



HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The HCD Fellowship program is funded by the City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development and facilitated by the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) at the University of Memphis. The competitive program places highly qualified graduate students with government and nonprofit agencies and organizations that are leading community development efforts in Memphis. The program seeks to support the work of selected placement agencies while enhancing the education of selected student fellows. Selected students are paired with a placement agency, where they work for 20 hours per week.

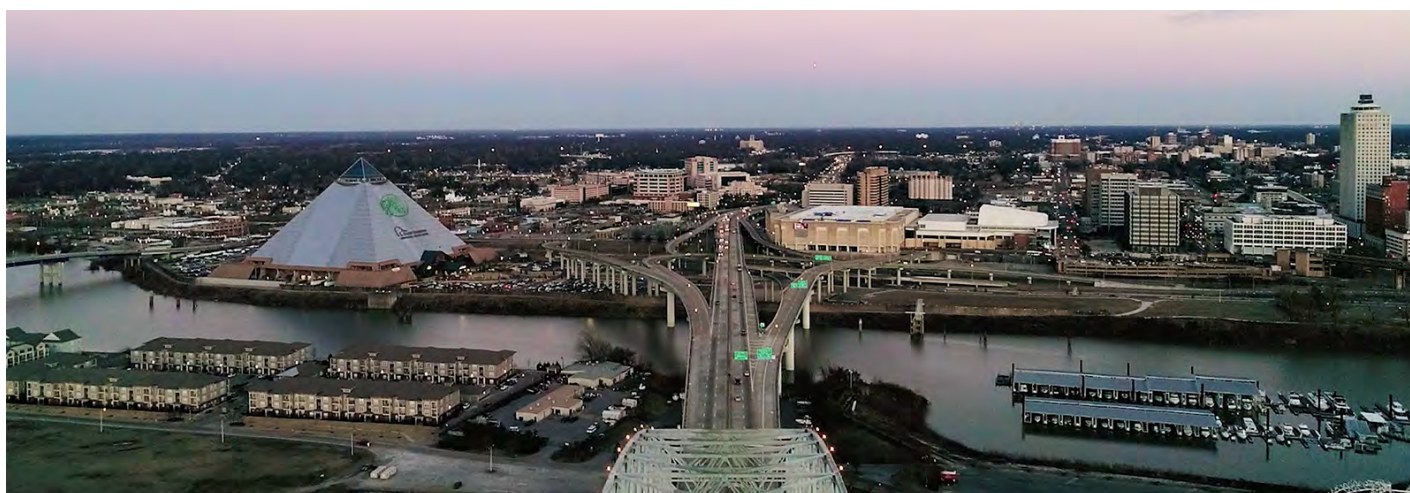
Agency Eligibility

Placement agencies are selected based on the following criteria:

- Appropriateness of agency mission
- Demonstrated and potential ability to improve quality of life for Memphis neighborhoods and residents
- Connection to priority areas/neighborhoods of the Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development
- Clarity of the proposed fellowship scope of work and focus

Student Eligibility

Full-time graduate students in Anthropology, City and Regional Planning, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Public Administration and Social Work are eligible to apply. Students are selected based on their academic and professional promise and their potential to contribute to selected placement agencies.



HCD FELLOWSHIP PLACEMENT AGENCIES



FELLOWSHIP SUMMARIES



Stella Adu

Graduate Program: **City and Regional Planning**

Placement Agency: **Center for Transforming Communities**



Rooted in the diverse communities of Memphis, the Center for Transforming Communities (CTC) is a non-profit spark for positive neighborhood renewal. By convening localized action teams, CTC creates forums where neighbors connect, build trust, and harness their collective wisdom to drive change. This participatory method empowers communities to own their challenges and develop comprehensive strategies tailored to their unique strengths and needs.

Fellowship Focus

Stella focused on advancing equitable housing in Memphis through the Binghampton Community Land Trust. She contributed to Binghampton Community Land Trust's strategy of acquiring and revitalizing blighted properties through the community land trust model, directly supporting the provision of permanent Affordable housing for long-term residents and ensuring accessibility of housing for families vulnerable to economic displacement.

"Witnessing the power of community-led action in the Binghampton Community Land Trust illuminated the tangible impact of innovative housing models in preserving neighborhood roots and fostering equitable access in the face of gentrification. It reinforced the idea that true progress lies in empowering residents to shape their own futures."





