

Yale University President's Public Service Fellowship

Proposal for Fellowship Placement • Summer 2017



Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven

Organization: Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven

Full street address of organization: 333 Sherman Avenue

Website: www.nhsfnewhaven.org

Name and title of the Direct Supervisor:

Stephen Cremin-Endes, Director of Community Building and Organizing

Phone number and e-mail address of Direct Supervisor:

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scremin-endes@nhsfnewhaven.org

Placement dates: Tuesday, May 30 – Friday, August 11

Are placement dates flexible? If so, please describe:

Yes—we are able to end the placement a week earlier, if requested.

Hours of the program:

Monday-Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, with occasional evening and one Saturday (July 8) required. A number of other opportunities are available to work on weekends.

Placement Description

Organization description

Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven positions neighborhoods to succeed by making homes beautiful, energy-efficient, and affordable while helping residents take charge of their neighborhoods. We serve people throughout New Haven, with an

emphasis on the long-struggling Newhallville, Dwight, and Hill neighborhoods. Since 1979, we have created homes for more than 500 low- and moderate-income families.

Our Community Building and Organizing Department has supported these residents and other community members to effect lasting change and make their voices heard. In addition to the annual Resident Leadership Program, this work has previously included support of resident-led placemaking projects. In the coming year, CBO is partnering with our “green team” in Design and Construction to launch an Environmental Leadership Program to complement this work and help our residents embrace their roles as environmental stewards. We will also continue to lend support to the West River Water Festival and Stevens Street Community Garden.

Summary of Fellow’s Responsibilities

The Fellow will work closely with residents and the Community Building and Organizing staff to support our comprehensive neighborhood revitalization initiatives. During the Fellow’s time with us, she or he will focus on: the West River Water Festival, our pilot Environmental Leadership Series, and the Stevens Street Community Garden.

Complete Description of Project and Fellow’s Duties and Expected Outcomes

The Yale Presidential Fellow will work with NHS staff to educate residents on the changes that they are able to make in their own neighborhoods and prepare them to advocate for broader environmental progress in New Haven. This will include work in three areas: supporting West River Water Festival in July, helping to pilot our Environmental Leadership Program, and establishing children and youth programming in the Stevens Street community garden. While each area is unique, they are all focused on broadening participation in our programs throughout the community.

West River Water Festival (July 8)

Since 2011, the West River Water Festival has engaged neighborhood residents in the neighborhoods along the West River and within its watershed, from Newhallville to the Hill, encouraging families to take some time together in the summer to run through a sprinkler, learn about fish and birds, and paddle a canoe.

The Fellow’s role will be to help with the final stages of planning and work alongside NHS staff and festival founder Doreen Abubakar to coordinate presenters and educational activities, perform outreach through neighborhood canvassing (with NHS team members) and other marketing strategies, and follow up with organizational and individual contacts after the event.

Environmental Leadership Program (June – August)

Modelled after our successful Resident Leadership Program, the Environmental Leadership Program will include the following topics:

- Community Engagement Strategies
- Home Energy Efficiency and Community-Based Energy Solutions
- Stormwater Management
- Waste Management: Composting, Materials Reuse, and Litter Campaigns
- Community Green Space
- Student Project Development

The Fellow's role will be to provide crucial support in this pilot year, including developing and distributing surveys to ensure we are meeting our learning objectives and reaching residents who are interested in becoming participants.

Stevens Street Community Garden (May – August)

The Steven's Street Community Garden is located in the Hill neighborhood. A small community garden established only a few years ago, it is nevertheless home to crucial resources including seven garden plots, a 3-bin compost, and a "hoop house" that acts as a miniature green house.

