



“There is an ongoing challenge of how to utilize young people in a way that is mutually beneficial. The Compton Mentor Fellowship Program is unique in its nature; it helps refresh the passion and enthusiasm for one’s work.” — Michael Kinsley, Rocky Mountain Institute, 2002
Mentor

Program Description

The Compton Mentor Fellowship program is based on the belief that life-changing experiences occur when formal learning becomes transformed by action. To this end, the Compton Mentor Fellowship offers exceptional graduating seniors from ten colleges across the United States with an opportunity to apply their creative talents to the selection of a Mentor and to the design of a project that seeks solutions to critical issues. The pragmatic, self-directed nature of the Compton Mentor Fellowship experience is meant to deepen and enrich knowledge, and guide Fellows to apply new understanding of themselves and the world in original ways.

The Compton Mentor Fellowship welcomes innovative project proposals that encompass elements of the Foundation’s traditional funding interests in environmental sustainability, climate change and energy policy, population and reproductive health, or conflict resolution. Proposed projects should demonstrate exceptional social merit and positive contribution in the fields of interest.

In selecting Compton Mentor Fellows, the Foundation seeks individuals who demonstrate imagination, intelligence, integrity, and leadership. Compton Mentor Fellows are self-starters who show promise of creative achievement and a commitment to compassionate and effective participation in the world community. The Foundation seeks individuals who strive to be thoughtful agents of change and find the task of charting their own learning paths exciting rather than confounding.

Upon selection, Compton Mentor Fellows receive a \$36,000 stipend to implement their project over a one-year period, beginning and ending at an annual mid-June gathering of Fellows held in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Mentor Description

An individual’s own life experiences in learning and working with others serves as the foundation for becoming a Mentor, and the best mentors are those whose passion for their work inspires others. At the core of the Compton Mentor Fellowship is a partnership between a Fellow and a primary Mentor, identified by the Fellowship candidate during the application process.

A Mentor should be accessible to the Fellow and willing to serve as a source of guidance,

encouragement and impetus for continued learning and service as Fellow's transform academic studies into practical applications. While the role of the Mentor will vary with individual Fellows and their projects – from providing professional advice to personal friendship – it should always include a commitment to helping the Fellow achieve a sense of satisfaction and growth through the project he/she has designed.

The most successful Compton Mentor Fellowship partnerships are characterized by clearly defined goals and expectations, with frequent contact, whether in person, by phone and/or electronic communication. The commitment of Mentors is for a one-year period, although lasting professional and personal relationships can result.

It is important to recognize that although a Mentor and Fellow will work collaboratively – from a distance or in close proximity – the Fellow is not an intern or an employee. Instead, the relationship is based on learning and applying knowledge in ways that the Fellow would not otherwise be able to do without a Mentor.

Roles and Responsibilities of Fellow and Mentor

Within the broad range of possibilities for a Mentor/Fellow partnership, the Compton Foundation expects each Fellow to:

- Define realistic goals and articulate clear expectations in regards to working with the Mentor
- Take initiative in seeking guidance, advice, and resources and determine with the Mentor the best means and frequency of contact
- Prepare and sign a Letter of Agreement with the Mentor
- Keep the Mentor apprised of career development, plans and activities
- Send mid-year and final reports to the Mentor
- Attend annual Compton Mentor Fellowship meetings
- Make every effort to follow through on commitments to the Mentor
- Honor the Mentor's involvement and willingness to take time away from other commitments in order to support the Fellow
- Participate fully in the Compton Mentor Fellowship program

In turn, the Mentor agrees to the following set of guidelines:

- Provide insight and guidance to help further the Fellow's identified goals
- Sign a Letter of Agreement prepared by the Fellow
- Share resources, contacts, and other opportunities to help the Fellow achieve goals
- Review and respond to the Fellow's mid-year and final reports
- Make every effort to follow through on commitments to the Fellow

The rewards of the Mentor's contribution may not be tangible or measurable. However, they are vital to the development of a promising young person committed to making a positive difference in the world.

For more information, see www.comptonmentorfellowship.org