

# **2018 Puerto Rico Youth Fellowships Guidelines and Application**

**U.S. Programs**

The Puerto Rico Program, seeks applicants for its Puerto Rico Youth Fellowships.

The Puerto Rico Youth Fellowships will support the next generation of youth leaders aged 18-27 who are at the beginning of their work life and want to learn more about what it takes to be most effective in catalyzing civic engagement and community education around critical issues affecting the island. There are no minimum education requirements.

This fellowship explicitly recognizes the threats of discrimination to an Open Society and seeks to create a leadership pipeline that promotes young people who have direct experience of the challenges they try to address.

Letters of Intent (LOI) are due on September 30, 2018 (11:59 p.m. EST) and must be submitted [here](#).

This document contains the guidelines, eligibility criteria, and information on how to apply.

## **General**

The Puerto Rico program, housed within [US Programs](#), seeks to advance the mission and values of the Open Society Foundations by empowering Puerto Rican citizens on the island and in the diaspora, to promote government transparency (at the local and Federal levels) and the self determination of the Puerto Rican people.

# **1. Part I: Overall Guidelines and Eligibility Criteria**

## **1.1 Project Focus**

Through these fellowships, the Open Society Foundations aim to provide promising leaders with the support they need to develop great ideas that dismantle challenges in their communities and advance the values of an open society.

The Puerto Rico Youth Fellowships will support the next generation of youth leaders aged 18-27 who are at the beginning of their work life and want to learn more about what it takes to be most effective in catalyzing civic engagement and community education around critical issues affecting the island. The projects we are interested in are particularly in the context of Puerto Rico's economic crisis and the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Successful applicants should demonstrate a connection to the community in which they will be based and a desire to re-imagine the island beyond its current constraints (geographic, political, social, cultural, etc). Human rights projects could include those relating to criminal justice, workers' rights, LGBTTIQ rights, food justice, environmental justice, education (including the right to public education), health, housing, or immigration, among other subject areas.

## **1.2 Project Approach**

Applicants may employ, either alone or in combination, any number of strategies to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in their projects. These strategies include but are not limited



to: grassroots organizing and mobilization, public education, strategic communications, policy advocacy, and coalition-building.

Regardless of the strategy employed or the issue addressed, all Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship projects should aim to make a contribution to a specific challenge in their community. In other words, projects that involve only planning, conceptualizing, researching, strategizing, or otherwise “laying the groundwork” during the term of the fellowship are unlikely to fare well in our process.

**The Puerto Rico Youth Fellowships do NOT fund:**

Enrollment in an Academic Institution for degree or non-degree study, including dissertation research. Also, as indicated in “Time Commitment” below, fellows cannot be full-time students during their fellowships.

Direct Services Projects: although we know there are many people in need of assistance and direct services on the island, we prefer projects that are focused on activism, base building and mobilization.

Lobbying. Please carefully review our [Tax Law Lobbying Rules](#) before submitting an application. If awarded a fellowship, applicants must agree to refrain from engaging in restricted lobbying activities during the term of the fellowship.

**1.3 Awards**

The fellowships come with an award of up to \$35,000 for full-time, 12-month projects (prorated for part-time). In addition, fellows may apply for project-related funds for travel, and will have access to health insurance, as well as access to a variety of training, networking, and professional development opportunities.

The purpose of the fellowship is to support individual fellows; therefore the program will only cover individual expenses. Please note grants to fellows are considered public information and fellows’ names and project descriptions will be included in the Open Society Foundations’ audited financial statements, as per IRS regulations.

**1.4 Eligibility Criteria**

1. **Age:** Applicants must be 18-27 years of age or under at the time of application.
2. **Project focus:** Applicants must propose projects that relate to the topics and marginalized communities mentioned above.
3. Applicants must be at the earliest stages of their careers and want to learn more about what it takes to be most effective as in catalyzing civic engagement and community education around critical issues affecting the island. The projects we are interested in are particularly in the context of Puerto Rico’s economic crisis and the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. There are no minimum education requirements. Ideally, candidates will have no more than two years of full-time work experience.

