

J.D. Pathways Fellowships/Max Berger '71 J.D. Pathways Fellowships¹ 2025

Columbia Law School is pleased to offer J.D. Pathways Fellowships for J.D. graduates of ABA-accredited law schools interested in beginning their careers in public interest law, including human rights, or in government service.² The fellowships serve two important purposes. First, they allow graduates to gain the experience, skills, and professional networks they need to obtain permanent paid positions in their fields. Second, they enable public interest organizations and government employers confronting great demand and diminished resources to benefit from the services of talented lawyers.

To be considered for a Pathways Fellowship, applicants must first obtain a written commitment by a “qualified host” to provide meaningful legal work and supervision. A qualified host is a public interest organization or government employer³ (federal, state, local, multinational, or international) that commits, contingent upon the applicant’s receipt of a fellowship, to:

- Provide the applicant with a position for a one-year period that will require the use of their legal education.
- Provide appropriate training and supervision during the fellowship period. The applicant's supervisor should be a lawyer.
- Consider the fellow for an appropriate permanent full-time paid position if applicable funding becomes available.

Law schools, whether Columbia Law School or other law schools, do *not* qualify as hosts. This includes centers, clinical programs, and faculty members.

Please note that applicants must submit a commitment letter from their prospective host. See the last page of this document for instructions on the specific information this letter must include.

The J.D. Pathways Fellowships pay a stipend of \$50,000 for one year of full-time work. Fellows must commit to work full-time at their host (at least 35 hours per week) for twelve consecutive months. Fellows are not considered employees of Columbia Law School or Columbia University. Columbia Law School cannot pay for health insurance or other benefits. In some cases, fellows are able to receive benefits through their hosts. This packet contains information about eligibility requirements and application and selection procedures, including deadlines. **Please read carefully.**

¹ A subset of applicants will be awarded fellowships generously funded by Max Berger '71. The terms, stipend, and application process for “Berger Pathways Fellowships” are identical to those of the standard J.D. Pathways Fellowships. In this document, both the standard J.D. Pathways Fellowships and the Berger Pathways Fellowships will be referred to as “Pathways Fellowships.”

² The fellowship is open to applicants receiving their J.D. from any ABA-accredited law school in the U.S. as part of that school’s class of 2025; Columbia Law School does not need to be the degree-granting institution.

³ Some federal employers will not take postgraduate fellows; applicants are responsible for verifying that their desired placement will host a fellow.

Eligibility

In addition to the aforementioned, the fellowships are available to class of 2025 members who:

- Have or will have completed the requirements for their J.D. degree (and all joint degrees, if any) by the end of May 2025.
- Are unemployed and do not have a fellowship, stipend, or other source of funding to work in 2025-2026.
- Intend to take the February 2025 or July 2025 bar examination.

Priority for the fellowship will be given to applicants who:

- Demonstrate a substantial commitment to pursuing a career in public interest law or government service.
- Demonstrate preparation for a career in public interest law or government service.
- Will endeavor to obtain employment in the public interest or government sector before or immediately following the fellowship's conclusion

Please note that the following are NOT eligible for the fellowship:

- Applicants who are completing a law degree other than a J.D., such as an LL.M., as part of the class of 2025 but will not complete a J.D. as part of the class of 2025; applicants who are completing a joint degree as part of the class of 2025 are eligible if one of those degrees is a J.D.
- Applicants who have completed a J.D. as part of a class earlier than the class of 2025.

Fellowship Application Process

1. Meet with a career adviser at your law school. Columbia Law School students should meet with an adviser in the Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers; visit Symplicity to make an appointment.
2. Apply directly to potential hosts.
3. Submit a fellowship application by May 1, 2025. For application instructions, see the last page of this notice.
4. Applicants will be notified of selection decisions by the end of May 2025.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If your desired host is a U.N. agency, you will be working within the U.S, and you will need a visa to work in the U.S., please contact Rebecca Hinde at rh2523@columbia.edu as soon as possible.

Questions?

If you have questions about the application or payment process, please review our [J.D. Pathways Fellowship FAQs](#). If you still have any questions, please contact:

Rebecca Hinde
Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers at Columbia Law School
rh2523@columbia.edu
212-854-3535

J.D. Pathways/Max Berger '71 J.D. Pathways Fellowships 2025

Application Instructions

Please visit cglink.me/2it/s62229 to submit the following materials.* **Applications are due at 11:59 p.m. on May 1, 2025.** If you have difficulty accessing the online application portal, please contact Rebecca Hinde at rh2523@columbia.edu.

1. Your resume.
2. An essay explaining how a position with the host will help you begin a career in your chosen field (no more than one single-spaced page). **PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THE DOCUMENT.**
3. An **unofficial** copy of your transcript. **PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT AN OFFICIAL COPY.**
4. A letter of recommendation, preferably from a member of the faculty of your law school. If the recommender would prefer, they may email the letter to rh2523@columbia.edu no later than the deadline for the rest of the application.
5. A list of two references with their titles, affiliations, and contact information. We recommend that at least one be someone who supervised your legal work. **PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THE DOCUMENT.**
6. A commitment letter from your host that demonstrates its qualifications for purposes of this fellowship and describes the work you will be assigned and the training and supervision you will receive if your application is successful. If you are a Columbia Law School student, the letter **MUST** also state:
 - a. The term of the fellowship (one year).
 - b. That Columbia Law School will provide funding of \$50,000 per year.
 - c. The amount that the host will supplement your stipend with its own funds, if applicable.
7. If you are a joint degree candidate, please upload certification from the institution conferring the joint degree that all requirements will be completed in time for you to receive both degrees by the end of May 2025.