

Columbia Law School Racial Justice Fellowships 2025

As part of its ongoing efforts to advance racial justice in the Columbia community and beyond, the Law School invites applications from second-year J.D. students for the Racial Justice Fellowships for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The Law School's Anti-Racism Steering Committee, created during the summer of 2020 by Dean Gillian Lester, established the Columbia Law School Racial Justice Fellowships in recognition of the unique role that lawyers can play in addressing structural racism and social inequality and of the desire of many Columbia students to use their law degrees in furtherance of this work. The goal of this fellowship is to provide financial assistance during law school to facilitate students' pursuit of careers in racial justice.

Terms of the Fellowship

Awards: Five fellowships of \$25,000 each will be awarded in spring 2025, with grant funds disbursed to the student account in fall of 2025.

Eligibility: Current second-year (2L) Columbia Law School students are eligible to apply. Recipients will receive their funding in the fall of their 3L year. Fellowships will be available to Columbia Law students who intend to pursue racial justice legal work immediately after graduation or immediately after a clerkship. Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to racial justice legal work, an intent to pursue this work immediately after graduation or immediately after a clerkship, and an ability to make a meaningful contribution to this field.

Application Process and Selection: The application deadline is February 23, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Application instructions are included below. A committee of members of the faculty and administration will select the fellows.

The selection committee will consider factors such as the following in assessing candidates:

- Demonstrated commitment to racial justice work. This might include:
 - Participation in clinics, externships, or other experiential learning opportunities and/or participation in classes focused on racial justice, social justice, or public service topics.
 - Work experience, including summer internships and term-time internships as well as work experience prior to and during law school.
 - Participation in specialized Law School programs such as the Max Berger '71 Public Interest/Public Service Fellows Program, Human Rights Institute 1L Advocates Program, or Davis Polk Leadership Initiative.
 - Volunteer experience.

- Extracurricular activities, including leadership or participation in student groups, affinity groups, moot courts, journals, and pro bono activities.
- The candidate's reflections on, and aspirations for, addressing racial justice issues.
- Demonstrated skills that will be useful in pursuit of racial justice work.
- Personal history and life experience
- Career goals and anticipated career path
- Evidence that the fellowship will help the candidate pursue a full-time career in racial justice

For questions, please contact Erica Smock, dean for the Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers and a member of the Anti-Racism Coordinating Committee, at els13@columbia.edu.

Application Instructions

Please submit the following documents at cmlink.me/2it/s81479. Applications are due on February 23, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Please contact Rebecca Hinde at rh2523@columbia.edu if you have questions with respect to submitting your materials.

- 1) Your resume
- 2) A personal statement (1000 words maximum; **PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THE DOCUMENT**) that describes your commitment to addressing racial injustice. This statement should address relevant experience and future aspirations, including postgraduate career plans. (The selection committee does not expect your career plans to be fully mapped out, but it is interested in hearing about your career interests, goals, and expectations and whether you intend to pursue a private sector/corporate position at any point.)
- 3) Two letters of recommendation.¹ It is strongly preferred, but not required, that one letter should come from a Columbia Law School faculty member. These letters may be brief; the selection committee will follow up directly with recommenders as needed.
- 4) An unofficial copy of your Columbia Law School transcript
- 5) Short-answer questions (200 words maximum per question; **PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THE DOCUMENT**):
 - a) How would this fellowship enable you to better pursue your career goals?
 - b) How will you use your 2L summer and 3L year to become a stronger candidate for a career in racial justice work?
 - c) Please detail your financial need. How will this fellowship affect your ability to pursue racial justice work immediately after graduation?
 - d) *Optional*: What distinguishes you from other applicants?
 - e) *Optional*: Please explain any factors that have prevented you from developing a demonstrated commitment to racial justice work to date.
 - f) *Optional*: Is there anything else you would like the committee to know about you?

¹ If the recommenders prefer, they can email their letters directly to Rebecca Hinde at rh2523@columbia.edu, but when applying online you will be required to provide recommenders' names, email addresses, and the date by which the letters will be submitted.