

LL.M. Pathways Fellowships 2026

Columbia Law School is pleased to offer Pathways Fellowships for LL.M. graduates beginning their careers in public interest law, including human rights or government service. The fellowships' goal is to enable graduates to gain experience, skills, and professional networks that will lead to permanent paid positions in their fields. In addition, the fellowships allow public interest organizations and government agencies confronting great demand and diminished resources to benefit from the services of talented lawyers. Applications are due March 8, 2026.

Fellowships will be awarded to selected 2026 LL.M. graduates who obtain positions at qualified host organizations. The position must require the fellow to make use of their legal education. Priority will be given to students who demonstrate a substantial commitment to and preparation for careers as public interest or government lawyers. A maximum of one fellowship will be awarded to any applicant.

Fellowships will be six months long.

To be considered for this fellowship, an applicant must obtain a public interest organization or government agency host. Advisers from the Office of Public Interest/Public Service Law and Careers (the PI/PS Office) will work with applicants to identify organizations that may be a good match. [View examples from past years.](#) (Requires UNI log-in.) Fellows must commit to work at the host organization full-time, which is at least 35 hours per week, for six months. Fellows who secure and begin a full-time paid position before the end of the fellowship or leave the fellowship position for any reason will not receive stipend payments after their departure.

Fellows are not employees of Columbia Law School. The Law School cannot pay for health insurance or other benefits. (In some cases, fellows are able to receive benefits through their host.)

This document contains information about eligibility requirements and application and selection procedures, including deadlines. **Please read carefully.**

Eligibility

LL.M. Pathways Fellowships are available to LL.M. Class of 2026 members who:

- Have completed the requirements for their LL.M. degree.
- Obtain a position at a qualified host that will make direct use of their legal education.
- Do not have full-time employment or a fellowship, stipend, or other source of funding equivalent to a full-time salary during the time for which a grant is sought.

A “qualified host” is a public interest organization¹ or government agency (federal, state, local, multinational, or international) that commits, contingent upon the applicant receiving the fellowship, to provide the applicant with:

- A position that will utilize the recipient’s legal education.
- Appropriate training and supervision during the fellowship. Fellows must be supervised by a lawyer.

Law schools, whether Columbia or another school, are generally not qualifying hosts. This includes faculty members and centers. Please meet with a PI/PS adviser if you have questions.

Priority for the fellowship will be given to applicants who:

- Exhibit a substantial commitment to pursue a career in public interest law or government service (including those who are transitioning from the private sector).
- Demonstrate preparation for a career in public interest law or government service.
- Will endeavor to work in public interest or government immediately after their fellowship ends.

Application and Selection Procedure

1. Meet with a PI/PS adviser (recommended).
 - Advising on international placements for the LL.M. Pathways Fellowship, as well as the Global Public Service, Haas, and World Bank Fellowships, will be available starting in November.
 - For public interest work in the United States that is not human rights-focused: select a PI/PS adviser based on your interests.

Among other things, advisers can help applicants identify hosts that match their interests and will benefit from their service. Applicants with multiple interests are encouraged to meet with multiple advisers. Please make appointments on Symplicity.

2. Apply to hosts. Apply directly to hosts of interest.
3. Apply for the fellowship by the deadline. See the instructions at the end of this document.
4. The PI/PS Office expects to be able to share the selection committee’s decision by early April.

Stipend and Payment Process

Unless their host organizations ask to have the stipend transferred to the organization, fellows are paid by Columbia Law School in monthly installments. Funds are not available before fellows commence work. Stipends are subject to U.S. taxes.

¹ A public interest entity is one whose proclaimed purpose is the advancement of a vision of the public good that is broader than the interest of particular clients, or one that provides legal services for a specifically defined low-income population. Such entities will normally be domestic 501(c)(3) nonprofits or international nongovernmental organizations. The PI/PS Office will determine whether a particular host organization satisfies this requirement.

IMPORTANT NOTE

If either of the following circumstances apply to you, please follow the instructions below **PRIOR TO APPLYING**:

- *You plan to start your fellowship prior to July 1, 2026:*
Please reach out to Rebecca Hinde at rh2523@columbia.edu to discuss the payment schedule.
- *Your proposed host organization is an intergovernmental agency such as the United Nations or World Bank, you plan to serve your fellowship within the United States, and you will require a visa to work in the United States:*
Please reach out to Rebecca Hinde at rh2523@columbia.edu **immediately** as there are restrictions on paying fellowship stipends to holders of certain visa types. If you do not receive proper guidance, you may not be eligible to receive a fellowship, so it is very important that you speak to Rebecca Hinde ASAP and definitely BEFORE you submit your application.

Fellowship Contacts

For questions about substantive issues, such as fellowship criteria, your essay, the appropriateness of a reference or host, please contact the appropriate adviser (see above).

In addition, at any time you may contact Rebecca Hinde, coordinator for postgraduate fellowships, at rh2523@columbia.edu for questions on the application and payment process. (Please note that she is unable to provide advice on substantive questions, such as whether a particular host would be a good match or how to write a compelling essay.)

Application Instructions

Please submit the following documents at cglink.me/2it/s60461 by 11:59 p.m. on March 8, 2026. Note: if you also apply for the Global Public Service, Leebron, Haas Fellowships, you may reuse portions of those applications, such as letters of recommendation, provided they meet the requirements described below.

1. Your resume
2. An essay, no more than one single-spaced page, explaining how a position with the host employer will help you begin a career in your chosen field. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THE DOCUMENT.
3. An UNOFFICIAL transcript (please do not submit an official copy)
4. A letter of recommendation, preferably from a Columbia Law School faculty member. 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 additional references, including their titles, organizations, 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
7. If you are a joint degree candidate, certification from the institution conferring the joint degree that all requirements will be completed in time for you to receive both degrees in May 2026