

POST GRADUATE PUBLIC INTEREST FELLOWSHIPS: AN INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

March 2012



Overview

Several **Fellowship Guides** (which provide good descriptions of the various types of fellowships, give examples, and have lots of tips) are available on **PSLawNet.org**

<https://www.pslawnet.org/informationandresources>

PIRC website: Click on Funding Your Public Interest Work & then **Post-graduate public interest fellowships** –direct link @ <http://law.fordham.edu/public-interest-resource-center/8522.htm>

Identify Potential Sources of Public Interest Fellowships

Timeline: 2Ls: spring/early summer
1Ls: generally familiarize yourself with them over the next 9 months

Resources:

PSLawNet.org (online):

Use Fellowships Calendar (*may list prior year deadlines*):

<http://www.pslawnet.org/applicationdeadlinecalendar>

Use “Search Opportunities” Database (*click on job category of each “fellowship-law related, legal, non-legal, sponsor*)

The Comprehensive Fellowship Guide (book—available in CPC Resource room, PIRC Office, Reserve Desk in library)

Types of Fellowships (details on PIRC website, guides describing available on PSLawNet.org)

- (a) Project-based Fellowships (summary of steps below)
- (b) Organization-based Fellowships
- (c) Criminal Justice Fellowships: *April 17th program*
- (d) Law School based/Clinical Fellowships
- (e) Firm-sponsored Fellowships
- (f) Entrepreneurial Fellowships
- (g) Prestigious Fellowships and Scholarships, such as Fulbright: *March 29th program*
- (h) Government Honors Programs

Project-Based Fellowships: Some Steps:

1. Come up with a project & secure a “sponsor” organization
2. Some of the most popular post-graduate public interest fellowships (e.g. Skadden Foundation, Equal Justice Works) invite applicants to submit their own proposal.

3. Some successful fellowship applicants started the process by having a potential project in mind, others have reached out to organizations which have a project for which they seek a fellowship candidate.

Consider reviewing lists of prior projects and organizations funded by Equal Justice Works and Skadden Foundation (<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/communities/participants/fellowships> & <http://www.skaddenfellowships.org/fellows-list>)

1. Identify Potential Host Organizations:

Some good resources:

- PSLawNet.org (use “search organizations” database, selecting a practice area, or “search opportunities” database, click on job category of “fellowship-sponsor”)
- Contacts from public interest legal job fairs.
- Networking with organizations you’ve interned/externed with.
- Discussion with your professors and/or PIRC counselors.

Timeline: 2Ls: Ideally spring/early summer

1Ls: Keep in mind when applying for interships/externships.

2. Contacting Potential Host Organizations:

- Talk with potential sponsors: you may **both**
 - approach an organization(s) *and/or*
 - respond to invitations by organization(s);
- Many organizations (particularly those with strong track records of winning EJW and Skadden Fellowships) conduct a process which includes an application and interviews to select potential candidate(s) whom they will sponsor.
- Don’t limit yourself to one organization to reach out to!

Timeline: Ideally early summer (*year before graduation*)

3. Discuss Potential Projects:

- Review the priorities of the funders of the fellowship when beginning to think about a proposal. Consult with PIRC, your faculty mentor and/or the funder before deciding upon a project.
- Contact prior fellows who were doing similar work, even in other locations/with other organizations.
- Research the need for the project and whether organizations in the geographic area are currently doing this work.
- Understand the project well: read up on the issues/problem(s) the project will address so you can write a compelling application.

4. Commitment from Sponsor Organization:

- Get the commitment in writing. Understand whether you are the only fellow the organization will sponsor.

Timeline: Ideally by the end of July/early August (where application is due in September or October).

5. **Writing the Application:**
Start early (by early August) to give yourself enough time to work on several drafts of the application and to receive the feedback of a faculty mentor. You will enjoy the process so much more and the words will flow more easily if you give it time.
6. **Recommendations, Resumes, Transcripts, Writings Samples:** Applicable to all fellowship applicants, *see next page*

All Post-Graduate Post Graduate Public Interest Fellowships:

