

Yale University President's Public Service Fellowship
Summer 2021

Proposal for Fellow working remotely for organization

- Organization: **Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, Inc.**
 - Full street address of organization: **311 Temple Street, New Haven, CT 06511**
 - Website: **www.deskct.org**
 - Name and title of person who will be the Fellow's direct supervisor:
Steve Werlin, Executive Director
 - Phone number and e-mail address of proposed direct supervisor:
(203) 624-6426, ext. 8557
swerlin@deskct.org
 - Placement dates:
June 1 – August 13, 2021
 - Are placement dates flexible? Are you able to accommodate a Fellow working in a different time zone?
Yes, placement dates are flexible and we can accommodate a Fellow working in a different time zone.
 - Proposed 37.5 hour per week work schedule:
Monday-Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
 - Organization description:
Mission:
To serve **people** experiencing homelessness or living in poverty by providing food assistance and services that promote health, community, and equity.
Vision:
A world in which people come to us not because they have to, but because they want to.
Values:
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Respect. The basis of peaceful human interaction.

Dignity. The most basic of human rights.

Community. The resource that matters more than any other.

Empathy. The best tool for the job.

Empowerment. The lever that moves both us and the people we serve.

Approach:

Low-Barrier. We aim to make all services as accessible as possible, reducing hurdles and barriers, like eligibility requirements, paperwork, waiting lists, and questions, as best we can.

Person-Centered. We aim to put the individuals we serve -- their needs, their goals, their aspirations, and their dignity -- at the focal point of our strategy in planning, executing, and improving all services, with particular attention to the wholeness and uniqueness of each individual's experience.

Harm Reduction. We aim to deploy strategies that can reduce negative consequences associated with risky actions of all kinds, while focusing on overall improvement of individual wellbeing in a non-judgmental and non-coercive manner.

Client Voice. We aim to ensure that those we serve not only have a seat at the table, but also provide the leadership and guidance to shape short-term improvements and long-term strategies.

- **Write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting:**
 1. Make an impact on the lives of people who are most in need in *your* community in New Haven by working with administrative staff to identify and steward community supporters.
 2. Gain an in-depth understanding of how grassroots nonprofits operate by working one-on-one with our Executive Director and Board members.
- Write a more complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow.

Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK) offers a work-learning experience in which the Fellow will have the opportunity to learn about the administration and internal operations of a small, community-based nonprofit serving the most vulnerable members of our city.

For over 30 years, DESK has served people experiencing homelessness and living in poverty in New Haven by providing a nightly dinner. The landscape has changed dramatically over the years, and so throughout our history, DESK has developed new programs and services to meet the changing needs of people experiencing homeless and living in poverty. Today, we take a nuanced and deliberative approach to program development: we identify the need, research best practices, lay out a strategy, recruit partners, assess resources, execute the work, and review results to inform improvement. *Small steps, forward momentum.*

Today, DESK is at an important inflection point in our history, and over the course of 2021, we'll be making a giant leap forward in our growth. After spending the last three decades housed in basements and dining rooms of local churches, DESK will be acquiring our own building and our space downtown so that we can craft a new program designed with our clients' needs as the foundation. The new program is a downtown drop-in center, and the new building will collocate

multiple services onsite. We will extend our service operations to provide a community space where our clients can not only access basic needs—like food, clothing, and harm reduction supplies—but also get connected to services that can move them beyond homelessness and poverty.

So where does the President's Public Service Fellow fit in?

We invite you for eleven weeks to be part of an organization on the precipice of systemic change. DESK is an organization that is large enough to address broader issues in New Haven with far-reaching implications, but small enough to give every player in the organization a seat at the table.

Specifically: The President's Public Service Fellow will work remotely to conduct fundraising research into grant opportunities, grant writing and report, donor stewardship, and other administrative support. The Fellow will also assist in external communications, including social media posting, e-news editing, and web content management.

DESK offers the Fellow an opportunity to get outside their comfort zone, interact with partner agencies, supporters, funders, and volunteers, and hone valuable skills that build on personal creativity and independence. The position is best-suited for an eager and enthusiastic self-starter looking to uncover the messiness and complexities of civil service beyond the classroom.

- List specific skills/experience required for this work:
 1. *Excellent* communication skills: written, oral, multimedia—with clarity and purpose.
 2. High-level of personal organization.
 3. Inquisitiveness: asking questions that are appropriate and useful.
 4. Independence: having the confidence to work without direct support, but knowing the limits of one's abilities or knowledge.
 5. Passion and Sense of Purpose: there is little that is straightforward or easy about serving people experiencing homelessness; it requires enthusiasm and drive.

- Equipment/resources you will provide to help Fellow conduct work:

We will provide an email address and phone number.

- Briefly describe the work that Yale PPSF Fellows have done with your organization in the past and present. If you have not worked with Yale Fellows, describe any work that Yale students have done with your organization.

DESK has worked with Yale students directly for many years through the Yale Hunger & Homelessness Action Project (YHHAP, Kitchen-to-Kitchen, and Yale Community Kitchen (the coordinators of whom serve on our Board of Directors and Program Committee). We have hosted a Yale President's Public Service Fellowship for the last two years. Throughout our internship programs and student mentorship work, we have provided an engaging and worthwhile experience for everyone, while also providing students with a foundation for future public service at Yale, in the New Haven community, and across the world.



