2019-2020
Yale Public Interest Fellowship (YPIF)
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, the Law School 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 in 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.

Terms of the Fellowship

YPIF generally funds six fellowships each year. Fellowships are for one year, and in very limited circumstances, such as when matching funds are available from other sources, some extensions may be available. The fellowship begins in late summer or fall 2018 through summer 2019. Students and alumni (up to three years after graduation from YLS) are eligible to apply.

Each fellowship provides a one-year stipend of approximately $47,500 and a health-care contribution of up to $5,000 in cases where health care benefits are not provided by the host organization. (See also the additional information concerning Yale Law Journal Fellowships below.)

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.

Additional guidance about the fellowship process comes directly from those involved in each program. Former and current fellows are a key source of information and suggestions. When formulating proposals, please consult those working in areas of interest to you as well as the deans, directors, and faculty involved in each of the fellowships. In addition to YPIF, programs at YLS to consider include:

- Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowship
- Gruber Fellowships in Global Justice and Women’s Rights
- Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship Program
- Initiative for Public Interest Law at Yale
- International Court of Justice Internship/Clerkship
- Mary McCarthy Fellowship
- The Robert L. Bernstein Fellowships in International Human Rights
- The Robina Foundation Human Rights Fellowship Initiative
- San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project Fellowship
- The Yale Law Journal Fellowships

For more information on these fellowships, including a list of YLS post-graduate public interest fellowships that were previously awarded, please go to:
www.law.yale.edu/studentlife/cdostudentsylspublicinterestfellowships.htm.
Submitting Your Application

The Law School has adopted a common application for the 2019-2020 fellowship cycle. The common application will open on the afternoon of January 4, 2019 and has a deadline of January 31, 2019. Click here to access the online application. Click here for instructions on using the online system.

YPIF applicants are required to meet with Norma D’Apolito, Director of Public Interest, 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 or (203)436-2580.

YLS Fellowship Consideration

Before the implementation of a common application in 2018, any application to the Bernstein, Gruber, Heyman, Liman, or Robina fellowships was automatically rolled over into the YPIF applicant pool for consideration. Applicants must now indicate on the common online application each program to which they are applying, including YPIF, in order to be considered.

We ask that applicants keep the Career Development Office apprised of any changes in their status. Remaining YPIF applicants will be contacted prior to final decision-making to confirm their continued interest and will have an opportunity to provide any updated material or information.

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;

(c) a proposal to work as a staff attorney at a public interest organization (describe range of work/projects for fellowship year); or

(d) a proposal to be funded for an unpaid foreign or international court or prosecution internship other than human rights [NOTE; those interested in transnational human rights fellowships should apply for Bernstein or Robina Fellowships and should consult with faculty in charge of those programs regarding any questions.]

The proposal should include a description of the need for the project, how goals will further the public interest, and how they will be accomplished within the fellowship year. Include a proposed timeline for the fellowship year.

APPLICATION SHOULD INCLUDE:

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) 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)

   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.

a) Depending on the fellowship or fellowships for which you are applying, you may seek funding for either a specific project or a staff position. You should consult the individual fellowship descriptions for further information.

b) For Liman, the project description must reflect how the project would engage with the relevant legal regime and may include an additional 1500 words, for a total of up to 3,000 words in the project description (including footnotes).

c) 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 human rights or well-being of others. We ask that you provide sufficient legal, historical, and factual context for us to understand the need you seek to address, the nature of the work you propose, and the impact you intend that work to have.

4. **Statement of other fellowships or public interest positions** to which to 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 arena. 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 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 (e.g., office space, computer, malpractice and/or other insurance, if needed); and 5) 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 foreign or international courts or prosecutors' offices, please include a letter confirming acceptance of the applicant or status of the application process.

Additional information concerning Yale Law Journal Fellowships

In an effort to unite legal scholarship and legal practice, and to advance the public interest, in 2017, the Yale Law Journal ("YLJ") partnered with the Yale Law School to provide three one-year public interest fellowships annually. The Fellows, after completing their year of public service, will publish reflections on their experience in the Journal’s online component, the Forum. In addition, the Journal will host a yearly gathering where incoming Fellows are welcomed and outgoing fellows are honored for their work. In recognition of the additional writing component, these YLJ fellows will receive an additional $5,000 payment at the end of their fellowship term.

The application for the YLJ Fellowship is the same as the application for the YPIF Fellowship. A committee comprised of the current Editor-in-Chief and several additional board members will designate three YLJ Fellows from among the nine Fellows chosen by the faculty selection committee. Additional information about the special honorees of the YLJ Fellowships can be found here.

Special requirements and notes

Proposals to work in the Executive branch of the United States (and in some instances for other branches of government, state and federal) may be subject to additional requirements.

Graduating students seeking funding should not submit projects for which Yale Law School would be the sponsoring employer.