- A. **Faculty Mentor:** Faculty members are available to work with fellowship applicants. PIRC and the Faculty Fellowships Committee will identify a faculty member with an expertise in the area(s) of your interest. The key is for you to contact us as soon as possible (early in the summer of the year in which you will be applying) so we can begin working with you.
- B. **Read the application closely.** Know what's required for your submission.
- C. **Do a Timeline:** Sketch out the dates for first, second draft, and third drafts.
- D. **Writing the Application:**
 - (i) **Do an outline or an early first draft.** Share this with your organizational sponsor (for Project-based Fellowships like EJW and Skadden), your faculty mentor and PIRC.
 - (ii) **For organization based fellowships:** Your cover letter should be very tailored to the work of the organization and any identified project, and will in a detailed way describe how your background and experience are relevant. *The letter will likely be more than one page.*
 - (iii) **Include narrative:** Be yourself. Let your passion and commitment come through onto the page. Have your project tell a story and be compelling. Avoid jargon.
 - (iv) **Drafts:** Be prepared to go through at least three drafts (it's not uncommon to do five for Project-Based Fellowships!) Be open to suggestions of the sponsoring organization (for Project-based Fellowships) and your mentor(s).
- E. **Recommendations:** Ask for recommendations from professors and employers who you have worked closely with you. It is appropriate to ask if your recommender feels comfortable sharing the recommendation with you or your faculty mentor or PIRC. Follow-up to ensure you receive the recommendation in a timely manner.
- F. **Resume:** Have your resume reviewed by PIRC—include all your public service work: no page limit!
- G. **Transcripts:** Some fellowships require a copy of your transcript—others do not.

- H. **Writing Sample(s):** Some fellowships require a writing sample, others do not. Discuss with your mentor which of your papers, briefs, memos may be most appropriate.
- I. **Keep the Deadlines:** Fellowships are very strict about deadlines. Get all your materials in on time.
- J. **Interviews:** Most fellowships will interview candidates before making a selection. PIRC and the Faculty Fellowships Committee will arrange a mock interview for you before your interview.

K. Post-graduate fellowships are not only for 3L/4Es

- (i) You can apply for a fellowship following your judicial clerkship. Some fellowships (e.g. Skadden) give strong weight to candidates who have completed clerkships. If your clerkship is for one year—we recommend that you complete a good draft of the fellowship application before you begin studying for the bar examination and your judicial clerkship begins.
- (ii) Many fellowships (e.g. Equal Justice Works, Soros Justice Fellowship) allow you to apply several years after graduation, and most Clinical Fellowships will require practice experience.

The Public Interest Resource Center (PIRC) and the Faculty Fellowships Committee are committed to working with you to support your efforts to explore and secure a post-graduate public interest fellowship. We are available at each step, described briefly here. The earlier you contact us, the more effective we can be.

Prepared by the Fordham University School of Law Public Interest Resource Center,
March 2012

Outline for Fellowships Overview Student Information Session:

Fellowships are a great springboard for a public interest career.

What are:

1. Sources of funding depending upon the fellowship work (direct services, advocacy), or conduct research.
2. Finite period of time (although many may parlay into permanent positions...)
3. Often come with benefits (health insurance, vacation).
4. Often come with loan repayment assistance.

Overview of the series and fellowships in general (e.g. project-based civil, organization-based, clinical, entrepreneurial, research (e.g Fulbright), criminal justice).

Hand-outs:

1. Outline of above.
2. PSJD's Project-Based Fellowship Applications: Take Cues From Those Who Know
http://www.pslawnet.org/uploads/Project-based_Fellowship_App_Tips_-_FINAL.pdf

Get sense of audience: 1Ls, 2Ls, 3Ls, etc.

Now time to:

1. Familiarize yourself with resources, including types
 - a. PSJD: fellowships resources <http://www.pslawnet.org/postgraduatefellowships>
 - b) Look at some of the Guides:
<http://www.pslawnet.org/informationandresources>
 - c) Look at types of:

Comprehensive Guide (book)

Fellowship Calendar <http://www.pslawnet.org/applicationdeadlinecalendar>

FLS track record:

<http://law.fordham.edu/public-interest-resource-center/7656.htm>

2. Talk about Project Based Fellowships:

a) What are they?

b) Largest sources:

1. Equal Justice Works:

<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/post-grad/equal-justice-works-fellowships>

2. Skadden Foundation:

Encourage you to take a look at the list of fellows for both:
<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/communities/participants/fellowships>
<http://www.skaddenfellowships.org/fellows-list>

b) Most important:

1. Finding a good match for a public interest organization to sponsor you.
2. Developing a strong project proposal that is consistent with your interests, and the needs of the organization.

c) Approaches:

