

HOPE Fellowship Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is the HOPE Fellowship Program?

How do I find a placement?

Who is eligible to apply to be a HOPE Fellow?

What are the requirements of a HOPE Fellowship?

How much are HOPE Fellows compensated?

How do I apply to be a HOPE Fellow?

When seeking a host agency, what kinds of questions should I ask?

How is a HOPE Fellowship beneficial when I graduate from Miami Law?

What if I do not intend to practice full-time in the public interest?

Is it possible to split the summer among two placements?

Can I work for a private attorney and/or private law firm that does pro bono?

Can I work at a public interest agency that does not have an attorney on staff?

When can I expect to hear about my fellowship?

What should I prepare for the interview?

What if I don't get a HOPE Fellowship?

Q: What is the HOPE Fellowship Program? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: The HOPE Public Interest Resource Center provides stipends to law students who work in uncompensated public interest jobs during the summer. HOPE Fellows work with local, national, and international public interest agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide much-needed legal advocacy. Since 2000, the program has evolved from two local placements to include national placements in locations such as Washington, D.C., New York City, and Los Angeles, as well as international placements in countries such as Tanzania, Namibia, Lebanon, and China.

Q: How do I find a placement? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: Students have the option to propose a placement of their own choosing or to apply with an organization that has previously hosted a HOPE Fellow. Start by identifying the geographic and topical areas in which you have an interest. A good place to start is to read past HOPE Fellow bios on the HOPE website and look on the Miami Law website for information about interesting externship placements. Need more ideas? Read ABA magazines, bar newsletters, and search on [PSLawnet](#) and [Equal Justice Works](#) to find out about exciting organizations. Talk to faculty, your classmates, and alumni who have been engaged in public interest and pro bono service. Be creative–this is your opportunity to create your dream job!

Q: Who is eligible to apply to be a HOPE Fellow? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: Rising 2Ls and rising 3Ls in good standing who are enrolled as continuing students are eligible to apply for HOPE Fellowships. While it is not a requirement, priority is given to students who have a demonstrated commitment to public service and financial need.

Q: What are the requirements of a HOPE Fellowship? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: Over the course of the summer, Fellows must complete a minimum of 360 hours of work over a period of no less than 9 weeks. HOPE Fellows will have an ongoing reporting and feedback commitment throughout the duration of their placement. Fellows must submit weekly journals reflecting on their experience and must participate in review and online discussion of articles identified by the HOPE staff. In addition to successfully completing their internship, upon return to campus, HOPE Fellows are required to develop a formal proposal regarding how they will “give something back” to the campus as a whole. The program must be completed within 1 academic year of your acceptance as a HOPE Fellow and the HOPE Fellowship summer placement has concluded. Fellows are encouraged to be creative when designing his or her program.

Q: How much are HOPE Fellows compensated? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: The HOPE Public Resource Center provides a \$5,000 stipend. Some students may be eligible for a travel stipend of up to \$1,000 (based on location and need).

Q: How do I apply to be a HOPE Fellow? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: Students must submit 3 copies of the fellowship application (including complete responses to the HOPE Fellowship Questions; current resume; unofficial transcript; and a letter of commitment from the host agency¹) to the HOPE Public Interest Resource Center **by 5:00 PM on February 24, 2011**. You may drop off your application in the HOPE Office (B462) or email it to umhope@law.miami.edu. Applications are available [here](#).

Q: When seeking a host agency, what kinds of questions should I ask? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: When you contact an agency, make sure you’ve done your homework! Take the time to research what they already do and who they have staffed at their organization. Think about how you can help the organization before you call and ask them about their needs. More than likely, the agency will appreciate your sincere interest and proposal to assist in their offices. Be patient, but also be persistent. Be sure to tell them who you are (*Miami Law student dedicated to public interest, rising 2L or 3L, interested in immigration, human rights (with your particular area of focus), bankruptcy, etc...*) and how you would like to go about meeting their needs.

Q: How is a HOPE Fellowship beneficial when I graduate from Miami Law? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: A HOPE Fellowship provides you with legal experience through on-the-job training in legal writing and research, and advocacy while working under the supervision of licensed attorneys. In addition, you will engage in project development with the guidance of a HOPE staff attorney. The HOPE Fellowship is highly competitive and obtaining this award is a great distinction for any resume. In addition, you will have a resource in former and future HOPE Fellows as well as the ongoing support of the HOPE team.

¹ Applicants are responsible for obtaining a letter of commitment from the host agency. If a letter of commitment has not been secured, please indicate the status of your communication with the organization and anticipated date of response.

Q: What if I do not intend to practice full-time in the public interest? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: While a commitment to public service is a factor in the selection process, we understand that everyone's career goals are different. Our goal is to instill within each law student a pro bono ethic. Our students will carry these experiences into the public and private sector and effectuate change in many ways.

Q: Is it possible to split the summer among two placements? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: No. HOPE Fellows must complete at least 360 hours over the course of no less than 9 weeks at one placement. Any additional hours spent at another placement will not count towards the hour requirement of the HOPE Fellowship. However, hours in excess of the 360 hours, should be logged as pro bono hours.

Q: Can I work for a private attorney / private firm that does pro bono? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: No. HOPE Fellowships are only for placements in public interest agencies. However, private law firms that do pro bono work in your field of interest are perfectly suitable for our Pro Bono Legal Research Project, which pairs students with attorneys in the private sector.

Q: Can I work at a public interest agency that does not have an attorney on staff? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: No. All HOPE Fellows must work under the direct supervision of an attorney. We want you to have the opportunity to work with exceptional lawyers to develop your advocacy skills.

Q: When can I expect to hear about my fellowship? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: Interviews will take place on February 28th, March 1st, and March 2nd. Offers will be extended no later than March 9th, with student commitments required by no later than March 30th at 12:00 PM.

Q: What should I prepare for the interview? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: Treat the interview as you would any job interview. You should be ready to discuss your goals and why you feel you are an exceptional candidate for the HOPE Fellowship.

Q: What if I don't get a HOPE Fellowship? [↑ \(back to the top\)](#)

A: Other resources for summer funding include the following: the Summer Public Interest Fellowship Program, Equal Justice Works Summer Corps, Florida Justice Institute Public Interest Law Fellowship, and many more. Search PSLawnet, Symplicity, and Equal Justice Works for other opportunities. If you are a 1L, you will have another opportunity to apply for a HOPE Fellowship next year!