The Fellow's role will be to establish regular "gardening hours" and develop outreach strategies with the CB&O staff that will bring more of the neighbors—particularly young people—out to enjoy the garden (including the fruit and berry trees)! The garden also acts as a community meeting place, bringing the neighborhood together. At the end of her or his term, the Fellow will work with CB&O staff and residents to organize an "evening" in the garden that welcomes the gardeners and others on the street with a cookout, music, games and a tented area for people to sit and enjoy one another's company in the garden. By summer's end the Fellow will produce an outline strategy for continuing resident engagement in the ongoing work of the garden, based on input from Stevens Street residents, conversations with seasoned garden coordinators from other gardens, and the Fellow's own observations.

The Fellow will also have the opportunity to get involved in other areas of our work, including: green placemaking initiatives, mural art projects along the Farmington Canal Trail, and small business entrepreneurship.

Specific skills or experience required for the project

Required:

- Passion for social justice, community development, and environmental stewardship
- Sincere desire to engage and work with low-income individuals and communities
- Flexibility, initiative, and creativity

Preferred:

- Experience working on neighborhood beautification projects
- Experience with grassroots organizing and door-knocking
- Experience with creating promotional materials for community events and workshops
- Experience or interest in program evaluation
- Experience planning/working/volunteering at an event or conference of 75+ attendees

Fellows with personal experience as a member of a low-income household are strongly encouraged to select Neighborhood Housing Services as their preferred placement

Additional requirements (e.g. a car or weekend working hours)

In order to support and build capacity around the Environmental Leadership Program, the Fellow will need to work until 8:00 PM on each of the six session dates (to be determined).

It is also crucial that the Fellow is available to work the day of the West River Water Festival—Saturday, July 8. In those instances, the Fellow's work hours will be adjusted to ensure she or he does not exceed 40 hours each week. Other opportunities abound for working on Saturday, and these will be coordinated as best as possible with Fellow's desired schedule.

A car is not required. NHS is located on the bus line and our staff has a culture of carpooling and biking. The Fellow will never be asked to canvass or visit a neighborhood on her or his own. If the Fellow chooses to drive, s/he will have access to free parking and work-related travel will be reimbursed at the NHS staff rate.

Briefly describe the work that Yale PPSF Fellows have done with your agency in the past and present. If you have not worked with Yale Fellows, please describe any work that Yale students have done with your agency.

In addition to hosting dozens of volunteer events with Yale students each year, NHS has been fortunate enough to host Yale President's Public Service Fellows for more than a decade. A few of the projects with which Fellows have assisted us are as follows:

- 2003: Developed a Business Plan for our organization (and presented it to NHS staff and Board of Directors); helped create an expanded website for our organization
- 2008: Coordinated our strategic planning process; created the written Strategic Plan that would guide our activities from 2008-2013; researched housing economic trends to update our Business Plan
- 2010: Worked alongside our Community Organizing team to coordinate neighborhood events and lay the groundwork for future community initiatives
- 2012: Compiled the organization's Annual Report; surveyed targeted neighborhoods using the Success Measures Survey created by NeighborWorks® America; created a final analysis of survey data
- 2013: Worked to strengthen NHS' relations with faith-based communities in and around our targeted neighborhoods
- 2015: Developed a sustainability report, which identified NHS' "green" accomplishments of the last year and target outcomes for NHS in 2015-16
- 2016: Conducted the 2016 Community Impact Measurement Survey, our three-year follow-up to the Success Measures Survey undertaken in 2012; provided social media marketing support for HOC Realty, one of NHS' direct subsidiary organizations

NHS has a long history of partnering with young adults, particularly university students, in our community development projects. All 13 President's Public Service Fellows have served our organization extremely well, assisting us in many different domains including community organizing, written correspondence, and research. Based on the evaluations and comments we have received, each of the students has found the experience of working with NHS to be very worthwhile.

We aim to accommodate the interests of the Yale President's Public Service Fellow by adapting and tailoring work assignments to maximize their value to the student while helping us accomplish our mission of revitalizing New Haven's neighborhoods. In this way, we are able to create a summer program that will not only meet the needs and aspirations of the student, but will also provide a substantive benefit to our organization.
