Mississippi Delta Fellowship 2027

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 hands-on policy and community development work, such as managing interdisciplinary and community-centered policy projects, drafting policy language, and translating complex legal and policy frameworks into accessible community resources.

Most past Fellows have been entry-level attorneys who have approached the Fellowship as an opportunity to use their law degree to explore and advance systems change, policy advocacy, and community development. The position provides opportunities for professional growth, especially in the areas of policy and program development, project management, community relations, coalition building, nonprofit leadership, research, and writing. Previous Fellows have gone on to careers in legal academia, policymaking, research, 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 (MDP) student practice organization. Through the partnership with Harvard Law School, the Fellow collaborates with the MDP supervising attorney at FLPC to serve as a bridge between community partners and HLS students and provide mentorship to students engaged in clinical work. The MDP supervising attorney also supports the Fellow's professional development and legal work through supervision and mentorship. The Delta Fellowship is supported by the CFNM and the Winokur Family Foundation.

<u>The primary responsibilities of the Fellow are as follows:</u>

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).

Examples of previous Fellows' work:
Economic Development: Community-based infrastructure planning, including the creation of a community designed and driven strategic plan after the passing of the Infrastructure Investments & Jobs Act; broadband and digital equity research, including a policy brief on affordability and digital infrastructure.

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 policy council planning and consultation.

The new Fellow will have the opportunity to advance ongoing initiatives in these areas and develop new projects based on the Fellow's interest and emerging community needs.

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 $68,000 plus benefits in year one (subject to salary increase if fellowship is renewed beyond year one) and a relocation stipend of up to $2,000. The Fellowship will begin in summer 2027.

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:
- CV/resume, including relevant coursework, work experience, and extracurriculars;
- 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;
- List of three references (name, email, business title), including at least one academic reference.

- Academic transcript.

Application Instructions:

Applications should be submitted by email to Gray Norton at gnorton@law.harvard.edu. Please include "Mississippi Delta Fellowship" in the subject line of your email. *We will review applications on a rolling basis.* The Fellowship will begin in summer 2027 (typically August, but there is some flexibility on the start date). 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 gnorton@law.harvard.edu.