



LL.M. Pathways Fellowships 2025

Columbia Law School is pleased to offer Pathways Public Interest and Government Fellowships for LL.M. graduates beginning their careers in public interest law, including human rights, or in government service. The goal of the Pathways Fellowships 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 9, 2025.**

Fellowships will be awarded to selected 2025 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.

To use limited fellowship funds efficiently and accommodate differing student needs, LL.M. Pathways Fellowships are often less than a year long. The stipend is \$2383.33 per month of full-time work, and applicants may request funding for as few as three months and as many as twelve. **Any applicant requesting six or more months of funding MUST describe in their essay the work they will be able to accomplish if they are granted less than that amount.** (For example, “A fellowship of three months would allow me to...,” “A fellowship of six months would allow me to...”)

A maximum of one fellowship will be awarded to any applicant.

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 will work with applicants to identify organizations that may be a good match.

Fellows must commit to work at the host organization full-time, which is at least 35 hours per week. Fellows who secure and begin a full-time paid position before the end of the fellowship period or leave the fellowship position for any reason will not receive stipend payments after their departure date.

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 arrange 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 2025 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 *not* qualifying hosts. This includes faculty members and centers.

Please note that 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 the public interest or government sector immediately following the fellowship’s conclusion

Application and Selection Procedure

1. Meet with an adviser (recommended).

We recommend that applicants meet with one of the following advisers before applying.

- For human rights work in the United States or abroad or for public international law work: Kerry McLean, director of human rights and public international law.
- 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 organizations or agencies of interest with a cover letter, resume, and additional materials, if appropriate.

3. Submit your fellowship application by March 9, 2025.

See the instructions at the end of this document for instructions.

4. Applicants will be notified of the selection committee’s decision by the end of March 2025.

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

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. SJI will determine whether a particular employer satisfies this requirement.

work. Stipends are subject to U.S. taxes.

If either of the following circumstances apply to you, please reach out to Rebecca Hinde at rh2523@columbia.edu to discuss the payment schedule PRIOR TO SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION:

- *You plan to start your fellowship prior to July 1, 2025.*
- *Your proposed host organization is a U.N. agency.*

Fellowship Contacts

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

For questions about submitting your materials, the application timeline, and fellowship payments, please contact Rebecca Hinde, coordinator for communications and postgraduate fellowships, at rh2523@columbia.edu.

Application Instructions

Please submit the following documents at cglink.me/2it/s60461 by **11:59 p.m. on March 9, 2025**. Email Rebecca Hinde with questions.

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. If you are requesting six or more months of funding, you **MUST** describe in the essay the work that you will be able to accomplish if you are granted less than that amount (see page 1, paragraph 3); if including this information requires you to go over the page limit, you may do so. **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 2025