Placement Description:

Connecticut Veterans Legal Center (CVLC) helps veterans overcome legal barriers to housing, healthcare and income. Legal help is provided in medical-legal partnership with VA programs helping veterans recover from homelessness and serious mental illness. By providing legal help—including advice, full representation, and volunteer referral—the program helps veterans resolve legal issues that destabilize their housing, employability, disability income, transportation, and family relationships.

Fellow’s Job:

CVLC seeks a PPSF Fellow to support its executive team in development and communications projects. The Fellow will be directly supervised by the Executive Director, and will work closely with her on CVLC’s major fundraising and development activities.

Please write a complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow. (Suggested length: one to two pages.)

The Fellow would be involved in several different projects during their time with CVLC. The student will join CVLC’s Development Committee and participate in biweekly phone calls and may attend CVLC’s Board of Directors meetings as needed. The Fellow will work on other special capacity building projects that develop over the course of the summer, providing the Fellow with insight into the workings of a small non-profit that is in the process of scaling-up its services.
Depending on when they begin work with our organization and their specific interests, that may dictate the different tasks to which they will be assigned. We have listed three broad projects that the Fellow might work on during the summer, and one open-ended project.

**Project 1: Client Engagement and Resource Guides**

Though CVLC assists hundreds of veterans a year, the organization rarely has the chance to engage with the communities it serves and get community input on CVLC services. The Fellow will be responsible for creating and leading focus groups of veterans to determine what types of resources CVLC could add to its offerings. One main goal is to create a number of resource guides, which would allow CVLC to offer solutions to common issues clients face outside of those that CVLC takes on in full representation cases, such as landlord issues. Through this community engagement, the Fellow will determine best practices for pursuing the guides and then begin to create them.

**Duties/Outcomes:**
1. Lead focus groups of veterans to determine resources would be useful
2. Research and compile resource guides on issues that affect veterans like housing management
3. Develop best practices for distributing and updating guides
4. Write resource guides in comprehensible, clear prose

**Project 2: Database Innovation**

The Fellow would work on revamping and reimagining CVLC’s development databases, ranging from volunteers to donors to client maps. This is a crucial capacity-building project to CVLC and will allow the organization to better leverage its existing networks of volunteers, donors, and contacts. It will allow the Fellow to learn skills in database software and to think creatively about streamlining our systems. Further, it will allow the Fellow to think critically about donor management and donor motivation, as the Fellow will be expected to use the database information to analyze how CVLC can increase individual donations.

**Duties/Outcomes**
1. Maintain the database of volunteers and their networks
2. Distill donor motivation
3. Increase individual donations to CVLC

**Project 3: Communications Maintenance and Overhaul**

The Fellow will work continuously on CVLC communications and will be encouraged to take a lead on social media and email communications. Along with maintaining an active social media presence and communicating with our email list, the Fellow will be encouraged to innovate and improve the communications process at CVLC. For example, the Fellow will be charged with segmenting email lists to specific interest groups and encouraged to build social media presence beyond current practices. Further, CVLC aims to be a social leader on engaging with veterans’
issues, and the Fellow will be expected to develop this role through Twitter and other social media engagement.

Duties/Outcomes:
1. Streamline email communication by segmenting email lists and targeting personalized communication
2. Use writing skills to further CVLC communication goals
3. Boost social media following and engagement
4. Help make CVLC a social media leader on engaging with veterans’ issues

**Project 4: Personal Goals and Interests, Ad-Hoc Duties**

The Fellow will be expected and encouraged to seek out new opportunities, such as shadowing lawyers and attending board meetings. The CVLC staff is always excited to allow Fellows to pursue opportunities that match their professional development and personal goals, and a Fellow will be able to do so freely. One example of an ad-hoc duty that could add to a Fellow’s exposure to the organization and the breadth of work at the organization is assisting with the annual bike ride fundraiser, The RIDE for Our Vets, in June.

Duties/Outcomes:
1. Assist with ad-hoc events, like the RIDE for Our Vets Fundraiser
2. Reach professional development goals
3. Gain full exposure to the breadth of possibilities in a nonprofit career

**Specific skills/experience required for the project (Please list):**

1. Strong writing skills
2. Attention to details and organizational methods
3. Strong communication and people skills
4. Open, collaborative, self-directed
5. Interest in nonprofit, development, and communications work

(Not required but desired)

1. This position will be particularly meaningful for someone interested in non-profit management, public interest law, or veterans’ issues
2. Experience working in nonprofits
3. Background in communications or development work
4. Data skills or interest in acquiring data skills

**Additional requirements (e.g. a car or weekend working hours). If a car is required, please include information regarding parking arrangements and mileage reimbursement):**

N/A
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.

CVLC has a strong relationship with Dwight Hall and Yale Fellows. Through Dwight Hall, CVLC has had an Urban Fellow for nearly three years, and last summer the organization took on a summer Fellow. Dwight Hall’s Urban Fellow, a current senior in the college, works mainly on communications and development projects. This ranges from writing grant applications to conducting client surveys to managing donor information. She has also had the opportunity to perform some paralegal duties such as reviewing cases and helping with pardon applications.

Last summer, our Dwight Hall Summer Fellow researched legislative advocacy, ran CVLC’s communications, and wrote grants. CVLC allowed and continues to allow both of these Yale Fellows to pursue their personal interests and professional development goals through the organization, which has made them both continue this work throughout the school-year. CVLC has also had a Yale student make a promotional video and regularly enlists Yale undergraduate volunteers for fundraisers. CVLC would love to strengthen this partnership more.