

Post Public Interest Fellowship Employment Report Fellowships Completed in 2017 September 2017

The Career Development Office surveyed the 39 graduates who completed post-graduate public interest fellowships in 2016 or 2017 to learn about their fellowship experiences and their post-fellowship employment choices. CDO received survey responses from 66% of the 39 graduates. Through independent research, CDO verified first post-fellowship employment from 12 of the 13 remaining graduates who did not respond to the survey.

Over half (59%) of fellows began their fellowships in the year they graduated and 18% commenced their fellowships one year after graduation.

Fellowship Timing and Types

Seventy-five percent of the 39 fellows received Yale Law School funded fellowships while 25% received external fellowships. The YLS fellowships obtained by these 39 graduates were: the Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowship (20%); the Yale Public Interest Fellowship (15%); the Robina Foundation Fellowship in International Human Rights (8%); the Yale Law Journal Fellowship (8%); the Gruber Fellowship in Global Justice and Women's Rights (5%); the Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship (5%); the Bernstein Fellowship in International Human Rights (5%); the International Court of Justice Fellowship (3%); the Permanent Court of Arbitration Fellowship (3%); and the San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project Fellowship (3%). The most common external fellowships were the Skadden Fellowship (10%) and the Equal Justice Fellowship (5%). 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 organizations types, including domestic public interest organizations (26%); legal services providers (26%); federal government (10%) and international organizations/clerkships (8%). Smaller percentages worked in criminal defense, local government, public interest law firms, and academia.

Host Organization Selection

Among fellows who responded to the question, 35% selected their host organizations based on a previous internship with the organization while 31% relied on recommendations from advisors and mentors. Independent research accounted for 11%, while the remaining 23% reported 'other'.

Fellowship Locations

The majority of fellows (79%) completed their fellowships in the United States. Overall, less than half (41%) completed their fellowships on the East coast with DC as the most popular destination. Tied with DC is California at 23%, followed by New York at 10%. International locations included the United Kingdom, France, and The Hague, Netherlands.

Fellowship Locations	
California	23%
Washington DC Area	23%
International	18%
New York	10%
Other (AL, AZ, CO, CT, LA, MA, NJ, Remote)	26%

Job Satisfaction

Among fellows who responded to the question, 96% were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their overall fellowship experience and 92% indicated that they would recommend their placements to future fellows. Some of the reasons they articulated were:

- Organization was very supportive of the work of the fellow and dedicated to ensuring the fellow learned as much as possible
- Lots of responsibility immediately
- Leadership is top-notch, work is substantive and interesting
- The people are so dedicated, generous, and collaborative. The work is urgent and necessary

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

- Position was unique to a particular administration

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 fellows indicated that they appreciated developing included:

Legal Skills

- Case management/structuring
- Direct representation
- Drafting briefs
- Legal research & writing
- Litigation & policy
- Negotiating
- Oral advocacy
- Trial Skills

Professional Qualities

- Client counseling & relationships
- Creative/strategic thinking
- Leadership and organizational skills
- Management skills
- Press & community activism
- Project management

Supervision and Training

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

- 2 week-long orientations and weekly meetings with supervisors
- Trial training
- Mostly on-the-job. Briefs had lots of supervision and editing, but by the end, the briefing and strategy became collaborative
- Weekly meetings/check-ins
- Minimal training, but very good supervision
- One hour meetings every other week

First Post-Fellowship Employment

Overall, 33% of fellows received offers to remain with their host organizations upon completion of their fellowships. Ultimately 26% 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 academia were the next most popular post-fellowship employment choices.

Post Fellowship Employer	Total
Fellowship Host Organization	26%
Judicial Clerkship	18%
Academia	10%
Other Public Interest Organization (not host organization)	8%
Business	5%
Pursuing Advanced Degree	5%
Law Firm	2.5%
Criminal Defense	2.5%
Other	2.5%
Unemployed	2.5%
Unknown/Uncertain	18%

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.