

2019 SOROS EQUALITY FELLOWSHIP

Deadline: January 10, 2019

Fellowship Overview and Applicant Deadlines

The Open Society Foundations seek applicants for its Soros Equality Fellowship, which aims to support emerging mid-career professionals who will become long-term innovative leaders influencing the racial justice field. The Fellowship award provides individuals with a grant of \$100,000 to support production of an innovative racial justice project over the course of 18 months.

Applications are due on January 10, 2019 (11:59 pm EST), and must be submitted online through the application portal. The application portal can be accessed [here](#).

General

The Soros Equality Fellowship is based within the Open Society Foundations' [U.S. Programs](#) Equality Team and seeks to support emerging mid-career professionals whom we believe will become long-term innovative leaders influencing racial justice. This approach recognizes the power of individuals to use a variety of tools, from traditional advocacy to [the arts](#), to impact change and uplift [the mission and values of an open society](#). Fellows will receive a grant of \$100,000 over the course of the fellowship period.

We invite applicants to be bold, innovative, unprecedented, and audacious in their submissions. The aim of the Fellowship is to incubate new ideas, promote risk-taking, and develop different ways of thinking that challenge our existing assumptions. The proposed project should add considerable value to the racial justice field and inspire new approaches to address issues of disparity and discrimination.

1. Guidelines

1.1 Fellowship Projects

Our Goal: Increasing Capacity to Combat Racism and Xenophobia

There is an entrepreneurial spirit that guides the Open Society Foundations' approach to seemingly intractable problems such as structural racism and xenophobia. Through this Fellowship, Open Society aims to provide promising leaders with the support they need to develop great ideas to combat racism.

This Fellowship is intended for a much broader universe than the traditional civil rights activist and contemplates support for individuals spanning a variety of fields. Its main goals are to support an individual's advocacy, artistic expression, cultural impact, community empowerment, narrative change, public opinion efforts, or technology innovation. We seek a diverse cohort of applicants, including but not limited to activists, researchers, artists, journalists, and organizers with unique perspectives, to produce projects with meaningful impact. We do not have a defined list of topics or issues that we will consider. Instead, we expect applicants themselves to make the case that their projects have the potential to

contribute something valuable to a particular issue or in a particular place. In this way, the fellowships are designed to be flexible and open — a space for projects that build effectively on work that has come before, that explore new and creative ways of doing things, that take risks, that offer new insights and perspectives.

It's our belief that the fellowships can be a useful platform for supporting people whose work pushes boundaries, challenges convention, elaborates novel ways of approaching deeply entrenched and intractable problems, anticipates emerging issues, or seizes upon particular opportunities in creative ways. Moreover, if these things are done well, individuals supported through the Fellowships can, over time and in conjunction with others, exert influence on the broader field of racial justice.

Project Guidelines: What Qualifies as a Completed Project for the Soros Equality Fellowship?

Regardless of the strategy employed or the issue addressed, *all Fellowship projects must during the term of the fellowship itself, actively seek some measurable form of combatting racism.* We generally define “combatting racism” as a change in attitude or perception, increased attention to a disparity, or a change to a policy or practice, whether formalized by law or not, that has a particular effect on individuals or communities. Combatting racism can promote or create good policies or practices, as well as change or mitigate the effects of bad ones. Moreover, these efforts should involve more than simply obtaining a specific result for a specific person; instead, groups of people defined by certain characteristics or circumstances should benefit from achieving a particular change.

Applicants must propose deliverables that reflects 18 months' of work. We leave it up to each applicant to determine the scope of the project deliverables and to make a convincing case that the work is sufficiently ambitious. *However, in all cases, deliverables must aim to reach audiences during the term of the fellowship itself, i.e. the program will not support projects that involve only research, planning, or other activities that simply “lay the groundwork.”* For advocacy projects, this requirement means that there should be at least the theoretical possibility, based on your activities that the change you want to see will happen during the term of the Fellowship itself. We encourage all applicants to review the lobbying and political activity restrictions section closely.

1.2 Fellowship Grant

Fellows will receive a \$100,000 grant over the 18 month fellowship to support all expenses related to the project including travel, conference fees, living stipend, and health insurance. Over the course of the fellowship, there will be additional Open Society Foundations-sponsored opportunities.

The purpose of the fellowship is to support individuals; therefore the program will only cover individual expenses and the project must be the creation of the individual applicant and confer a professional benefit to that individual. These fellowships should not be seen as a proxy for organizational grants. The fellowship does not fund enrollment for degree or non-degree study at academic institutions, including dissertation research. Please note grants to fellows are considered public information and the fellow's name and project description will be

included in the Open Society Foundations' audited financial statements, as per IRS regulations.

1.3 Eligibility

Fellowship Term and Time Commitment

Applicants must be able to devote at least 35 hours per week to the project if awarded a Fellowship; and the project must be the applicant's only full-time work during the course of the Fellowship. Fellows cannot be full-time students during their Fellowship. In addition, if awarded a fellowship, applicants must be available to attend a set of activities during the fellowship term: New Fellows Orientation (tentatively set for June 24-27, 2019); the Soros Equality Fellowship retreat (tentatively set for Fall of 2019); fellowship class network calls; and a Rockwood Leadership Institute training. Exact dates and location will be confirmed upon Fellowship selection.

Projects Based Outside the United States

Applicants may be based outside the United States, provided their work directly pertains to a U.S. racial justice issue and is able to demonstrate a proficiency in spoken and written English.

Joint Applications

Up to two (2) individuals can apply jointly for a Soros Equality Fellowship. However, joint applications carry a single award. For joint applicants, the "full-time work" requirement does not apply to each applicant. All other restrictions associated with an individual application still apply.