1. You have an idea and approach organization(s).

i. Identifying organizations:

PSJD organization field
<http://pslawnet.org/searchorganizations>

Interned/Externed/Partners of PIRC student groups
Professor recommendations, PIRC.

ii. You look for those organizations recruiting:

PSJD: search opportunities fields
<http://pslawnet.org/searchopportunities>

Several drop down menus under Job Type:

Fellowships- Law related
Legal
Non-legal
*Sponsor

d) The issue of law firm funding: Thoughts when approaching the process

e) How to make yourself a strong candidate

Select courses

Experiential opportunities:

Work with PIRC student groups

Clinics

Internships/externships

To gain background, skills, experience + bolster your resume,
+demonstrate commitment.

Through coursework + externships/internships: writing sample

Make professional relationships: recommendations:

Asking for the right references.

f) Clerkship vs. or in addition to fellowship.

g) Post–fellowship plans.

3. **Ask the Experts:**

- a) Marni Von Wilpert, '11, 2011-2013 Skadden Fellow, Mississippi Center for Justice, Jackson, MS, HIV Medical/Legal Partnership
- b) Sarah Leberstein, '08, Equal Justice Works Fellow, National Employment Law Project (fellowship parlayed into a full-time staff attorney position),
- c) Gowri Krisha, '06, 2006-2008 EJW Fellow, Urban Justice Center, Community Development Project, currently Clinical Fellow, CED Clinic, FLS

Talking Points for alumnae panelists:

- 1. Briefly--What do/did you do as an EJW or Skadden fellow?
- 2. When did you start thinking about post-grad fellowships?
- 3. How did you get started?
- 4. What resources did you use to identify potential fellowship funders? (e.g. written, people—e.g. PIRC, faculty).
- 5. How did you come up with the project (e.g your idea or organization's idea?)
- 6. How did you find the right public interest organization to sponsor you?
- 7. How did you go about process?
- 8. Did you have any relationship with them before?
- 9. What was process like to do the application?
 - a) When did you start writing?
 - b) How many drafts did you do?
 - c) Who reviewed them?
- 10. What do you think made you a good candidate?
- 11. What did you do in school: internships, clinics, journal, student groups, etc. grades.
- 12. References—how did you ask?
- 13. When did you find out?
- 14. Advise to give

Q&A from audience

>>> Tom Schoenherr 3/21/12 12:28 PM >>>

MEMORANDUM

To: **Class of 2013** students, and **Class of 2012** students continuing on to post-graduate Judicial Clerkships (and also to **all interested First Years**)

From: Tom Schoenherr, Assistant Dean, PIRC
Andrew Chapin, Director, PIRC
Hillary Exter, Director, PIRC
The Faculty Public Interest Fellowships Committee

Re: **Skadden Fellowship Program Orientation**

We've invited **Susan Plum, Director of the Skadden Fellowship Program** to come to the Law School on **Tuesday, March 27th from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Room 207** to conduct an orientation for all students who may be interested in applying for a Skadden Fellowship that would commence in the Fall of 2013 (or in the Fall of 2014 for interested first years or class of '12 graduates who will clerk). **Sandwiches from Mangia will be served.**

The Skadden Fellowship Foundation, described as "a legal Peace Corps" by The Los Angeles Times, was established in 1988 to commemorate the firm's 40th anniversary, in recognition of the dire need for greater funding for graduating law students who wish to devote their professional lives to providing legal services to the poor (including the working poor), the elderly, the homeless and the disabled, as well as those deprived of their civil or human rights. The aim of the foundation is to give Fellows the freedom to pursue public interest work; thus, the Fellows create their own projects at public interest organizations with at least two lawyers on staff before they apply.

Fellowships are awarded for two years. Skadden provides each Fellow with a salary (for the class of 2012, the salary is \$46,000) and pays all fringe benefits to which an employee of the sponsoring organization would be entitled. For those Fellows not covered by a law school loan forgiveness or low income protection plan, the firm will pay a Fellow's law school debt service for the tuition part of the loan for the duration of the fellowship. The 2012 class of Fellows brings to 648 the number of academically outstanding law school graduates and judicial clerks the firm has funded to work full-time for legal and advocacy organizations. See <http://www.skaddenfellowships.org/>

Applications will be due on October 1, 2012, and notification of fellowship offerings will occur on December 7, 2012. For members of the Class of 2013, it's important to begin planning now. Susan Plum and several Fordham Law Skadden Fellows will discuss what sort of public interest projects are most likely to be funded, give advice on how to identify and approach potential sponsoring legal organizations starting now, and share how to best utilize her, the PIRC and the Fordham Faculty Public Interest Fellowships Committee, and the Skadden Fellowship alumni community during the application process. If you have any ideas of projects and are willing to share them at the orientation, Ms. Plum would be happy to give you feedback. **Skadden does not fund "traditional" criminal defense work, or international work** (although they will fund fellows to work with "domestic" organizations in either London or Paris, where the firm has large branch offices).

