

## **Post Public Interest Fellowship Employment Report Fellowships Completed in 2015 September 2015**

The Career Development Office surveyed the 28 graduates who completed post-graduate public interest fellowships in 2014 or 2015 to learn about their fellowship experiences and their post-fellowship employment choices. CDO received survey responses from 93% of the 28 graduates. Through independent research, CDO verified first post-fellowship employment from the remaining graduates who did not respond to the survey.

Over three quarters (79%) of fellows began their fellowships in the year they graduated and 21% commenced their fellowships one year after graduation.

### **Fellowship Types**

Seventy-five percent of the 28 fellows received Yale Law School funded fellowships while 25% received external fellowships. The YLS fellowships obtained by these 28 graduates were: the Gruber Fellowship in Global Justice and Women's Rights (14%); the Robina Foundation Fellowship in International Human Rights (14%); the Yale Public Interest Fellowship (11%); the Ford Foundation Fellowship (11%); the Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowship (7%); Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship (7%); the Bernstein Fellowship in International Human Rights (3.5%); the San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project Fellowship (3.5%); and Permanent Court of Arbitration Fellowship (3.5%). The most common external fellowships were the Skadden Fellowship (11%) and Soros Justice Fellowship (7%). The popularity of the Yale Law School fellowships demonstrates that these fellowships provide essential support to YLS graduates pursuing public interest careers.

These fellows worked for a variety of host organization types, including domestic public interest organizations (32%); federal government (14%); legal services providers (14%); and international organizations/clerkships (11%). Smaller percentages worked in criminal defense, local government, public interest law firms, and human rights journalism.

### **Host Organization Selection**

Among fellows who responded to the question, 38% selected their host organizations based on a previous internship with the organization while 35% relied on recommendations from advisors and mentors. Independent research accounted for 15%, while the remaining 12% reported 'other'.

## Fellowship Locations

The majority of fellows (79%) completed their fellowships in the United States. Overall, more than half (53%) completed their fellowships on the East Coast with DC as the most popular destination, followed by New York City. Approximately 7% of fellows worked in California. International locations included Geneva, Switzerland and Strasbourg, France.

Fellowship Locations	
Washington DC area	21%
International	21%
New York City	18%
California	7%
Other (AZ, CT, FL, LA, MA, MI, TX)	32%

## Job Satisfaction

Among fellows who responded to the question, 92% were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their overall fellowship experience and 88% indicated that they would recommend their placements to future fellows. Some of the reasons they articulated were:

- Very supportive environment and allows fellows the freedom to pursue their interests and work as they envision it
- You can make a real difference and get a lot of first-hand experience there
- Excellent opportunity to learn by doing about integrated advocacy and impact litigation
- One of the few places where you can really learn how to do law and organizing work, work for a multi-racial worker center, and focus on both city-level policy and changes in the global economy
- An incredible opportunity to do a huge range of projects within one of the most important rights-protecting courts in the world
- Fantastic and very substantive work, high-speed and very challenging work environment, brilliant colleagues, and no shortage of issues in the world to work on
- Amazing organization, especially for those interested in getting away from their desk and engaging directly with organizers, activists, and directly affected populations
- The organization does amazing, daring work in the areas of immigrant, labor, and civil rights, and is often willing to take positions and support causes that more cautious, less accountable, and more elite organizations are not willing to do--at least initially

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 recommend the organization as a whole but would not recommend their specific group or department

## 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 these 28 fellows indicated that they appreciated developing included:

### Legal Skills

- Complex civil and criminal litigation skills
- Analytic and technical skills regarding high-level and fast-paced briefings
- Interviewing clients and witnesses
- Client counseling
- Legal writing and research skills
- Oral advocacy
- Investigating/framing human rights abuses tailored to advocacy goals
- Policy and international law expertise
- Organizing and working with organizers as a movement lawyer
- Simplifying complex legal issues for a more general audience
- Rules and legislation drafting

### Professional Qualities

- Public Speaking
- Simplifying complex legal issues for a more general audience
- Producing short video and multimedia advocacy pieces

## Supervision and Training

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

- Learned mostly through doing and by having work edited and critiqued by co-counsel
- Supervision was minimal, but organization provided ongoing training
- Attended CLE's and was supervised/given feedback by seasoned attorneys
- Most of training and supervision was through discussion with colleagues at work and with workers themselves
- Not a lot -- mostly about self-training. But received a lot of direct feedback from the supervisor

## First Post-Fellowship Employment

Overall, 50% of fellows received offers to remain with their host organizations upon completion of their fellowships. Ultimately 36% of fellows remained with their fellowship organization upon completion of their fellowships. For fellows who did not remain with their host organizations, judicial clerkships and other public interest organizations were the next most popular post-fellowship employment choices, followed by law firms.

Post Fellowship Employer	Total
Fellowship Host Organization	36%
Judicial Clerkship	25%
Other Public Interest Organization (not host organization)	18%
Law Firm	7%
Public Interest Law Firm	7%
Criminal Defense	3.5%
Academia	3.5%

## Conclusion

Yale Law School takes great pride in our fellowship offerings, in the success of our graduates on the fellowship market, and in the incredible work conducted by fellows during their fellowship year(s). The survey responses summarized here demonstrate the significant value fellowships offer in training new public interest advocates and in providing a bridge to practice.