Yale University President’s Public Service Fellowship

Proposal for Fellowship Placement • Summer 2019

- Organization:
  Columbus House, Inc.

- Full street address of the organization:
  586 Ella T Grasso Blvd., New Haven

- Website: www.columbushouse.org

- Fellow’s direct supervisor
  Carl Rodenhizer, Chief Real Estate Officer

- Phone number and e-mail address of proposed direct supervisor:
  203-980-2139, crodenhizer@columbushouse.org

- Placement dates:
  May 28 – Aug 9

- Are placement dates flexible?
  Yes, Dates can be changed based on fellow’s schedule

- Proposed work schedule
  8:30-4:30 with a half hour for lunch (flexible)
Placement Description

- Organization description

Columbus House, founded in 1982, has a mission to serve people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless by providing shelter and housing and by fostering their personal growth and independence. Today, we operate homeless services in four of the eight counties in the state: New Haven, Middlesex, Hartford, and New London. We have a roster of 170 employees that serve over 2,800 people annually. Its 40 programs fall into the following categories:

Housing initiatives that Columbus House has completed, supports or are under construction to provide housing options include:

- Seventeen-unit supportive housing development on Frank Street in New Haven
- single room housing sites on Howard Avenue and Davenport Avenue in New Haven
- duplex houses in concert with the Yale School of Architecture
- veteran housing on Davenport in New Haven
- 32-unit supportive housing for veterans in Middletown
- Scattered site apartments throughout New Haven and Middlesex County

- Summary

The primary objective of this fellowship will be to identify and propose opportunities for the remediation of blighted properties as well as other available properties for the expansion of affordable housing. This project will expand affordable housing stock for low-income and homeless singles, youth and families through property development, acquisition and renovations.

- Project complete description

With a rental vacancy rate of 1%, Columbus House seeks to identify and pursue opportunities to promote housing that can be developed to increase the availability of permanent, supportive housing for low income and homeless households. The fellow will identify site prospects, assess viability, and work with Columbus House staff and stakeholders to evaluate the potential to pursue.
Actual development of housing can be a multi-year effort, and outcomes for the fellow will not include the completion of any housing developments during the fellowship. But, efforts will include mapping of opportunities, comparison of sites, prioritization of potential sites in consultation with agency stakeholders, and projecting revenue and expenses in consultation with agency design team.

The fellow will identify parcels that meet specific criteria and are conducive for quality living among low-income households and will map the sites.

The fellow will work in collaboration with agency staff to research and assess funding options for acquisition, renovation, rental subsidies and support services.

Efforts will be initiated to assess any special considerations that will be necessary to successfully develop a parcel and the related costs.

The end outcome will be to create a portfolio of two to three sites that are viable low-income housing acquisition/development sites. The portfolio will include a preliminary budget and, SWOT analysis of each site, and will reflect the counsel of key stakeholders including vendors, neighbors, and politicians.

- **List specific skills/experience required for the project:**

  Strong oral and written communication skills  
  Mapping skills  
  Microsoft Office - Intermediate Excel  
  Research skills
• **Additional requirements**

A car is helpful but not necessary. Should a personal vehicle be involved, reimbursement for travel and parking is available.

• **Previous Yale PPSF Fellows, Yale student work**

Columbus House’s Human Resources Department has worked with Yale students on developing job descriptions for case managers and also with the Yale School of Management on initiatives related to the development of social enterprises to help secure employment for consumers.

In partnership with the Yale School of Architecture’s Jim Vlock Building Project, Columbus House is designing and building five modularly-constructed duplexes over a five-year period to be occupied by individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The houses, designed with input from homeless and formerly homeless clients, will be comprised of two units: one smaller, efficiency sized unit for a single adult and a larger, two-bedroom unit for a small family. Each will be built on a formerly vacant lot in low-income neighborhoods throughout the city of New Haven, CT.