

Yale Public Interest Fellowship (YPIF) 2023 Overview and Application

Yale Law School (“YLS”) has long been a leader in the public service arena. The Law School has been on the forefront of clinical teaching, developed teaching fellowships for both clinical and non-clinical positions, and pioneered supervised student clinical services in the 1970s.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, YLS began providing post-graduate fellowships to fund public interest work.

In the spring of 2008, under the leadership of former Dean Harold Koh, YLS once again demonstrated its commitment to public service by substantially increasing the existing number of its own post-graduate public interest fellowships, as well as providing targeted support to its graduates seeking fellowships sponsored by other organizations. These important initiatives are intended to provide encouragement for our students and recent graduates entering the job market to obtain positions within the diverse range of programs that advance the public interest.

The recipients and host organizations of the YPIF Fellowship for the 2022-2023 year are:

Atticus Ballesteros '22 – ACLU of Illinois, Chicago, IL
Tanushree Bansal '22 – Fair Share Housing Center, Cherry Hill, NJ
Ify Chikezie '22 – New York Civil Liberties Union, New York, NY
Grace Choi '22 – New York Legal Assistance Group, New York, NY
Ali Gali '22 – Detroit Justice Center, Detroit, MI
Kathleen Olds '22 – Worker Justice Center of New York, New York, NY

Terms of the Fellowship

YPIF generally funds six one-year fellowships each year. The fellowships generally begin in late summer or early fall. Students and alumni up to three years after graduation from YLS are eligible to apply.

Each fellowship provides a stipend of \$50,000 and a health-care contribution of up to \$5,000 in cases where health care benefits are not provided by the host organization.

YLS fellowships are one-year fellowships and fellows are expected to devote a full 12 months to working on their projects. 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.

Fellowship Process

Our goal is to have as many of our students and graduates who want to obtain positions in this sector as possible. Therefore, we encourage efforts to find sources of support from various places, of which YLS is but one. Applicants should apply for all fellowships for which they are eligible, including both YLS and non-YLS supported fellowships.

Former and current fellows are a key source of information and suggestions about the fellowship. Applicants should also consult other alumni, faculty, and attorneys working in their areas of interest when developing their proposals. In addition, YPIF applicants are required to [meet with Norma D'Apolito](#), Public Interest Director, to discuss the scope and details of their fellowship proposals prior to applying. Questions about the fellowship and the application process can be directed to her at norma.dapolito@yale.edu.

Application Details

The faculty Public Interest Committee will review YPIF applications and select the fellows. The Committee will consider several factors, including the following:

- a) scope of the problem or the need identified;
- b) feasibility of the project and its potential impact;
- c) applicant's experience and knowledge of the issue, governing law, and community served;
- d) applicant's commitment to public interest; and
- e) strength of the organization to provide supervision and implement the project.

Interviews are not conducted. Awardees will be notified by mid-March.

Submitting Your Application

The Law School will be using a common application for most of its public interest fellowships once again during the 2023 fellowship cycle. Applicants must indicate on the common online application each fellowship program to which they are applying, including YPIF, in order to be considered.

*The common application will open on January 3, 2023 and has a **deadline of February 2, 2023**. Click [here](#) to access the online application. Click [here](#) for instructions on using the online system.*

Yale Non-Discrimination Policy and Your Host Organization

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

Scope of the Fellowship Work

The fellowship proposal must include one of the following:

- (a) a proposal for a legal project designed by the applicant in partnership with a sponsoring organization;
- (b) a proposal to work on an existing project with a host organization; or
- (c) a proposal to work as a staff attorney at a public interest organization (describe range of work/projects for fellowship year).

The proposal should include:

- (a) a description of the need for the project,
- (b) how goals will further the public interest, and
- (c) how they will be accomplished within the fellowship year.

Include a proposed timeline for the fellowship year.

Application Materials:

1. **Personal statement** (500 words maximum)
describing the applicant's experiences with and commitment to public interest, public service, and/or human rights, aspirations for future work, and the ways in which the fellowship will help achieve the applicant's aspirations.
2. **Concise summary** (1 paragraph maximum)
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 specific project or a staff position.

A. Project proposal: (a) to pursue a project designed by the applicant in partnership with a sponsoring organization; or (b) to work on an existing project with a host organization.

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.

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.

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 the 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. We will 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.
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
 - 5) (e.g., office space, computer, malpractice and/or other insurance, if needed); 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.
 - 7) whether the host org will be able to provide healthcare coverage for the fellow and;
 - 8) an agreement to provide malpractice insurance if applicable to the position.

NOTE: Post-fellowship retention is not a requirement.

Samples of successful YPIF fellowship applications can be found in CDO's Fellowship Guide [here](#).

Special requirements and notes

Proposals to work in some government office may be subject to additional requirements. Please consult with [Norma D'Apolito](#), if you are thinking of seeking a government sponsor for your fellowship.

In order to be eligible as a 3L to receive a YPIF fellowship, your law degree must be conferred in December 2022, May 2023, or October 2023. You will not be permitted to start your fellowship before the degree is conferred or the Registrar has certified that you have successfully completed all your academic requirements for graduation.