide new lawyers practical training in a field of interest while providing services for generally underserved populations or serve society in general. Even if the fellowship does not lead to employment with the host organization, the fellow has a strong foundation to pursue other opportunities. Some of the skills the fellows have appreciated developing have included:

Legal Skills

- Complex civil litigation skills
- Drafting complaints
- Interviewing clients and witnesses
- Drafting and responding to demand letters, discovery requests
- Legal research skills
- Oral advocacy
- Communicating with opposing counsel
- Negotiating
- Coalition building
- Preparing and making statements in legislative hearings
- Courtroom experience
- Translate critical information into persuasive advocacy

Professional Qualities

- Multitasking
- Operating under short deadlines
- Balancing competing political demands
- Time management
- Working with sometimes difficult clients
- Managing client relationships
- Strategic planning
- Relationship building with stakeholders
- Working in teams
- Presenting information relevant to audience

Supervision and Training

As expected, supervision and training varied greatly from excellent supervision to none and everything in between. Fellows reported the following:

- No training but weekly supervisory meetings
- Hands –on training from supervising attorney
- Weeklong training school
- Informal supervision and training from attorneys
- Very little training but the staff is always available to answer questions
- On the job training and encouraged to seek supervision as needed
- Clear discussion of project and priorities
- Shadowing and asking questions

Despite the variety of supervision and training models, fellows report that assistance is available if one asks.

First Post-Fellowship Employment

Overall, 40% of fellows received offers to remain with their host organizations upon completion of their fellowships. Because most but not all fellows accepted their offers, ultimately 32% of fellows remained with their fellowship organization upon completion of their fellowships. Judicial clerkships were the next most popular post-fellowship employment choice for our graduates, followed by other public interest work, law firm practice, and academia.

Post Fellowship Employer	Total
Fellowship Host Organization	32%
Judicial Clerkship	26%
Other Public Interest Organization (not host organization)	25%
Law Firm	7%
Academia	6%
Other Government (not host)	4%

Conclusion

Post-graduate public interest fellowships provide an invaluable way for applicants to obtain permanent positions in fields that are historically difficult to enter. Additionally, fellows gain practical knowledge they take with them regardless of their ultimate career goals.

The fellowship not only provides invaluable substantive work experience, it allows the fellows to network and become part of a greater community of like-minded advocates.