Joyanta Basak

Graduate Program: **City and Regional Planning**

Placement Agency: **Clean Memphis**

Clean Memphis is committed to fostering a cleaner, greener, and more environmentally sustainable Memphis. Through environmental education, community empowerment, and civic engagement, Clean Memphis equips leaders and neighborhoods with the tools and data to create lasting change, working toward a circular economy and a zero-waste future for the city.

Fellowship Focus

As an HCD Fellow with Clean Memphis, Joyanta was deeply involved in developing and implementing a pilot Neighborhood Litter Source Abatement Strategy in Uptown, Memphis. The goal of this project is to create a scalable model that can be replicated in other Memphis neighborhoods. His primary responsibilities include facilitating community meetings, gathering input through site visits and conversations, and analyzing this information using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), innovative technologies, and statistical methods.

"Working at the crossroads of environmental justice and city planning, I've come to realize that meaningful change happens when data is guided by dignity -- when residents are seen not as subjects of policy but as co-creators of their community's future. Through this fellowship, I've learned that maps and models alone aren't enough; the most powerful insights come from listening deeply to those who live the realities we aim to change."





Duke Brinkley

Graduate Program: **City and Regional Planning**

Placement Agency: **United Housing**



United Housing provides quality housing opportunities to Mid-South residents through financial coaching, mortgage lending, home building and renovation, and creative partnerships with public, private and nonprofit entities.

Fellowship Focus

Duke helped to facilitate United Housing's efforts in various new home construction projects, assisted in grant research, and helped coordinate several events with the newly merged Convergence department to reach out to local investors and developers. In addition, he wrote a white paper regarding the administration of the Realty and Mortgage transfer tax in the state of Tennessee, providing a valuable resource for those in United Housing and Convergence. Furthermore, he also attended community meetings, learned about various aspects of the home inspection process through frequent field visits, participated in partnerships with other organizations and government agencies, such as the City of Memphis Department of Housing and Community Development, as well as drafting a new resource guide to help update United Housing's Home901 website.

"This fellowship has taught me the essential component of cross-departmental and multiorganizational collaborations as a guiding principle toward making effective change in our communities. Whether I have been on the ground; learning about the home inspection process, or while attending community events, it's essential that everybody has a seat at the table, especially for an issue as pressing as the affordable housing shortage happening nationwide."





Aminatou Gandou

Graduate Program: **Social Work**

Placement Agency: **The Works, Inc.**



The Works, Inc. is a nonprofit community development corporation based in Memphis that focuses on rebuilding and revitalizing neighborhoods through innovation, advocacy, and collaboration. The nonprofit's primary focus is to increase access to affordable housing, support neighborhood revitalization, provide social services advocacy, and provide the support necessary for families' holistic, healthful, and socioeconomic success.

Fellowship Focus

Aminatou contributed to advancing family self-sufficiency through a holistic, strengths-based approach rooted in community engagement and measurable impact. She created need assessment tools, including questionnaires and spreadsheets, to understand our tenants' priorities better and inform service delivery. She supported financial literacy efforts by collecting data, creating evaluation tools, and assessing program outcomes. In support of the organization's food security and wellness goals, she designed evaluation forms for healthy cooking classes to capture participant feedback and track impact. Additionally, she built a comprehensive community resource database to streamline referral management and collaborated with case managers to ensure accurate tracking of services, follow-ups, and support.

"South Memphis is a challenging place, but it is possible to make it move forward. This fellowship taught me how to transform community voice into actionable insights—designing tools, analyzing needs, and supporting programs that uplift families for self-sufficiency. In my way, I contributed to a stronger, more equitable, and safer Memphis."





Kelsey Huse

Graduate Program: **City and Regional Planning**

Placement Agency: **Innovate Memphis**

Innovate Memphis is a team of systems thinkers, design-thinking professionals, facilitators, program managers, and leaders when it comes to civic innovation methodology. With a deep understanding of our priority areas and a large network of local and national subject matter experts, we develop and deliver impactful initiatives, cultivating the capacity for others to sow the seeds of change and drive Memphis forward.

Fellowship Focus

Kelsey focused on transportation advocacy and data transparency in the Mid-South region. She helped organize Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day events with Memphis Shelby County Schools, World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, and the start-up of a new (soon to be announced) transportation advocacy organization for Memphis. Additionally, her background as a Software Engineer enabled her work to create custom data visualizations and an improved Memphis Property Hub app as part of a new Data Midsouth platform to increase data transparency and access in the region.

"There are so many people doing good community development work in Memphis who need access to clean, reliable data to empower their work further – and it's exciting to be a part of that! Additionally, as the most dangerous city for pedestrians in the United States, the work to improve transportation safety is critical. I've met incredible advocates and am thrilled to continue the work with them next year."





