

Yale University

President's Public Service Fellowship

Proposal for Fellowship Placement Summer 2024

Organization information

<i>Name of organization</i>	City of New Haven Office of Climate and Sustainability
<i>Full street address</i>	165 Church St 2nd Floor Annex, New Haven, CT 06510
<i>Website or link to social media page</i>	www.newhavenct.gov/climate

PPSF Fellow's direct supervisor

<i>Name</i>	Steven Winter
<i>Title</i>	Executive Director of Climate & Sustainability
<i>Cell phone number</i>	(475) 331-3769
<i>E-mail address</i>	swinter@newhavenct.gov

What is the best way for prospective student applicants to contact you with questions about your proposal?

- Contact the person below with questions about this proposal:

Max Teirstein (mteirstein@newhavenct.gov)

Placement dates (8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 28, 2024 through Friday, August 9, 2024)

Flexible, 11 weeks

Are placement dates flexible? Are there any dates on which your Fellow must work?

Dates are flexible.

Proposed work schedule (*work week should equal (and not exceed) 37.5 hours per week*)

Monday through Friday, from 9 AM until 5 PM with an hour-long lunchbreak taken at the Fellow's discretion (35 hrs/wk).

If a hybrid schedule is offered at your site, please describe:

N/A

Organization description (*mission statement, population served. 1,000 characters or less*)

The Office of Climate and Sustainability works with City departments, community organizations, and New Haven residents to advance and coordinate city-wide climate and environmental sustainability policies, practices, and initiatives. The Office seeks to implement climate mitigation and adaptation solutions that intersect with and address the immediate challenges facing our residents: from finding safe and affordable housing, to accessing quality employment opportunities, to improving air quality and respiratory health. Our work is particularly focused on addressing the health and economic impacts of climate change in underserved communities that have been hit the hardest by COVID-19 and are still overcoming the legacy of redlining.

Write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting (500 characters or less).

The Fellow will assist in organizing the City's community outreach and education campaign regarding residential energy efficiency and home electrification. Tasks would include organizing meetings with community groups, managing teams of volunteers and participating in neighborhood-level canvasses, designing communications materials, and launching a community ambassador program that can carry on the Fellow's work after the end of the Fellow's term.

Write a more complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow.

In 2019, the City formally recognized the urgency of the climate crisis through the declaration of a climate emergency and, in 2021, the City committed a

community-wide electrification goal by the end of 2030. The built environment comprises 70% of New Haven's carbon emissions. Attempting to reach the City's ambitious climate goals will entail leveraging both existing state programs supporting residential energy efficiency improvements and recently announced federal incentives for home energy efficiency, electrification, and clean energy. Many New Haven residents are not aware of the significant resources available for energy-related home improvements, which can lower energy bills, improve air quality, and make one's home more comfortable. Free or low-cost energy audits and energy efficiency improvements are available through the state of Connecticut's Home Energy Solutions program. New federal subsidies from the Inflation Reduction Act have the potential to spur increased investment in clean energy and building electrification. As these programs are unfamiliar or new, community engagement and education on this issue is vital, particularly to help low- and moderate-income residents access resources to reduce the financial burden of high energy bills.

The City of New Haven and Neighborhood Housing Service of New Haven recently received a grant through EnergizeCT's Community Partnership Initiative that will fund a community-wide public engagement campaign to make renters and homeowners aware of local, state, and federal programs subsidizing energy efficiency and clean energy improvements for their homes. The campaign will seek to connect these issues to pressing issues at the top of residents' minds, particularly housing affordability and respiratory health. The campaign will aim to both measurably increase residents' participation in energy efficiency programs and to identify barriers that prevent residents from participating. Particular focus will be placed on reaching residents in the city's underserved neighborhoods, where the twin burdens of high energy bills and air pollution harm most those who can afford them the least.

The Yale Fellow would be working directly with the staff of the Office of Climate and Sustainability on this project, and more indirectly with the three community-based organizations supporting the campaign (Neighborhood Housing Services, Junta for Progressive Action, and Community Action Agency of New Haven). The Fellow's tasks include setting up the systems, managing the operations, and tracking the metrics of the outreach campaign. The Fellow will also participate directly in the campaign's community engagement activities: convening meetings with community partners, organizing and taking part in neighborhood-level canvasses, and creating communication materials. Outcomes from this work have the potential to tangibly improve residents' health, comfort, and financial bottom lines.

Due to the hands-on nature of this work, the Fellow would need to conduct this work primarily in person. While some community meetings continue to take place on Zoom and a portion of the community engagement activities will take place over phone calls or email, working out of the Sustainability Office at City Hall and out in the neighborhood will be critical to succeeding in this role.

This is an excellent opportunity to see how changes in policy at the state and federal level reach (or, in some cases, fail to reach) the communities they are designed to serve. This Fellowship will also provide a valuable window in the role of municipal government and community partners in amplifying policy messages and connecting eligible residents to services that offer direct and tangible benefits. This is an exciting time to get involved and we hope you will join us!

List any specific skills/experience required for the project

No specific skill is required for this project. However, a number of skills are preferred and would benefit any Fellow conducting this project:

- o An interest and experience in community engagement
- o Knowledge of energy and environmental/sustainability-field
- o Spanish language proficiency
- o Confidence in communicating with strangers

Additional requirements

Since this role requires movement across the City of New Haven, the Fellow would benefit from some way to nimbly get around—a bicycle, eBike, or skateboard are excellent. A car would work too, but the City is unable to provide free parking or mileage reimbursements.

Briefly describe any work that Yale PPSF Fellows and/or Yale students have done with your organization.

The Office of Climate and Sustainability hosted a Yale PPSF Fellow for the summer of 2023, who assisted the City in achieving certification through the Sustainable CT platform, a voluntary certification program for Connecticut municipalities. The City of New Haven was awarded Gold certification (the highest possible) as a result of our PPSF Fellow's work, making New Haven the only Gold-certified city in the state. The Engineering Department also hosted PPSF Fellows that worked on SustainableCT in 2019 and 2022, before our Office opened in December of 2022. The team at the City has been very pleased with the initiative and enthusiasm displayed by our Fellows and look forward to working with new Fellows to improve the lives of New Haven's residents and

achieve the City's climate and sustainability goals. Additionally, Yale graduate students have supported the Office's research work into energy efficiency policy and the Office also has a year-round undergraduate intern who supports with web content and other projects as needed.