

Public Scholars Fellowship Call for Applications

Summary

The Moynihan Center at The City College of New York invites applications for the 2026–2027 cohort of the Moynihan Public Scholars Fellowship, which will commence in September 2026. Centered on the Moynihan Public Scholars Seminar, fellows join a vibrant intellectual community that includes Moynihan postdoctoral fellows and Moynihan undergraduate fellows. Moynihan Public Scholars take part in the weekly seminar at CCNY's historic Harlem campus and receive an award of up to \$30,000 for the academic year.

Applications are due by February 9, 2026.

Overview

The Moynihan Public Scholars Fellowship takes inspiration from Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's celebrated career, which exemplified the vital connection between rigorous research and broad public engagement. Senator Moynihan demonstrated how scholarly work could inform public service and spark meaningful debate beyond academic circles. In an era of increasing polarization and partisan echo chambers, we seek fellows who share Moynihan's commitment to pursuing bold, heterodox ideas that challenge conventional wisdom and reach across ideological divides.

Public Scholars join a dynamic society of fellows that creates unique opportunities for intellectual exchange across career stages and disciplines. Through regular interaction with promising postdoctoral and undergraduate fellows, Public Scholars become part of an intellectual community that bridges generational and professional divides to foster meaningful dialogue on pressing public issues.

Public Scholars will be chosen for their demonstrated excellence in communicating complex ideas to broad audiences through academic research, journalism, policy writing, media appearances, or other forms of public engagement. We particularly value applicants who have shown an ability to foster substantive dialogue across different viewpoints and backgrounds.

The cornerstone of the fellowship is the Moynihan Public Scholars Seminar, a weekly forum where fellows gather to think, debate, and engage with ideas beyond partisan divisions. Meeting Tuesdays from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. over lunch, the seminar creates a rare space where intellectual rigor meets open dialogue, bringing together fellows, faculty, and invited guests from diverse professional and ideological backgrounds. This community serves as an antidote to the increasingly polarized spaces of contemporary political and media discourse.

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Fellowship Award

Fellows receive a \$30,000 unrestricted stipend (\$15,000 per semester).

Program Structure

Fellows commit to the following core activities during each academic year:

Weekly Seminar

Participate in the Moynihan Public Scholars Seminar every Tuesday (12:00–2:00 p.m.) during term time (September–December and February–May) on the CCNY campus

Research Presentations

Present their work three (3) times:

- One (1) time per semester to peer fellows and faculty during the weekly seminar
- One (1) time per year to undergraduate fellows

Mentorship

Participate in structured mentorship events with undergraduate fellows.

Public Engagement

Identify as a "Moynihan Public Scholar at the City College of New York" in published work and media appearances.

Eligibility

Fields

Reflecting Senator Moynihan's multi-faceted career, Public Scholars may come from a variety of professional and academic backgrounds. We welcome applications from academics, researchers, public service practitioners, and journalists or writers who have demonstrated success in engaging broad public audiences.

Education

Applicants must hold at least a bachelor's degree. Academic applicants must have a PhD. Graduate students are not eligible to apply.

Location

Fellows must be able to attend weekly seminars in person at CCNY's Harlem campus.

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How to Apply

To be considered for the Moynihan Public Scholars Fellowship, please submit your application through the application portal at moynihancenter.cuny.cuny.edu by February 9, 2026.

A complete application must include the following:

Curriculum Vitae or Resume

Please submit a Curriculum Vitae or resume, whichever is standard in your field.

Personal Statement

Please submit a personal statement of up to 750 words that addresses your:

- Approach to public scholarship and experience engaging broad audiences
- Commitment to substantive dialogue across difference
- Anticipated contributions to and benefits from our intellectual community and society of fellows
- Current research or writing project and how this work would be presented at the Public Scholars seminar and to undergraduate fellows
- Interest in mentoring emerging civic leaders

Evidence of Public Engagement

Applicants may upload up to two (2) writing samples or share a link to a portfolio of examples of public engagement, including, but not limited to:

- Published articles, op-eds, or essays
- Media appearances or interviews
- Public lectures or speaking engagements
- Policy papers or reports for general audiences

References

Applicants should share the contact information for two (2) professional references.

Please review the [Moynihan Public Scholars Fellowship FAQ page](#) on the Moynihan Center website for more details. Please address any inquiries to moynihancenter@ccny.cuny.edu with "Public Scholars Fellowship" in the subject line.