Jackson Lyles

Graduate Program: **City and Regional Planning**

Placement Agency: **Binghampton Development Corporation**



The BDC is a non-profit community development corporation working to improve the quality of life in the Binghampton community. The BDC serves the neighborhood by investing in people and property toward a stronger and more self-sustaining future. The BDC Business Hub is a warehouse-based on-the-job training program that seeks to dismantle employment barriers while equipping individuals with the necessary hard and soft skills needed to obtain and retain gainful employment. The BDC Business Hub actively and intentionally prepares employees for a living wage career.

Fellowship Focus

In his fellowship position with the BDC, Jackson was actively involved in several of the BDC's programs. For the main office, he helped in mapping commercial properties along Tillman Street and drafted a report on the development opportunities along Tillman. For the BDC Business Hub, Jackson did grant writing, database improvement, and warehousing and logistics development. Jackson was also tasked with building out and developing the BDC Business Hub's mattress recycling program which included attending city blight remediation meetings. He also had the opportunity to be a part of the bike lane barrier installation project along Mississippi Boulevard from its beginning to its end. Jackson mapped, organized community engagement, and helped install the bike lane barriers.

The fellowship program has added diversity to my knowledge by introducing me to urban issues, shortcomings and development pattern. The most impactful thing I have learned through my fellowship with the BDC is the power of a second chance. Being a part of an organization that actively seeks to provide employment opportunities for those who may not otherwise have been offered a job opportunity has been a great experience. It has opened my eyes to the challenges many in Memphis face of obtaining a living wage career. I have been thrilled to be a part of the BDC's great work and have loved finding creative ways to apply what I am learning in my planning classes to my work at the BDC."s in the USA. It has provided me with many opportunities to have a meaningful impact and serve both individuals and communities.



Logan Tyree

Graduate Program: **Public and Nonprofit Administration**

Placement Agency: **Alcy Ball Development Corporation**



**Alcy Ball
Development
Corporation**

ABDC's mission is to connect and empower Alcy Ball residents to develop a thriving community. We do this through our three program areas: Connect, Train, and Restore. In Connecting, we strengthen relationships in the community by facilitating events and maintaining the flow of information between Alcy Ball stakeholders. In Training, we provide access to tools, training, and resources for Alcy Ball families to build financial knowledge. In Restoring, we work with residents to select real estate, beautification, and development projects focused on maintaining affordability while increasing the economic vitality of the area.

Fellowship Focus

Logan had the opportunity to apply his skills across several internal functions to help build a more efficient and effective organization. His responsibilities have included fundraising (such as grant writing, reporting, and compliance), financial planning, procurement, and budgeting. He also collaborated with local government divisions to support affordable housing initiatives and contributed to improving HR operations and staff benefit policies. These areas of work have deepened my understanding of organizational frameworks and boosted my confidence in navigating complex challenges within the nonprofit and public sectors.

"Supporting each of ABDC's programs from an operational perspective has allowed me to learn the ins and outs of nonprofit management and the critical role of collaboration. Our work depends on a network of partnerships, and without them, we could not serve alongside the community as effectively. I've especially enjoyed designing and implementing new systems that improve our operations and make our work more impactful."





Caroline Warner

Graduate Program: **Anthropology**

Placement Agency: **Music Export Memphis**

Music Export Memphis was founded on two core beliefs. First: music makes cities better. It drives economic development, it attracts new talent, it creates vibrant communities. Second: musicians choose to live in cities where there are opportunities. In Memphis, we're lucky to have an incredibly rich musical heritage and a low cost of living, two things that attract artists to move here. We believe that opportunities – like those available through Music Export Memphis – are a key element to keeping them here. And when they stay, our city – everyone in our city, not just those in the music community – stands to benefit.

Fellowship Focus

Through the use of ethnographic and anthropological research methods, Caroline investigated the politics of culture and value and alternative economies at work in the Memphis Music Scene. She sought to understand the ways in which music as a cultural production has influenced and continues to influence culture in Memphis as well as how Memphis as a place and community has influenced the music and music scene. She conducted research in music support services and participants (venues, record stores, technicians, etc.).

"I believe it is not only possible but imperative to value the arts and cultural heritage beyond its economic potential. My goal is to use the skills I've learned for the good of communities, when invited by those communities, through intentional partnership and creativity. I truly believe that often that good also means seeing value beyond economics."



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