Lobbying

Projects that include electioneering, lobbying, or other activity that does not fall within IRS 501c(3) guidelines will not be funded. Please carefully review the [Tax Law Lobbying Rules](#) before submitting an application. If awarded a fellowship, applicants are required to attend a training session on the tax law lobbying rules, conducted by the Open Society Foundations' General Counsel's Office; and must agree to refrain from engaging in restricted lobbying and political activities during the term of the Fellowship.

1.4 Selection Criteria and Process

Request for Full Proposals

There are three stages to the application and selection process. First, all applicants must submit a full application by the application deadline. Second, from the pool of applicants, we will select a group of finalists, who will be invited to interview with a selection committee consisting of Open Society Foundations staff and outside experts. Finally, from the pool of finalists, we will select up to 12 individuals to receive fellowship awards.

Applications will be evaluated on the extent to which the applicant possesses the vision, drive, and skills needed to broaden understanding, spur debate, or catalyze change on the issues at the heart of the Open Society Foundations' U.S. racial justice priorities.

Under certain circumstances, Fellowship program staff may reach out to specific candidates by phone or email to get answers to questions that may help us determine whether to select someone as a finalist or to award a fellowship.

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR APPLICATION

2. Application

2.1 Application Information

The full proposal application deadline is **January 10, 2019 (11:59 p.m. EST)**. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Online Submission

Applications must be submitted online through the Open Society Foundations [web portal](#), which can be accessed through the [Soros Equality Fellowship website](#).

In order to submit, applicants will have to provide basic contact information and register in the system. Once registered, applicants will be able to proceed to the application itself. All communications with applicants will be sent to the email used to register with the online system, so applicants should ensure that email communications from us do not end up in their “Junk Mail” folder.

Content of Complete Applications

Complete applications consist of a number of items that must be uploaded to the online application system:

1. Cover Page
2. Resume or CV
3. Project Proposal
4. Two Letters of Recommendation
5. Publisher Letter(s) (book proposals only)
6. Samples of, or links to view previous work (arts, technology, and media projects only)

Cover Page

Each application must include a single-spaced cover page, which includes the following information:

Name:

E-mail Address:

Phone Number:

Permanent Mailing Address:

Title of Project Proposal:

Brief Summary of Proposed Project (no more than one paragraph):

Project Proposal

Each application must include a single-spaced proposal of no more than 2,000 words (approximately four pages in 12-point font with one-inch margins) containing responses to the five (5) questions listed below in order, with the headings as listed below, i.e. Project Synopsis, Project, Personal Experiences, Skills, and Attributes, Timeline, etc.:

Question 1 (Project Synopsis): *“Provide a synopsis of the project that describes: the issue your project will address and why this issue is important, your methods for addressing the issue, and how you expect your project will influence and advance the racial justice field.”*

Your response to this question should reflect extensive background research on the issue, as well as a sufficient understanding of the work that others have done or are doing on the issue; and should suggest how your project fills a significant gap or otherwise represents an important contribution to, or departure from, similar/related work.

Question 2 (Personal Experiences, Skills, and Attributes): *“How have your unique experiences (personal, professional, academic, etc.), skills, and network prepared you to carry out this particular project? What do you hope to gain from participating in this fellowship cohort?”*

Question 3 (Timeline): *“Provide a timeline that sets forth the project’s specific activities and reflects all phases of the project, as well as the time you will allocate to meet your specific objectives.”*

Question 4 (Budget): *“In order to give us a general sense of the overall cost of your project exclusive of your daily living expenses, briefly outline a budget that shows any project-related expenses, including research and travel costs, supplies, and finishing and distribution costs, as well as expected income from sale of stories or from other funders.”*

Question 5 (Time Commitment): *“Describe any non-fellowship work responsibilities (e.g. freelance work, consulting, hourly project-based work, etc.) or educational commitments (e.g. classes for a post-secondary degree) that you expect to have during the course of your fellowship, including the approximate time to be devoted to these responsibilities/commitments.”*

Letters of Recommendation

Each application must include two (2) letters of recommendation from supervisors or close colleagues. The letters should address your talent, professionalism, and demonstrated ability to work independently to complete long-term, in-depth projects; as well as any other matter that you or your letter writers deem relevant to our assessment of you or your project. Letters should not be more than two (2) pages in length.

Publisher Letters (for book projects only)

If proposing a book project, completed applications must include letters from two (2) publishers that have expressed strong interest in the book. Letters should not be more than two (2) pages each.

Samples of Previous Work (for arts, media, and technology projects only)

If proposing an arts, media, or technology project, complete applications must include samples (or relevant links) of your work.

- *Print journalism or books* should upload up to three (3) samples of previous work (applicants proposing books should include excerpts of the book, if available, as one of the samples). Each sample should be of no more than ten (10) pages.
- *Radio or audio applicants* should upload or provide links for up to three (3) samples of previous work.
- *Film and video applicants* should upload the proposed project (fine cut or rough-cut), if applicable *and* an additional sample of previous work.
- *Technology and arts and culture applicants* should provide a link to up to (3) samples of previous work.
- Applicants proposing projects involving *other forms of media* should upload or provide links to up to three (3) samples of previous work.

2.2 Application and Selection Timeline

Application Process Open	November 2, 2018
Application Deadline:	January 10, 2019 (11:59 p.m. EST)
Finalists Notified:	Early March 2019
Finalist Interviews:	Early-Mid April 2019 (all finalist interviews will be conducted at the Open Society Foundations' office in New York City)
Selected Fellows Notified:	May 2019
Projects Begin:	Summer 2019