

Vera-CUNY Graduate Center Summer Fellowship 2021

The Vera Institute and CUNY Graduate Center invites applications for Summer Fellows who will be based in Vera's New York City office. These **\$4,000** fellowships will be offered to Graduate Center Ph.D. students from any program with primary research interests in criminal or immigration justice and the work of the Vera Institute.* The primary responsibilities of the award winners will be to collaborate with researchers in one of Vera's 4 centers or programs on research relating to a specific project, including but not limited to data collection, analysis, fieldwork, report writing, stakeholder engagement, and dissemination.

While Vera's centers and programs span the criminal justice system, Vera is offering CUNY Fellows projects in select areas. Please see the list of potential projects below and indicate in your application which project or projects are most relevant to your experience and interest. If you are interested in more than one project, be sure to fill out the last page of this document, listing those projects in order of preference. You can apply for no more than 3 projects.

Fellowship recipients will be required to be in residence for **120 hours** over the summer of 2021 at the Vera Institute of Justice working for scheduled times from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM on Monday through Friday. Depending on developments with COVID-19, this fellowship could be remote. Vera and CUNY will provide more information as the summer gets closer. In addition, recipients will be required to attend a welcome reception at the beginning of the fellowship, to do a brief presentation on their work at the end of the summer and write a blog post about their experiences before the end of the Fall 2021 semester.

To apply please send a letter of interest describing your research interests and related experience with specific reference to one of the projects described below, a c.v., a current Graduate Center transcript (you may submit the unofficial student copy that can be printed from CUNYFirst), and a letter of support from your primary advisor.

Instructions for submitting your application:

- 1) Please combine the above materials (except for the letter of recommendation) into a SINGLE file (saved as either a Word or PDF file).
 - a. Use the following format when naming your document: Last Name, First Name, GC Program
 - b. If you are applying to more than one center or program, be sure to include page 4 with the rest of your materials.
- 2) Email your file directly to Jakiyah Bradley at jbradley@vera.org.
 - a. Please use your Graduate Center email address when sending the file.

Instructions for Faculty Recommenders

- 1) Prepare your reference letter as a Word or PDF file.
- 2) Please use the following format when naming your document: Student Last Name, First Name
- 3) Email your file directly to Jakiyah Bradley at jbradley@vera.org.

Application Deadline: February 1, 2021

***Students must be designated as Level II students to be eligible for the fellowship.**

CUNY Graduate Center / Vera Institute of Justice PhD Student Fellowships

1) Center on Sentencing and Corrections, *Unlocking Potential*

Vera's Unlocking Potential initiative promotes postsecondary education for those who are incarcerated. Research suggests that education is key to improving many long-term outcomes for incarcerated people, their families, and their communities—including reducing recidivism and increasing employability and earnings after release. Vera works with colleges who offer prison-based programs to ensure that they provide quality higher education to as many students as possible.

As part of this initiative, Vera is engaged in two research projects funded by the District Attorney of New York's Criminal Justice Investment Initiative. The first is an outcome evaluation of college-in-prison programs in New York state. This project compares those who enroll in college programs against incarcerated peers who do not, focusing on outcomes like recidivism, post-release education completion, and employment. The second is a process and outcome evaluation of a reentry program for women in New York City. It compares those who participate in education- and career-based reentry programming against peers who do not, focusing on recidivism, employment, and wages.

Vera seeks a research fellow who will contribute to both of these evaluations. Depending on the fellow's expertise, tasks may include quantitative data collection, cleaning, and analysis; qualitative data collection and analysis; report writing; or logistics support for the two projects. The fellow may also have an opportunity to develop independent research that contributes to the mission of the team.

2) Policing Program

The goal of the [Vera Policing Program](#) is to shrink the footprint of American policing and advance racial equity. We provide data and tools in support of grassroots and community-led movements, and blueprint approaches that prioritize community needs. We approach our work by focusing on areas in where disparities and biases exist, making enforcement data widely accessible, and uplifting community-based solutions.

Relative to these goals, a fellow would have the opportunity to contribute to several projects including - although not limited to - our [Behavioral Health Crisis Alternatives work](#), [Arrest Trends](#) and our continuing work in the [911](#) space. These projects will provide opportunities for fellows to practice and develop applied research skills in translating research findings for general audiences; contributing to training and technical assistance and working with and visualizing big data.

