Proposal for Fellowship Placement • summer 2018

• Organization: New Haven Free Public Library

• Full street address of organization: 133 Elm St. New Haven, CT 06510

• Website: www.nhfpl.org

• Name and title of the Direct Supervisor (please note: the Direct Supervisor must be available to supervise Fellow on a daily basis): John Jessen, Deputy Director

• Phone number and e-mail address of Direct Supervisor: 203-946-8124, john.jessen@nhfpl.org

• Placement dates ((8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 29th and Friday, August 10, 2018): May 29 - August 10, 2018

• Are placement dates flexible? If so, please describe: The Fellow can start a couple of weeks later if they prefer.

• Hours of the program (placements should be equivalent to full-time): Flexible schedule - during the Library’s operating hours. (Mondays 10-8, Tuesdays 10-5, Wednesdays 10-8, Thursdays 10-8, Fridays or Saturdays 10-5)

Placement Description

• Organization description (Mission statement, population served. 150 words or less.):

The mission of the New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL) is to ensure that all of New Haven’s citizens have full and unlimited access to information and knowledge so that they may meet the needs of daily living, have opportunities for self-education, and participate successfully in self-government.

Established by city charter in 1886, the public library system comprises five locations across New Haven as well as a Readmobile and a 24/7 digital branch. Ives Main Library, a cornerstone of the historic New Haven Green since 1911, welcomes nearly
300,000 guests through its doors annually and is recognized as major contributor to the social and cultural vitality of downtown. The library enjoys a reputation as a safe haven and seeks to inspire curiosity, learning, and opportunity for all who enter, fulfilling the promise of a truly democratic civic commons in the heart of the city.

- Please write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting (50 words or less):

The Fellow will support the New Haven Free Public Library as it seeks to further develop programs, services, policies and practices that address racial and socio-economic equity barriers experienced by homeless and marginalized users of the Library.

- 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.)

Public libraries across the country have faced a growing influx of homeless, disengaged, and mentally ill people. According to a recent report over half a million people are homeless in the United States and although 69% have beds at night, very few have a place to go during the day. Moreover, state mental hospitals contain only 10% of the patients they once had. Like libraries in the rest of the country, the New Haven Free Public Library has become a go-to place for this marginalized population. The Library is a heating and cooling center, a convenient hub with internet access for individuals searching for jobs, studying for tests related to job requirements, and filling out applications. The Library offers daily programs on a host of topics. On top of this, the Library continues in its traditional role as a quiet space for study and reflection.

In 2014 NHFPL entered into a partnership with Liberty Community Services. LCS now has a part-time case worker on site at Ives Main Library daily. In 2016-17, LCS assisted 380 individuals through more than 1,000 appointments in the Library. The case worker offers a wide range of social support services for the underserved. These include, but are not limited to: assisting individuals navigate Section 8 requirements, placing individuals in immediate housing, communicating and explaining information about soup kitchens and food pantries, signing individuals up for LCS’s clinical services and LCS intensive case management services, HIV counseling, and resume building and interview coaching.
We feel now is an ideal time to reassess the Library’s programs, services, policies and practices to make sure those individuals and groups that are marginalized among us can be heard, engaged, and not left behind.

In April 2018, The New Haven Free Public Library will open “Ives Squared.” This major renovation of the Main Library will include a café, tinkerlab (maker-space), interactive technologies, and collaboration and co-working spaces. As the NHFPL prepares to launch this innovative space, we continue to address issues of social and racial equity barriers. The Library is home to everyone and we want to continue to provide service for everyone who enters our doors. In the needs assessment research completed before building the space, we discovered keen interest from our homeless and disengaged users regarding Ives Squared services, in particular makerspace activities (e.g. 3-D printing, use of vinyl cutter and other tech equipment).

As we prepare to open Ives Squared, we also recognize the challenges that continue and will be created by the changes made to our traditional space.

The Library’s HELP response team, under the direction of the Deputy Director, is dedicated to meeting the needs of our underserved homeless population and seeks a Fellow to assist us as we expand our offerings in summer 2018.

A sample of our upcoming offerings include but is not limited to the following:

- One-on-one resume writing assistance
- One-on-one job application assistance
- Homeless individuals Town Hall meetings
- Introduction to Ives Squared offerings (including, but not limited to 3-D design and printing, Carvey, Laser cutting, Vinyl Cutter 8, and a suite of design software classes)
- Adult coloring book clubs
- Open mic programs for poetry and voice
- Crafting clubs
- Cultural programs – book discussions, film screenings.
- Chess mini-tournament

Ideally the Fellow will be able to assist us on all levels of our approach. This includes individual program support, one-on-one assistance, recruiting efforts, obtaining feedback from this cohort via daily one-on-one engagement, and documenting and assisting in evaluation of our offerings with the goal being a more equitable future for all our members.
A final report from the Fellow will focus on their findings and experience, offering observations and recommendations on the programs, services, and polices that might strengthen the Library’s effectiveness in serving homeless and disenfranchised populations at the Main Library.


Further reading:

Public Library response to homelessness /model programs:
http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/extending-our-reach-reducing-homelessness-through-library-engagement-6

Growing innovation divide:

San Francisco’s response to homelessness:

• Specific skills/experience required for the project (Please list):
  o Desire to work with racially and socio-economically disenfranchised individuals and groups.
  o Motivated to assist in the piloting of sample programs or services in collaboration with library staff and other stakeholders
  o Excellent verbal and written skills
  o Spanish speaking a plus.
  o Marketing design skills a plus.

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

  Work assignment will be based at Ives Main Library, 133 Elm Street
• 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.

  o In 2015 & 2016, NHFPL had Yale Fellows working to help prevent “summer slide” and maintain or raise reading levels of children rising to 1st - 3rd grade through the our “READy for the Grade” program based at Wilson Library in the Hill. Criteria for school children accepted into the program was based on reading level and economic level of family. The program has a proven track record of success over the past 5 years.

  o Five summers ago, a Yale Fellow cataloged and researched the NHFPL’s children’s rare book collection to help the Library determine its value and which items the library should keep. The Fellow also assisted the Library with the children’s Summer Reading program, recruiting participants and working at “Family Nights”.