Summer Community Service Fellowship

Frequently Asked Questions

---

1. What is the Summer Community Service Fellowship Program?

Established in 1992, the Summer Community Service Fellowship (SCSF) program has become a crucial initiative in supporting the development of a new generation of graduates working for the public interest. The program, administered jointly by the Harvard Alumni Association and the Center for Public Service and Engaged Scholarship (CPSES), provides one of the largest sources of funding for summer public service for current Harvard College undergraduates.

2. Who is eligible to apply for a Summer Community Service Fellowship?

Eligibility Students:

- Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and first-semester seniors who will return to Harvard in fall 2027.
- Graduating seniors, though Clubs and SIGs may give nomination preference to returning undergrads.
- Applicants must be in good academic and disciplinary standing.

Community and Geographic Considerations:

Familiarity with a sponsoring Club or SIG community is helpful but not always required.

- Clubs may determine geographic eligibility criteria and may give preference to students performing service within the Club's local area. Actual residency in a Club's community is not required in all cases.
- SIGs may choose to give preference to students whose service projects align with their mission, industry, or community.

Helpful tip: The broader the eligibility criteria, the larger the applicant pool the Club or SIG is likely to receive.

Public Service Commitment:

- Applicants should have a demonstrated interest in and commitment to public service.
- In the administration of fellowships at Harvard, public service is defined as:
    - Work that helps people meet their need for food, shelter, and health; improves educational and employment opportunities; educates people about their legal and/or civil rights; protects the environment or wildlife; and/or supports social issues affecting the general welfare.
- Work must be done for an organization that is nonprofit, nondenominational, and nonpartisan.

3. How can my Club/SIG participate?

All Clubs and SIGs are invited to participate in the SCSF program. Inform the Harvard Alumni Association of your commitment to participate in the program by completing the SCSF participation form sent to Clubs and SIGs in early November. **The deadline to submit participation information is early December.**

4. What are the funding requirements for my Club/SIG to participate in the program?

Clubs and SIGs commit to providing $6,000-$8,000 per student for 10 weeks of work, which is given to the student as a stipend to offset the income they would have earned. This amount aligns with other summer funding opportunities available at Harvard College.

Awards can be prorated for projects more than or less than 10 weeks in length.

Payment Process:
Participating organizations will receive an invoice from Harvard based on the amount they've chosen to offer and how many students they award funds to. **Payment is required prior to the end of the University's fiscal year (June 30).**

5. How is SCSF communicated to students?

HAA and CPSES:
The HAA and CPSES utilize a variety of print and electronic means to advertise SCSF to students through a variety of marketing strategies, including:

- Broad outreach to all students.
- Targeted outreach to past participants of CPSES programs.
- Special efforts to engage students from regions that historically submit fewer applications.

Clubs and SIGs:
Clubs and SIGs are encouraged to promote their participation in SCSF to their communities. While student contact information cannot be shared due to data protection policies, there are several ways organizations can market SCSF:

- Share program information with your community through newsletters, events, or social media.
- For Clubs, the latest Alumni List includes parents of current students who can be contacted to gauge interest in the program.
- For SIGs with corresponding student groups, enlist their help to promote SCSF directly to student members.
- Tap into past SCSF fellows:
    - Ask them to promote SCSF to friends or relatives who are current students.
    - Highlight past fellows and their work on social media to inspire interest - requires student approval.

6. What is the typical timeline for this program?

Early November – Early December: The HAA Clubs & SIGs team distributes the SCSF participation form to all Clubs and SIGs. Organizations interested in funding a student must submit their participation details by the December deadline.

Early-February – Mid-March: Application window for current Harvard College students to apply for SCSF funding.

Late March: Participating Clubs and SIGs receive their pool of eligible student applications and have approximately three weeks to review and select their awardees. Clubs and SIGs then notify the HAA Clubs & SIGs team of their selections.

Mid-April: CPSES reaches out to selected students to confirm eligibility and finalize awards. Once students accept the funding, the HAA Clubs & SIGs team notifies the corresponding Club or SIG and they can reach out to congratulate the fellows.

May: The HAA Clubs & SIGs team coordinates with each participating Club and SIG regarding payment details.

Late June: Final payment deadline – Clubs and SIGs must submit payments **no later than June 30**, the end of the University's fiscal year.

7. How is the hosting non-profit organization chosen?

Most students apply with an independent project, meaning they've contacted a non-profit organization of their choice and have coordinated the opportunity on their own. Students must provide proof of the project in the form of a letter of sponsorship from the host organization. This process is recommended.

Alternatively, some Clubs and SIGs form relationships with local non-profit organizations to create specific "pre-packaged" service opportunities that students can apply to. If your Club/SIG has relationships with nonprofits that students should reach out to, we encourage you to include that information on your participation form.

8. How are fellowship award recipients selected?

Fellowship award recipients are selected by the participating Club or SIG. Before applications are shared, CPSES reviews all submissions to ensure they meet eligibility and feasibility requirements.

9. Once my Club/SIG selects our awardee(s) can we directly notify them?

While we understand how exciting it is to award SCSF funds, Clubs and SIGs **cannot** notify their awardee(s) of funding.

CPSES will communicate with student applicants as they need to confirm that:

- The student isn't being "double funded"
- The student understands what they are agreeing to by accepting the offer, and
- Important deadlines and orientation events are communicated.

Once the student formally accepts the fellowship, the HAA Clubs and SIGs team will approve your organization to reach out and congratulate the awardee(s).

10. What responsibilities does my Club/SIG have during the summer?

The SCSF program offers current Harvard undergraduate students and Harvard alumni the opportunity to connect. Clubs and SIGs are encouraged to provide meaningful support and engagement for their fellows throughout the summer.

We strongly encourage each Club or SIG to foster mentorship and community for their fellows by:

- Identifying alumni connected to the host organization or area of interest (if applicable) to guide and support the fellow.
- Designating at least one Club or SIG contact to serve as a mentor, offering guidance, encouragement, and support throughout the summer, and including the fellow in relevant Club or SIG activities.
- Inviting fellows to attend Club or SIG meetings, dinners, and events that facilitate connections between students and alumni.
- Sharing information about Club or SIG membership to encourage continued engagement beyond the fellowship experience.

Please note, while these engagement opportunities are encouraged, student participation is optional and not a requirement of SCSF.

11. Whom do I contact if I have further questions?

If you have any questions about the SCSF program, please do not hesitate to contact the HAA Clubs & SIGs team at clubs@harvard.edu.