

## GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

# 2018 Community Youth Fellowships Guidelines and Application

The Youth Exchange, in partnership with the Human Rights Initiative, seeks applicants for its Community Youth Fellowships.

The Community Youth Fellowships will support dynamic youth activists aged 18 to 30 who want to implement a project of their own design in the Czech Republic that acknowledges the intersection between the Roma and disability communities, and the multiple layers and forms of discrimination faced by this community.

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 with the challenges they try to address.

Letters of Intent (LOI) are due on January 10, 2018 (11:59 p.m. CET) and must be submitted [here](#).

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

### GENERAL

The Youth Exchange is based within the Open Society Foundations' Strategy Unit team and seeks to support meaningful engagement with youth across the Open Society Foundations. The Youth Exchange seeks to work with dynamic youth activists who impact change and uplift [the mission and values of an open society](#).

The [Human Rights Initiative](#) (HRI) at the Open Society Foundations supports advocates to promote justice, equality, and participation of all. HRI supports some of the largest international human rights organizations, as well as national advocacy organizations and small and emerging groups working directly with those whose rights have been violated.

### PART I: OVERALL GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

#### Background

European anti-discrimination laws do not fully recognize or address challenges and rights issues faced by Roma with disabilities, and social policies fail to sufficiently address pervasive and intersecting patterns of discrimination and inequality. As a result, Roma with disabilities experience disproportionate health and education disparities, as well as intense marginalization.

#### Project Focus

Through Community Youth 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.

Recognizing the need to increase the engagement of young people on these issues, the Community Youth Fellowships seek to support dynamic youth aged 18 to 30 who want to implement a project of their own design in the Czech Republic that acknowledges the intersection within the Roma and disability communities, and the multiple layers and forms of discrimination faced by this group.

The projects we seek to support may focus on any area of human rights relevant to young Roma with disabilities, including education, criminal justice, use of non-disability-specific community resources, workers' rights, employment, health, housing, immigration, or other subject areas.

#### Project Approach

Applicants may employ one or more different strategies to achieve the goals and objectives of their project, including, but not limited to, participatory action research, advocacy and educational campaigns, grassroots organizing, exploration of how to address existing violations, identifying or initiating positive practice, etc.

Regardless of the strategy employed or the issue addressed, all Community Youth Fellowship projects should aim to address a specific challenge in the applicant's community.

#### Community Youth Fellowships Do NOT Fund:

- **Enrollment in an academic institution** for degree or non-degree study, including dissertation research. Also, as indicated in the "Time Commitment" section, fellows cannot be full-time students during their fellowship.
- **Lobbying or political activity.** Potential applicants should carefully review our [Tax Law Lobbying Rules](#) before submitting their application. If awarded a fellowship, applicants must agree to refrain from restricted lobbying and political activities during the term of the fellowship.

### Awards

The fellowships come with a stipend for full-time, 18-month projects (prorated for part-time or 12-month projects). In addition, fellows may apply for project-related funds for travel and project support, 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, and funds cannot be used in support of an individual's employment salary. 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.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. **Age:** Applicants should be between 18 and 30 years of age at the start of the fellowship.
2. **Project focus:** Applicants must propose projects that focus on an area of human rights relevant to the young Roma with disabilities community, such as education, criminal justice, use of non-disability-specific community resources, workers' rights, employment, health, housing, immigration, etc.
3. **Professional development:** Applicants should be at an early stage of their careers and want to learn more about what it takes to be optimally effective as an activist and educator in a specific place or on a specific issue. There are no minimum education requirements.
4. **Directly affected individuals:** Applicants directly affected by, or with significant direct personal experience of, the challenges, policies, practices, and systems that perpetuate discrimination against members of the Roma with disabilities community are strongly encouraged to apply. Effective and meaningful support will be provided to ensure the candidate is successful. This option is open to all candidates who meet the criteria regardless of support required. There are no minimum education requirements and full-time work experience is not necessary. Candidates who have not typically had access to this type of opportunity are encouraged to apply.
5. **Potential and attitude:** 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, and tenacity to seize upon an opportunity for growth and development when it presents itself.
6. **Time commitment:** Fellowships are intended to be either 18 or 12 months in duration and can begin between August and November 2018. 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 their fellowships, even if the fellowship is only part-time.

7. **Project location and purpose:** Applicants must be based in the Czech Republic and the project must take place there.
8. **Mentor/ supervisor/ champion:** Applicants are strongly encouraged to identify at least one person who will provide them with advice, guidance, and support on a consistent basis throughout the project—someone who would be considered the applicant’s mentor, supervisor, or “champion.” This person can be, but is not required to be, from a host organization (described below). This person should be familiar with the applicant’s fellowship project, committed to helping the fellow achieve the project’s goals and objectives, and committed to supporting the fellow’s growth and development as an activist and educator. This person will also, ideally, have deep familiarity with the issue at the focus of the fellowship project or with the geographic location of the fellowship project work.
9. **Host organizations:** Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to work with a host organization. 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.

If you are invited to submit a full application, you will be asked to provide more information about the host, and the host can help you finalize the application. We may also ask host organizations to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with us, depending on the level of involvement with the project.

## PART II: APPLICATION

### HOW TO APPLY

To apply, applicants must complete two steps by **January 10, 2018**:

- **Complete the online registration form [here](#).** Once registered, applicants will gain access to the application itself.
- Upload the following application documents:
  - **RESUME OR BIO** (maximum 2 pages)

- **LETTER OF INTENT (LOI):** either a single-spaced letter of intent (maximum 2 pages) structured according to the online LOI template, OR a video or sound recording (maximum 4 minutes) covering the same points outlined in the online LOI template

Applicants can only submit one written or recorded LOI for a single proposed project.

Applicants who submit multiple submissions or propose several project ideas in a single submission will not be considered.

After the LOIs and resumes/bios have been reviewed, a limited number of applicants will be invited to submit full proposals, which will be accepted by invitation only.

Those invited to submit full proposals will be given all necessary details regarding the content and structure of proposals.

Complete guidelines in English, Romani, and Czech are available in the Download Files section on this webpage. If you have questions or experience technical difficulties with the online application form, please contact the Youth Exchange at [youth.exchange@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:youth.exchange@opensocietyfoundations.org).