The Vera Institute and CUNY Graduate Center invites applications for **four** Summer Fellows. These **$4000** 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 5 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, programs, and demonstration projects span the criminal justice system, it is offering CUNY Fellows projects in select areas. Please see the attached list of potential projects below, and indicate in your application which project or projects are most relevant to your experience and interest.

Fellowship recipients will be required to be in residence for **120 hours** over the summer of 2017 at the Vera Institute working for scheduled times from 9:30 to 4pm on Monday through Friday. In addition, recipients will be required to do a brief public presentation on their work and write a blog post about their experiences before the end of the Fall 2017 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 (Students may submit the unofficial student copy that can be printed from banner), 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 as a pdf document or a word document).

Use the following format when naming your document: Last Name, First Name, Program

2) Email your file directly to lhenderson@vera.org

Please use your graduate center email address when sending the file.

**Instructions for Faculty Recommenders**

1) Prepare your reference letter as a regular word or pdf document.

2) Please use the following format when naming your document:

   Student Last Name, First Name

3) Email your file directly to lhenderson@vera.org

**Application Deadline: February 3, 2017 by 5:00 PM**
CUNY Graduate Center / Vera Institute of Justice PhD Student Fellowships

Available projects, Summer 2017

Policing Program

Program in Policing

The Policing Program is the Vera Institute of Justice’s newest program and is entering this space at a critical time. A summer fellow would have the opportunity to help Vera refine our strategy and action plan around national police reform. This work would include, but not necessarily be limited to, helping: conduct surveys of current practice and opportunities; identify police departments and law enforcement partners that are interested in implementing reform strategies; design research methodologies; and analyze results.

Performance-based Standards (PbS)

Center on Youth Justice

Performance-based Standards (PbS), an initiative of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA), provides national standards for juvenile placement facility administrators. Currently, 36 states report data to PbS twice a year across eight domains: safety, order, security, health and mental health services, justice, programming, planning for reintegration into the community, and family engagement. Vera worked with PbS in 2013 to create the family engagement domain and is eager to see, three years later, the type of data being reported and how it connects to the other domains. The Summer Fellow will have the chance to analyze data from across the country from this large dataset that is unparalleled to anything else we have in the juvenile justice field. While Vera has specific research questions about the way family data interacts with the other domains, the Summer Fellow will take part in discussions about other research questions and have the potential to co-author a research report with Vera and PbS.

Project: Questioning Bias: Validating a Bias Crime Assessment Tool in California and New Jersey

Center on Immigration and Justice

Research suggests that bias crime is not only on the rise, but is also more prevalent than shown by official reported crime data. Compared to similar offenses without bias motivation, bias crime also has more serious negative consequences for victims and communities. One fundamental barrier to victim identification is the lack of reliable means of determining bias crime victimization. The Vera Institute of Justice is conducting a multi-method study, funded by the National Institute of Justice, to develop and validate a Bias Crime Assessment Tool (BCAT) that can be used by schools, law enforcement and community organizations to improve victim identification among under-identified Latino, immigrant, youth and LGBT communities. The research will provide a sensitive and practical tool to improve bias crime victim identification and also help reduce barriers to reporting for victims. This research will provide the selected CUNY Fellow an opportunity to collaborate in qualitative and quantitative data analysis, particularly validation of the pilot tested BCAT, and reporting of study findings.
Developing Research and Performance Measurement for the Unaccompanied Children Program  
*Center on Immigration and Justice*

Each year, thousands of unaccompanied children fleeing war and poverty enter the United States. They are detained in federal custody in shelters contracted by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), and placed in removal (deportation) proceedings without the benefit of an appointed attorney. Vera works nationwide to provide legal services and representation to unaccompanied children in removal proceedings, develop best practices, and expand representation to ensure that no child appears in immigration court alone. The work is done through Vera’s Unaccompanied Children Program (UCP), which contracts with the federal government to serve the entire United States. Performance measurement is an influential applied research method used to inform program improvement and policy reform. The UCP is developing and testing performance indicators in support of technical assistance and program evaluation efforts. The UCP is also engaged in assessing needs and best practices for providing holistic legal services (legal and social work services) to unaccompanied children. A CUNY Fellow dedicated to research in this area could collaborate in these and other timely projects that are crucial to improving legal and social outcomes for unaccompanied immigrant children.

Incarceration Trends  
*Center on Sentencing and Corrections*

The Incarceration Trends Project (ITP) seeks to advance research on the prevalence and impact of incarceration at the local-level. Vera’s ITP dataset merges 45 years of county-level jail population data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) Census of Jails and Annual Survey of Jails, county-level prison population data from state departments of correction statistical reports, and resident population demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau. For more information, see the ITP data tool at [trends.vera.org](http://trends.vera.org) and complete details on the ITP dataset in *Incarceration Trends: Data and Methods for Historical Jail Populations in U.S. Counties, 1970-2014* (Kang-Brown, 2015).

Vera is seeking a Summer Fellow that will use this dataset to explore the factors the drive the wide variation in prison and jail incarceration rates observed in the more than 3,000 U.S. counties. The Summer Fellow will also contribute to the research activities of the ITP team and help shape the future direction of the project.

Solitary Confinement in U.S. Prisons and Jails  
*Center on Sentencing and Corrections and Substance Use and Mental Health Program*

Incarcerated people placed in segregation (commonly ‘solitary confinement’) are held in heavily isolating conditions, often restricted to a small cell for a minimum of 23 hours per day. Citing the potentially devastating psychological and physiological impacts of this practice, a diverse range of international and national bodies, advocates, policymakers, the U.S. Department of Justice, and corrections practitioners have called for prisons and jails to reform their use of segregation. However, there are still significant gaps in our knowledge relating to how segregation is used across the country.

Vera is embarking on a new set of research activities to (1) document and describe the various policies governing segregation across the United States, (2) analyze administrative data from eight state departments of corrections to identify the characteristics of people placed in segregation, the reasons they are placed there, and patterns and biases in its use, and (3) evaluate the impact of working in these conditions on the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of corrections officers in two states.

Vera is seeking a Summer Fellow that will leverage the project’s multi-site administrative records to explore the similarities and differences among states’ use of restrictive housing. The Summer Fellow will also contribute to the work of Vera’s research team, which will include the development a national survey on the use of solitary confinement, in prisons and jails, during the summer.
New Category

Technology and Justice Fellow

Research Department

Vera is seeking a summer fellow to develop work on the use of new technologies in the justice system. Some examples of potential projects include the benefits and potential risks of the use of technology by law enforcement agencies, courts and correctional system. This work includes, but is not limited to, confidentiality and privacy concerns associated with the use of new technologies. This fellowship opportunity would be particularly suited to students with a background in data science, information systems, computer science or related disciplines who are interested in gaining experience working at an organization that addresses issues related to criminal and social justice.