

Post Public Interest Fellowship Employment Report Fellowships Completed in 2016 September 2016

The Career Development Office surveyed the 46 graduates who completed post-graduate public interest fellowships in 2015 or 2016 to learn about their fellowship experiences and their post-fellowship employment choices. CDO received survey responses from 54% of the 46 graduates. Through independent research, CDO verified first post-fellowship employment from 20 of the 21 remaining graduates who did not respond to the survey.

Over half (58%) of fellows began their fellowships within three years after graduation.

Fellowship Types

Sixty-five percent of the 46 fellows received Yale Law School funded fellowships while 35% received external fellowships. The YLS fellowships obtained by these 46 graduates were: the Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowship (11%); the Bernstein Fellowship in International Human Rights (11%); the Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship (9%); the Ford Foundation Fellowship (9%); the Gruber Fellowship in Global Justice and Women's Rights (6.5%); the Robina Foundation Fellowship in International Human Rights (6.5%); the Yale Public Interest Fellowship (6.5%); the Permanent Court of Arbitration Fellowship (2%); the International Court of Justice Fellowship (2%); and the San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project Fellowship (2%). The most common external fellowships were the Skadden Fellowship (15%) and the Equal Justice Works Fellowship (9%). 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 (41%); legal services providers (17%); federal government (13%); and international organizations/clerkships (13%). Smaller percentages worked in criminal defense, public interest law firms, and academia.

Host Organization Selection

Among fellows who responded to the question, 20% selected their host organizations based on a previous internship with the organization while 32% relied on recommendations from advisors and mentors. Independent research accounted for 28%, while the remaining 20% reported 'other'.

Fellowship Locations

The majority of fellows (91%) completed their fellowships in the United States. Overall, more than half (65%) completed their fellowships on the East Coast with New York City as the most popular destination, followed by DC. Approximately 13% of fellows worked in California. International locations included Kampala, Uganda and The Hague, Netherlands.

Fellowship Locations	
New York City	35%
Washington DC Area	19%
California	13%
International	9%
Other (AL, CO, CT, GA, LA, MA, NJ, WA)	24%

Job Satisfaction

Among fellows who responded to the question, 80% were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their overall fellowship experience and 80% indicated that they would recommend their placements to future fellows. Some of the reasons they articulated were:

- Excellent supervision and support
- Colleagues and clients are wonderful and couldn’t imagine a better place to fight for justice
- Very good supervisors, friendly atmosphere, meaningful work mission and opportunity to achieve results, lots of responsibility
- Incredible work and incredible integration within the organization - I am treated as another Staff Attorney, with all the same opportunities and responsibilities
- Great, fearless organization doing cutting edge legal work. It was a great way to start my legal career

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

- While I appreciated the opportunity, I would recommend that fellows pursue projects with organizations that have close links with the communities they seek to protect
- Organization was not well set up to host a Fellow. It may work for someone connected to the organization already, but there were no supervision or support structures set up

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

fellows has a strong foundation to pursue other opportunities. Some of the skills the fellows have appreciated developing have included:

Legal Skills

- Complex litigation skills
- Courtroom skills
- Drafting briefs
- Bringing a case from complaint to settlement
- Policy analysis and development
- Interviewing clients and witnesses
- Drafting pleadings and taking depositions
- Legal research skills
- Improved oral advocacy
- Negotiating skills

Professional Qualities

- Public presentation
- Subject matter expertise
- Creative/strategic thinking
- Client management
- Stress management
- Leadership and organizational skills
- Management skills
- Developing and maintaining relationships with local activists

Supervision and Training

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

- No training but regular supervisory meetings
- Extremely supportive and open supervisory environment
- Intensive multi-week daily training, ongoing weekly training
- Training: field research, policy advocacy, media
- Reported directly to the program director, not as closely supervised as some other fellows. Was given a fair amount of freedom and was relatively more hands-off than with others. It really depends on the program/division you join.
- Paid language training. Great day-to-day supervision
- It's a young organization so I was often learning along with my supervisors.
- I received training and supervision from both supervisors and peers, though I had a great deal of independence in my work.

First Post-Fellowship Employment

Overall, 33% of fellows received offers to remain with their host organizations upon completion of their fellowships. Ultimately 33% of fellows remained with their fellowship organization upon completion of their fellowships. For fellows who did not remain with their host organizations, law firms and other public interest organizations were the next most popular post-fellowship employment choice, followed by federal government.

Post Fellowship Employer	Total
Fellowship Host Organization	39%
Law Firm	15%
Other Public Interest Organization (not host organization)	13%
Federal Government	11%
Judicial Clerkship	7%
Academia	7%
Business	4%
State Government	2%
Unknown (did not answer)	2%

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.