

Yale Law School Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship Program 2023-2024

Yale Law School has a longstanding commitment to public service, including service in the federal government. Through the generosity of Sam and Ronnie Heyman, the Law School created the Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship Program in 2005. These one-year fellowships allow recent YLS graduates to work closely with high-level leaders in the U.S. federal government, often through a “special assistant” type position. Appropriate positions include high-level, substantive work with a sponsoring agency, office, or committee. The goal of the fellowship is to inspire a new generation to serve by allowing YLS alumni to explore careers in public service and to bring creative, entrepreneurial ideas to the federal government.

Fellowship Criteria

Generally, three to four Heyman Fellowships are awarded each year for fellows to work in the executive branch or the legislative branch of the United States federal government. Awards are made based on a variety of factors, including the degree to which the fellowship will give the applicant exposure to significant policy and rulemaking, the opportunity to focus on important substantive issues, and the chance to acquire the skills and credentials to start a public service career as well as a showing of how the applicant’s experience fits the proposed fellowship position, the clarity of the proposed responsibilities, and the quality of the supervision expected. Judicial clerkships, entry-level positions, and work for political campaigns are not eligible.

YLS fellowships are one-year fellowships and fellows are expected to devote a full 12 months to their fellowships. It is important when planning your start date that you take this requirement into consideration. If you need to end your fellowship by a certain date, you may need to start your fellowship over the summer, rather than wait until September. If you have any concerns about your particular situation, speak with the fellowship administrator as soon as possible.

Special Considerations

IPA Requirements

Most government agencies require YLS to enter into an IPA agreement, whereby the University employees the fellow directly. Under the IPA arrangement, the fellow works at YLS for the first three months of the fellowship and is seconded to the government for the remaining nine months. To date, the legislature and White House Executive Offices have not required IPAs. These IPA agreements are sometimes difficult to arrange and can interfere with or slow down the agency’s ability to accept the fellow. If you plan to submit a fellowship application for such a host agency, you should first consult with [Norma D'Apolito](#), to discuss the IPA process.

Background Checks

As with any federal employment, Heyman fellows are required to complete a background check or security clearance, the extent of which can vary depending on the level of security required for the job. For more information about background checks, click [here](#).

YLS Non-Discrimination

Your host organization must certify compliance with Yale Law School's Non-Discrimination Policy. For instructions on confirming organization compliance, please click [here](#).

Meeting with Fellowship Director

Heyman applicants are required to meet with the Public Interest and Fellowship Director, [Norma D'Apolito](#), to discuss the scope and details of their fellowship proposals in advance of the submission to allow for revisions. If you have any questions about the Heyman Fellowship, you can set up a time to meet [here](#).

Stipend

Fellows for 2023-2024 will receive a stipend of \$50,000. Federal offices are not generally in a position to accept the stipend and put fellows on their payrolls so, except for those fellows that YLS hires pursuant to an IPA, fellows generally receive their stipend directly. In those instances, an additional stipend of up to \$5,000 is available to purchase medical insurance.

Common Application

The Law School has adopted a common application for all YLS fellowships, including Heyman. The application for the upcoming year will open on January 3, 2023 and has a deadline of February 2, 2023. Click [here](#) to access the online application. Click [here](#) for sample instructions on using the online system.

All applications will require the following information:

1. **Personal statement** (500 words maximum) describing the applicant's experiences with and commitment to public interest, public service, or a specific area of law and the ways in which the fellowship will help achieve the applicant's career aspirations.
2. **Concise summary** (1 paragraph) of the proposal that includes the place in which the applicant will work and the goals of the project the applicant will undertake.
3. **Proposal** (1500 words maximum)

Depending on the office for which you are applying, you may seek funding for either a staff position or a specific project.

Staff positions: The proposal should address:

- 1) nature of the fellowship position and the organization that will host the fellow;
- 2) type of work the applicant expects to do in the fellowship position, including any particular project the applicant intends to carry out; and
- 3) a discussion of any relevant background information - legal, historical, factual - necessary to understanding the need for and the goals of the fellowship position, as well as any challenges that you anticipate.

Specific Project: The proposal should address:

- 1) the problem or need that the project seeks to address;
- 2) the project's specific goals and how the applicant will meet those goals within the one-year fellowship period (a proposed timetable should be included);
- 3) a discussion of any relevant background information - legal, historical, factual - necessary to understanding the need for and the goals of your project, as well as any challenges that you anticipate.

Please note that the proposal, whether for a project or a staff position, should not be an essay akin to a substantial or supervised analytic writing, nor is mastery of the area of law expected. Rather, the goal is to explain how you hope to use or change the relevant law or otherwise contribute to the workings of the government and the well-being of its citizens.

4. **Statement** of other fellowships or public interest positions to which applicant has applied or plans to apply and, if none, an explanation (for example, a gap year, unusual geographic or project-specific need, and so on). Applying for external funding is not a requirement for receiving a YLS-funded fellowship, but is strongly encouraged, absent extenuating circumstances.
5. **A resume.**
6. **Official YLS Transcript**
7. **Two letters of recommendation:** One from YLS faculty and one from a supervisor or employer.
8. **RECOMMENDED:** An additional letter of recommendation from YLS faculty.
9. **List of people**, including current or former fellows, whom the applicant consulted. The purpose of some of the fellowships is to connect you to a field and to learn from people close to it. We, therefore, expect that before you craft a proposal, you have talked to some of those working in the area. Alternatively, we can provide a list of current and former fellows and their fields so that you may consult with them. We recommend that you discuss the project with 2-4 former fellows or people in the field, whether on the list we provide or not, who can help you think through it. Click [here](#) to view a list of recent recipients.
10. **Host letter**, detailing:
 - 1) organization's purpose and function;
 - 2) a description of how the fellow's proposed work fits with the host organization's

- activities;
- 3) a description of the supervision the fellow will receive, including identification of the fellow's immediate supervisor;
 - 4) the resources that will be provided to support the project (e.g., office space, computer, malpractice and/or other insurance, if needed);
 - 5) a statement of whether an IPA is needed in order to host the fellow and an indication of who is responsible in the office for developing the IPA in conjunction with the Law School; and
 - 6) a statement addressing the potential for the organization to retain the fellow as a full-time member of the organization's staff beyond the fellowship year.

NOTE: Post-fellowship retention is not a requirement. For additional guidance on Heyman fellowship host organization letters, click [here](#).

Samples of successful Heyman fellowship applications can be found in [CDO's Public Interest Fellowship Sample Applications](#).