

Mississippi Delta Fellowship 2021

The Mississippi Delta Fellowship connects recent law school graduates to on-the-ground, community-centered work in the Mississippi Delta. Based in the heart of the South and home of the Blues, the Fellowship provides a unique opportunity to inform and catalyze community change through the creation, development, and management of interdisciplinary projects. In turn, the position provides opportunities for professional development, especially in the areas of project management, engagement with social and public health scientists, policy analysis and implementation, community coalition-building, teaching and mentoring, public speaking, research, and writing. Previous Fellows have gone on to careers in policymaking, teaching, writing (academic and non-academic), research, film-making, and professional legal practice in community development. The Fellowship is a one-year commitment with opportunity for renewal at the end of the first year to two years; however, due to the Delta Fellow's central role in the Mississippi Delta community, applicants able to commit to a two-year fellowship are preferred. The Fellow receives a competitive salary and benefits, detailed further below, commensurate with or above that of most fellowships for recent law graduates, particularly in light of relative cost of living.

The Fellow works in collaboration with the Delta Directions Consortium (DDC), an interdisciplinary group of academic institutions, community-based organizations, and foundations focused on pursuing improvements in health, food systems, and economic development in the Mississippi Delta Region. The Delta Fellow is hosted by the Center for Population Studies (CPS) at University of Mississippi, which is the backbone organization of DDC. While reporting to the Director of the CPS, the Fellow also works closely with the Harvard Law School Food Law & Policy Clinic, of the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, and Harvard Law School Mississippi Delta Project, as well as the Delta Directions Consortium Advisory Committee.

By working closely with the DDC and its partners, the Fellow will become a part of a diverse network creating transformational change in the Mississippi Delta. Through their work, Fellows become familiar with community needs, assets, challenges, and opportunities. Fellows have the chance to pair academic resources of University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, Harvard Law School, and Harvard School of Public Health with community-based organizations in the Delta, to translate academic resources into projects that address community interests. The Fellow will build on existing projects, launch new projects in partnership with DDC members, and have the opportunity to design one new signature project for completion during their tenure, subject to review and input by the Director of the CPS and members of the DDC Advisory Committee. The Fellowship is supported by the Winokur Family Foundation and the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi.

Previous and current project themes include:

- **Food Policy:** Delta Fellows' work has included establishing and supporting the Mississippi Food Policy Council, a diverse group of stakeholders aiming to educate Mississippians about food and farm policies that build healthy communities and strengthen local food systems; supporting farm to school programs by helping launch pilot programs, publishing legal guides, and assisting in the creation of an annual statewide Farm to Cafeteria Conference; supporting small farmers by publishing guides and conducting trainings on topics such as the impacts of inheritance laws on farms; and working to increase food access, by launching farmers markets and making recommendations to eliminate the ban on people with drug convictions felons utilizing SNAP.
- **Public Health, Health Care Access, and Social Determinants of Health:** Delta Fellows' projects have included supporting better mental health practices via research on policies needed to keep those utilizing mental health services in the least restrictive settings; supporting breastfeeding through conducting a multi-tiered outreach and education strategy, working with local hospitals to establish breastfeeding-friendly practices, and promoting systemic change through passage of local and state breastfeeding policies; engaging in research and recommendations on improving maternal and infant health; and conducting research on policy opportunities to support better lead testing in small rural water systems.
- **Economic Development:** Delta Fellows' work has included partnering with University of Mississippi to create a small business incubator and launch a transactional legal clinic; publishing guides to support small businesses, including a small business legal guide and a guide for farmers to sell products to local Mississippi institutions; and publishing reports about economic development topics, such as recommendations for Mississippi to enact paid family leave and recommendations for Arkansas to develop microfinance lending.

Principal responsibilities of the Delta Fellow include:

- Managing existing and developing new projects, based on local needs, research, evidence-based results, interdisciplinary opportunities, and interest from Delta Directions partners;
- Researching, drafting, and editing policy and research reports, and educating community partners and policymakers on the research;
- Working with faculty and staff to develop clinical and pro bono projects for Harvard Law students in the Mississippi Delta Project, the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation, and other Harvard Law clinics;
- Identifying opportunities for, mentoring, and teaching college students from local universities with interest in creating change in the Delta;
- Helping to plan and host the annual Delta Regional Forum;
- Coordinating with partners for the Delta Scholars, a student leadership development program;
- Reporting twice annually to Delta Directions Advisory Committee and preparing a public annual report; and
- Supporting coordination, growth, and development of the Delta Directions Consortium.

For more information, please visit <http://www.deltadirections.com> (for information about Delta Directions) and <http://www.chlpi.org> (for information about the HLS Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation). For questions please contact flpc@law.harvard.edu

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Experience & Qualifications:

- Law degree;
- Strong writing, research, organizational and communication skills;
- Interest in learning and developing skills for conducting and connecting social and public health research and legal/policy research and working in interdisciplinary teams to inform stakeholders;
- Ability to work both independently and in diverse teams, and in demanding and periodically high stress circumstances;
- Strong sense of self-motivation and entrepreneurial mindset;
- Demonstrated leadership experience, experience bringing together diverse stakeholders, and/or experience with direct public action or community development preferred;
- Relevant academic or professional experience, including interest in or experience with economic development or public health, especially in rural areas; and
- Interest in or knowledge of the Delta region or the American South preferred.

Salary: \$55,000 plus benefits in year one (subject to salary increase if fellowship is renewed beyond year one), along with a relocation stipend, health benefits, and generous retirement benefits; also includes \$15,000 in the program budget to cover travel, event planning, hiring, and other expenses related to the position.

Application Materials & Deadline:

- Curriculum vitae, including relevant coursework, work experience, and extracurricular activities;
- Personal statement (500 words maximum) about the applicant's relevant experience, interest, and suitability for the Delta Fellow position, as well as future career aspirations;
- Two recommendation letters, at least one from an academic reference; and
- Academic transcript.

Application Instructions:

Applications must be submitted through [CARAT](#). To access the submittal screen you may either search for "Mississippi Delta Fellowship" once logged into CARAT or click on [this direct link to the fellowship opportunity](#).

Please submit the application materials by midnight (11:59pm) on June 7, 2021.