

Mississippi Delta Fellowship 2025

The Mississippi Delta Fellowship connects a recent law school graduate or post-graduate degree recipient to community-centered work in the Mississippi Delta. Based at the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi (CFNM) in Clarksdale, Mississippi, the Fellowship is a unique opportunity to catalyze community change through developing and managing interdisciplinary projects in the Delta region. The position provides opportunities for professional development, especially in the areas of project management, community relations, coalition building, nonprofit leadership, research, and writing. Previous Fellows have gone on to careers in policymaking, teaching, research, film-making, and professional legal practice in community development.

The Fellow helps coordinate the Delta Directions Consortium (DDC), an interdisciplinary group of academic institutions, community-based organizations, and foundations focused on pursuing improvements in health, food systems, education, and economic development in the Mississippi Delta Region. In addition to working with the CFNM, the Fellow also works closely with the Harvard Law School Food Law & Policy Clinic (of the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation) (FLPC) and the Harvard Law School Mississippi Delta Project, as well as with other members of the DDC. The Delta Fellowship is supported by the CFNM and the Winokur Family Foundation.

The primary responsibilities of the fellow are as follows:

1. Technical Assistance and Capacity Extension

- Work with the CFNM to identify and support community partners in need of technical assistance (TA) and capacity extension services, such as providing legal support, drafting policy, engaging in advocacy, sharing resources, writing and administering grants, evaluating programs, analyzing data, as well as program planning, budgeting, and project management, depending on the Fellow's interest and expertise.

2. Project Development

- Act as a doer and facilitator, pairing law, policy, and academic resources with community-based organizations in the Delta through community-driven initiatives.
- Work with HLS FLPC to develop clinical and pro bono projects for Harvard Law students in the Mississippi Delta Project and the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation.
- Work with the CFNM on their grant-funded initiatives (e.g., the Next-Generation Leaders, "Healthy Hub," and Hunger Summit initiatives) and support other CFNM projects.
- Create new projects and/or support existing long-term initiatives, based on local needs and resource gaps.

3. DDC Administration

- Schedule and facilitate DDC meetings, coordinating with members on agenda items.
- Update DDC members on collaboration opportunities & upcoming projects.
- Plan and execute the Delta Regional Forum (June). Support the Delta Scholars program, a student leadership development program for undergraduates, with operations and planning for their Boston conference (November).

Previous and current project themes include:

Economic Development: Community-based infrastructure planning, including the creation of a community designed and driven strategic plan, developed for a local community after the passing of the Infrastructure Investments & Jobs Act; broadband and digital equity research and outreach, including policy brief writing on the topics of affordability and digital infrastructure.

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Food & Health Policy: Co-creation of the “Healthy Hub” educational curriculum for food pantries; organization and coordination of the “Hunger Summit”- a gathering of diverse stakeholders working in the food insecurity space; and food allergy research and advocacy.

Salary and Benefits:

The Fellowship is a one-year commitment with an opportunity for renewal at the end of the first year. 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 role pays \$63,000 plus benefits in year one (subject to salary increase if fellowship is renewed beyond year one) and a relocation stipend of up to \$1,000.

Experience & Qualifications:

- JD preferred, qualified applicants with a graduate degree in a relevant field are invited to apply
- Strong writing, research, organization, and communication skills
- Demonstrated leadership experience, experience bringing together diverse stakeholders, and/or experience with direct public action or community development
- Ability to work independently with a strong sense of self-motivation
- Interest in mobilizing technical legal, research, and policy knowledge to co-create practical solutions with project partners
- Desire to engage in multidisciplinary collaborations that focus on health, education, food systems, and socioeconomic development
- Strong passion for community-driven solutions, with motivation to connect community leaders and changemakers with resources to amplify their work
- Current driver’s license
- Previous work experience in rural areas, or in the American South, is a plus, but not required

We recognize that there is no perfect candidate and will review applications holistically. We encourage all interested applicants who are passionate about community-rooted changemaking work to apply or reach out to our team to discuss their qualifications.

Application Materials:

- 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 should be submitted by email to Gray Norton at gnorton@law.harvard.edu by March 24, 2025. Please include “Mississippi Delta Fellowship” in the subject line of your email. Applicants will be notified within 2-3 weeks whether they will advance to an interview.

For more information, please visit <https://cfnm.org/programs/delta-directions/> (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