Current application forms are available on the Skadden website at <http://www.skaddenfellowships.org/application>. Also on the website you can find very helpful information about all past Skadden Fellows including the names of the legal organizations that sponsored them as fellows. Skadden fellows have worked in both urban and rural settings at public interest organizations all over the country.

Please e-mail Abby Hernandez-Brown (ahernandez@law.fordham.edu) in the PIRC as soon as

possible to RSVP (so we'll know how many sandwiches to order for lunch).

Professors Elizabeth Cooper, Robin Lenhardt, and Catherine Powell, and Dora Galacatos are also available as resources. They have expressed a strong interest in helping any students who are seriously interested in applying. **All of these Professors are also Skadden Fellow alumnae.**

Following is a list of Fordham alumni who are currently or have served as Skadden Fellows:

Marni von Wilpert, Class of '11, started her Skadden Fellowship last September at the Mississippi Center for Justice where she is involved in direct representation and impact litigation on behalf of people living with HIV/AIDS in the Mississippi Delta region who face barriers to the access of medical care, as well as unlawful discrimination based on their HIV-positive status, including housing discrimination by landlords and adverse actions by employers.

Daniel Hafetz, Class of '10, is in the second year of his Skadden Fellowship at Brooklyn Legal Services, Corp A, where he is providing transactional legal assistance to Cypress Hills Local Development Corp., a nonprofit organization seeking broad economic redevelopment for the Cypress Hills area of Brooklyn. Dan's work focusses on facilitating energy-efficient retro-fits to homes and launching a green-collar job training center.

Elizabeth Joynes, Class of '10, is also in the second year of her Skadden Fellowship at LatinoJustice PRLDEF, where she is providing direct representation and work on impact litigation on behalf of low-wage Latina immigrant workers in Long Island who are subjected to exploitative labor conditions.

Lindsay Ernst, Class of '05, was selected as a Skadden Fellow to work with the Juvenile Rights Division of The Legal Aid Society at their office in Queens where she worked with juvenile offenders. Lindsay moved to Hong Kong when her husband received a job offer there in 2007, has two young children, and is volunteering with a Hong Kong-based NGO.

Jeannie Martin, Class of '04, was selected as a Skadden Fellow to work with Education Law Project of The Legal Aid Society in Manhattan. Jeannie began her fellowship in September, 2004, and continued the second year of her fellowship at Team Child in Seattle, Washington. She is continuing her work at Team Child as a permanent Staff Attorney.

James Regan, Class of '02, worked as a Skadden Fellow for the Community Law Offices of The Legal Aid Society in Harlem. James was a Legal Aid Housing Advocate at the new Harlem Community Justice Center. James subsequently clerked with the Hon. Victor Marrero, SDNY, and is currently a partner at Satterlee Stephens in NYC.

Molly Murphy, Class of '01, clerked with the Honorable Loretta Preska, SDNY, and was selected as a Skadden Fellow to work at Lawyers for Children in New York City. Molly continued her work at Lawyers for Children for many years as a permanent Staff Attorney, and now works with the New York City Council as Counsel on Youth and Child Advocacy.

Udi Ofer, Class of '01, was selected as a Skadden Fellow in December, 2000 to work as an advocate for victims of domestic violence at My Sisters Place in Yonkers, New York. Udi currently works as the Advocacy Director at the NYCLU in Manhattan.

Terissa Horowitz, Class of '98, worked as a Skadden Fellow at The Legal Aid Societys Juvenile Rights Division from 2000-2002. Teri clerked in the Eastern District with Judge Carole Amon before starting her fellowship.

Derek Denckla, Class of '97, worked at The Legal Aid Societys Brooklyn Office for the Aging. Derek clerked on the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals with Judge Fred Parker in Burlington, VT, before starting his fellowship.