3) Center on Youth Justice, *Nurturing Justice*

Nurturing Justice is a budding initiative with the twin aims of supporting the creation of safe, nurturing communities and transforming the national conversation on violence. This project draws inspiration and grounding from peace/conflict studies, public health, black queer feminism, well-being theory, structural and community-rooted investment, and participatory action research. This initiative takes structural violence as a major obstacle to the flourishing of communities of color and seeks to support and partner with activists, organizers, and local organizations to develop comprehensive democratic plans for promoting safety, healing, and transformative community-led investment.

Transforming Violence, a sub-project of Nurturing Justice, aims to transform the conversation around violence by creating content and research on structural violence and its relationship to interpersonal violence. Transforming Justice seeks to not only uproot and address the structural drivers of violence in communities of color, but also promote healing and transformation within these communities through investment and community-building. Antiviolence, nonviolence, nurturance, community healing, and transformative justice must be further explored to properly highlight, inform, and/or build responses to violence that dismantle structural oppression. A new narrative about violence alone is not enough.

The second sub-project, Sowing Safety, aims to support deep local work to contextualize understand the history of violence in a community and its structural drivers, partner with communities of color to assess the current anti-violence assets and investments, and foster the conditions for community-led safety agendas centered on care work, investment, and healing. Safety must be rooted locally, tended to by everyone, and cultivated from a thriving community. Responses to violence are often triaged leading to a heavy focus on ending interpersonal violence and punishing individuals. But structural violence, which contributes to interpersonal violence, is not carried out by any one individual and requires collective action and cohesion to repair. Sowing Safety aims to create the conditions for communities to collectively imagine what structural safety and flourishing looks like for them.

The heart of Nurturing Justice is building strong equitable partnerships with advocates and organizations, both local and national, to support proactive accountability on behalf of the project and ensure the initiative aligns with racial equity and respects existing and historical efforts, coalitions, and progress, especially ones rooted in local community. Another lifeblood of the project is using art and creative expression in every aspect of the initiatives. Art, inclusive design, and self-expression are essential elements to building deep community, disrupting ableist and elitist patterns, and sharing power and experience across social identities.

Grounding Project Values

- Nonviolence and harm-reduction
- Intersectional anti-oppression
- Holistic participatory research
- Equitable partnership
- Power-sharing & accountability
- Public education & artistic expression
- Cultural healing & flourishing
- Liberation and joy

4) Participatory Action Research (PAR)

We encourage applications from individuals familiar with or striving to learn more about Participatory Action Research (PAR), an approach aimed at creating social change and remedying the effects of structural violence through collaborative research. PAR, which can be applied to both qualitative and quantitative research projects, centers the experience and expertise of those who are impacted by the issues we study. It requires building trusting relationships and skill sharing in order to disrupt the power imbalance between outside researchers and community members. Researchers engaging in PAR are

directly accountable to impacted communities and expected to work closely with them through various forms of collaboration.

5) Center on Immigration and Justice, Quantitative Research Fellow

In the face of stepped-up immigration enforcement, millions of non-citizens are at risk of extended detention and permanent separation from their families and communities. The Center on Immigration and Justice (CIJ) is helping to build a movement toward universal legal representation for immigrants facing deportation. CIJ seeks a quantitative research fellow to join a project team that aims to increase government transparency, create data-driven tools for advocates, and shape an understanding of mass detention as an extension of mass incarceration.

Vera seeks a quantitative research fellow to work collaboratively with the project team to conduct exploratory analyses using Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) data released through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (e.g., detention, detainers, removals/deportations, or ICE AIR flights datasets). Candidates should be comfortable working with large, messy administrative datasets for quantitative analysis, including: writing code to clean data, assessing data quality in the absence of an available codebook, conducting exploratory analyses, producing descriptive statistics, and building and refining statistical models. The fellow is likely to be involved in creating a special report or interactive data visualization to share findings with the public.

CIJ welcomes applications from students from all academic backgrounds (e.g., social science, computer science, statistics, mathematics). Applicants with experiences with the immigration system are especially encouraged to apply.

Applicant Name:

I am interested in applying for more than one project. I acknowledge that if accepted, I will only be able to work on one project. The projects I'd like to work on are listed below in order of preference.

Signature

Date

Please list the projects to which you are applying in order of preference (1 being the project you are most interested in working on).

1.

2.

3.