4. **Directly affected individuals:** Applicants directly affected by, or with significant direct personal experience of, the challenges, policies, practices, and systems their projects seek to address are strongly encouraged to apply. This includes, but is not limited, applicants who have an intellectual disability, applicants who have been sex workers or who have been incarcerated, or applicants with family members or loved ones with these direct experiences. It also includes people with deep ties and connections to the communities or constituencies that are the focus of the projects. Finally, it includes people who have been historically marginalized in Puerto Rico, including but not limited to: LBTTQI people, afro-Puerto Rican people, low-income youth (including youth living in public housing), and/or youth who are not formally participating in the education system.
5. **Potential and attitude:** Applicants must have the potential to accomplish their project objectives and to benefit from the opportunity and exposure that the fellowships offer. Ideally, applicants will teach us (and the field) important lessons about how to best identify and support the next generation of youth leaders who may come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. We are looking for candidates who have not had easy access to existing leadership pipelines or other paths to achievement and accomplishment, but who nonetheless have the drive, aptitude, savvy, and tenacity to seize upon an opportunity for growth and development when it presents itself.
6. **Time commitment:** Fellowships are intended to be 12 months in duration and can begin between December and January 2018/2019. Projects can be either full-time (minimum of 35 hours/week) or part-time (minimum of 20 hours/week). Fellows cannot be full-time students or have full-time jobs during a full time fellowship. We will consider part time fellowships based on each applicants time commitment.
7. **Project location and purpose:** The Puerto Rico Youth Fellowships will support dynamic youth leaders aged 18-27 who want to implement a project of their own design that takes place in underserved communities in Puerto Rico, and focuses on any area of human rights, including criminal justice, workers' rights, LBTTIQ rights, food justice, environmental justice, education (including the right to public education), health, housing, or immigration, among other subject areas.
8. **Host Organizations:** Applicants can choose (if they so desire) a host organization. A host organizations – which can be advocacy or community groups, scholarly or research institutions, government agencies, or other nonprofit organizations or associations – can provide access to resources such as space, technology, and networks, as well as mentoring and guidance. The fellowship program encourages host organizations to provide in-kind contributions such as office space and necessary overhead. Host organizations may also augment the stipend award and provide other benefits. The fellowship program does not provide the host organization with supplemental funds. Fellows working with a host organization must submit a letter of commitment from the host organization that details the

parameters of the working relationship before beginning any project under this fellowship.

Projects proposed in conjunction with host organizations are evaluated in part on the extent to which the host organization is the right fit for the project and the applicant. However, if awarded a fellowship, the individual applicant ultimately is responsible for the work; and the fellowship “attaches” to the individual, not the host organization. The individual has the right, with the prior approval of the fellowship program, to take the fellowship to another host or choose to do the work without a host organization.

## **2. Part II: Application**

### **How to Apply**

To apply, applicants must:

**Complete the form here by September 30, 2018.** Once registered, applicants will be able to proceed to the application itself.

Upload the following documents:

**RESUME OR BIO:** no more than TWO (2) pages.

**LETTER OF INTENT:** a single-spaced letter of intent (maximum 2 pages) structured according to the template you will find online. The LOI can be submitted instead as a video or sound recording (maximum 4 minutes) covering the same points in the template.

Applicants can only submit a single written or recorded LOI for a single proposed project. Those who make multiple submissions or propose several project ideas in a single submission will not be considered.

From the pool of LOIs, we will select a limited number of applicants to submit full proposals.

Full proposals are accepted by invitation only.

For those invited to submit full proposals, we will provide all necessary details regarding the content and structure of proposals, as well as further information about the fellowships, eligibility, selection criteria, and the next steps in the selection process.

### **Application and Selection Timeline**

Letters of intent due: September 30, 2018 (11:59 p.m. EST)

Full proposals invited: October, 2018 (only those applicants who have been selected to submit a full proposal will be contacted)

Full proposals due: November 2018

Finalists selected: late November 2018

Finalist interviews: December 2018

Selected fellows notified: December 2018

Projects begin: No earlier than January 2019

For more information or if you experience technical difficulties with the online application form, please contact the Puerto Rico project at [prfellows@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:prfellows@opensocietyfoundations.org).