Dora Galacatos, Class of '96, worked at the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation. Dora was the Ethics Editor for the Fordham Law Review, and clerked with the Honorable Milton Pollack, SDNY, before starting her fellowship. Dora worked to provide legal representation for community child care providers.

Peggy Healy, Class of '96, was selected as a Skadden Fellow to work at My Sisters Place in December, 1996. Peggy clerked with the Honorable Richard Owen, SDNY, before starting her fellowship.

Patrick Walsh, Class of '95, was a Skadden Fellow with the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund, Prestonburg, KY. Pat was a former Associate Editor of the Fordham Law Review, and a former clerk with Judge McKenna, SDNY. Pat started his work as a Skadden Fellow in the Fall of 1996 to establish a new law office, The Kentucky Legal Services Project, in Richmond, Kentucky, which provides legal assistance for migrant farm workers and their families. In the Fall of 1998, Pat received an Equal Justice Works Fellowship to continue his work as an advocate for migrant farm workers at the Migrant Farm worker Justice Project of the Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc. in Belle Glade, FL. In 2000, Pat returned to New York to work as an Assistant Solicitor General in the Division of Appeals and Opinions at the New York State Attorney Generals Office, NY, NY.

All of these recent and longer-term Fordham graduates would be more than happy to talk to you about their experience applying for a Skadden Fellowship as well as their experience working as a Skadden Fellow. We can provide their current addresses and phone numbers to you.

From: Hillary Exter
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 1:04 PM
To: Black Law Students Association; blsa.fordham@gmail.com;
lalsa@law.fordham.edu; Apalsa; South Asian Law Students Association
Subject: Getting the Job of Your Dreams: Post Graduate Fellowship –ALSA Outreach

Dear APALSA, BLSA, LALSA and SALSA board members,

Post-graduate fellowships are a great way to begin a public interest career and we would love to do everything we can to encourage and help support -ALSA members who may be interested in exploring the possibilities and applying.

Please spread the word about the upcoming series of events to your members. In addition, we are available to organize smaller meeting with each of your -ALSA groups individually, or host a jointly sponsored event. We could invite Fordham Law APALSA, BLSA and LALSA alums who have received fellowships. For example:

BLSA alums Afua Atta-Mensah, '04 did both Soros Community Justice and Fulbright Fellowships, Alycia M. Guichard, '04, Georgetown Law's DC Law Fellowship.

LALSA alums Lynda Garcia, '12 and Akira Arroyo, '01 did, respectively, a Soros Community and an Equal Justice Works Fellowship, through its precursor NAPIL, with the NYC Bar Association on a Post 9/11 Small Business Assistance Project.

APALSA alums Caroline Hsu, '09 and Esther Hie-Jin Limb, '04 did, respectively, EJW Fellowships with Legal Aid Society's Prisoners' Rights Project and the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center.

In addition professors Dora Galacatos, Jennifer Gordon, Robin Lenhardt, Chi Mbako, Kimani Paul-Emile, Elizabeth Cooper, and Olivier Sylvain, all did public interest fellowships. Let me know what you think.

Let me know if a meeting with your groups—individually or jointly—is something you would like to sponsor and we can schedule this.

Here's the series of programs that we would love your help in promoting as well—lunch served at each:

FELLOWSHIPS—AN INTRODUCTION, INCLUDING EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS FELLOWSHIPS, Thurs., March 21st - 12:30 PM, Room 205: with Fordham Law alums who were recipients of project-based and organization-based, post-graduate public interest fellowship

SKADDEN FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIPS, Tues., April 2nd - 12:30 PM, Room 211: with Susan Butler Plum, Director of the Skadden Fellowship Foundation & Fordham Law alums & profs who were Skadden Fellows.

FULBRIGHT INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS, Tues., April 9th - 12:30 PM, Room 211 with Walter Jackson, Program Manager, Fulbright & Rebecca Stark-Gendrano, Fordham University Fulbright Fellowship Coordinator.

CRIMINAL DEFENSE FELLOWSHIPS, TUES., APRIL 16th - 12:30 PM, Room 211, with Lynda Garcia, '12 Soros Community Justice Fellowship.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Hillary

Hillary Exter, Esq.
Director of Student Organizations & Publicity
Public Interest Resource Center
Fordham Law School
140 W. 62nd St., Room 08
NY, NY 10023
212.636.7789
Hexter@law.fordham.edu
www.law.fordham.edu/pirc
<http://www.facebook.com/pircfordhamlaw>