

# GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

## 2017 MEDIA FELLOWSHIPS GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

### Soros Justice Fellowships

The Soros Justice Fellowships seek applicants for its Media Fellowships. Letters of Intent (LOIs) are due on **October 12, 2016** (11:59 p.m. EST) and must be submitted online at <http://sorosjusticefellowships.submittable.com/submit> (the online system will begin accepting LOIs on September 9, 2016). This document contains the eligibility guidelines (Part I, pages 2 – 4) and application information (Part II, page 5).

### General

The Soros Justice Media Fellowships support writers, print and broadcast journalists, bloggers, filmmakers, and other individuals with distinctive voices proposing to complete media projects that engage and inform, spur debate and conversation, and catalyze change on important U.S. criminal justice issues. The Media Fellowships aim to mitigate the time, space, and market constraints that often discourage individuals from pursuing vital but marginalized, controversial, or unpopular topics in comprehensive and creative ways. Media Fellowships are one year in duration, and fellows are expected to make their projects their full-time work during the term of the fellowship. Projects can begin in either the spring or fall of 2017.

Individuals with projects that seek, as their primary purpose, a specific reform goal or objective, should determine whether their work is better suited for the [Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowships](#).

There are two Media Fellowship tracks: Track I, which is for new and emerging media makers; and Track II, which is for more experienced individuals, i.e. those with at least ten (10) years of full-time work as a media maker. The award for Media Track I is \$58,700 over 12 months. The award for Media Track II is \$78,000 over 12 months.

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## PART I: GUIDELINES

### Fellowship Projects

#### Project Focus

We will consider projects that focus on one or more of our broad criminal justice reform goals: reducing mass incarceration, challenging extreme punishment, and promoting fairness and accountability in the justice system in the United States. In our view, there are a number of issues that relate in important ways to these broad goals — for example, the extremely long prison terms that have become the accepted norm as a response to serious and violent crimes; the punishment and harsh treatment of youth in the justice system; police unaccountability; prosecutors' orientation toward harsh charging and sentencing practices; and draconian responses to drug use.

However, for the fellowships we don't have a defined list of topics or issues that we'll consider. Instead, we expect applicants themselves to make the case that their projects have the potential to contribute something valuable to the debate and discussions around mass incarceration, extreme punishment, and fairness and accountability in the justice system. 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 on what we thought we knew, and that teach us about what we don't know but should.

#### Types of Media

We will consider a wide range of media projects and products, including but not limited to: print and broadcast journalism, documentary films, books, digital media, as well as projects that utilize a mix of platforms or mediums. We neither require nor expect Media projects to reflect or endorse a particular viewpoint or position on any policy or practice that relates to our criminal justice reform goals; and accommodate a wide range of perspectives and professional orientations to the issues that are the subject matter of applicants' work. We will consider work that remains decidedly neutral, as well as work that explicitly seeks to achieve or otherwise contribute to particular advocacy objectives. The overriding consideration is whether the project is likely to engage and inform, spur debate and conversation, or catalyze change.

#### Intersectional Projects

We recognize that criminal justice issues are exceptionally complex and involve an array of interrelated social, economic, political, and historical dynamics. We therefore encourage applications that demonstrate a clear understanding of the intersection of criminal justice issues with the particular needs of low-income communities; communities of color; immigrants; LGBTQ people; women and children; and those otherwise disproportionately affected by harsh criminal justice policies. We also welcome projects that cut across various criminal justice fields and related sectors, such as education, health and mental health, housing, and employment.

#### Directly Affected Individuals

We in particular welcome applications from individuals directly affected by, or with significant direct personal experience with, the policies, practices, and systems their projects seek to address. This includes, but is not limited to, applicants who have themselves been incarcerated; applicants who have a family member or loved one who has been incarcerated and whose fellowship project emerges from that experience; and applicants who are survivors of violence and crime. It also includes people with deep ties and connections to the communities or constituencies that are the focus of their projects.

#### Not Sure if Your Project Fits? Submit an Email Inquiry

Applicants who are uncertain whether some aspect of their proposed project fits within the parameters of the fellowships guidelines or whether the project is otherwise likely to be of interest may submit an email inquiry. The email should provide a brief (no more than 200 words) description of the proposed project, as well as

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some background information on the applicant, and should be sent to: [sorosjusticefellowships@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:sorosjusticefellowships@opensocietyfoundations.org). We will do our best to respond to all email inquiries within a week of their receipt. Those who submit email inquiries but do not receive a timely response will have to make their own determination of whether the proposed project fits within the guidelines.

An email inquiry does not constitute an application. To apply, individuals must submit a Letter of Intent, resume or bio, and work sample via our online application system (see page 6 below).

## Awards

Individuals can apply for one of two awards, depending on the applicant's level of experience. The award for Media Track I is \$58,700 over 12 months. The award for Media Track II is \$78,000 over 12 months.

## Eligibility

### Experience

Applicants are ideally full-time writers, print or broadcast journalists, filmmakers, bloggers, or other media makers, with well-established records of publication, dissemination or broadcast in local, regional or national markets, or among targeted audiences or constituencies. Applicants who are not professional writers, journalists, filmmakers, or other types of media makers must demonstrate that they nonetheless have the experience and capacity to accomplish the project.

Media Track I applicants must have at least two (2) years of relevant full-time experience. Media Track II applicants must have a minimum of ten (10) years of relevant full-time experience. Applicants with fewer than 10 years of relevant full-time experience may nonetheless be considered for a Media Track II fellowship, provided they can demonstrate that they have truly distinguished themselves over the course of their careers.

### Education

All applicants must have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

### Time Commitment

Fellowships are 12 months in duration and can begin in either the spring or fall of 2017. 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 fellowships.

### Proposed Project Deliverables

Applicants must propose deliverables or work product that reflect a year's worth of full-time 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. we will not support projects that involve only research, planning, or other activities that simply "lay the groundwork."

### Additional Requirements for Book and Documentary Film/Video

Book projects must either have a publisher in advance of applying for the fellowship or demonstrate strong interest from publishers; and must include plans, during the term of the fellowship itself, to publish, broadcast, lecture, or otherwise reach audiences around work related to the subject matter of the book.

Documentary film or video projects must be in post-production or distribution stages; and must primarily seek support for the promotion, outreach, and audience engagement plan associated with the film/video. Research and pre-production film or video proposals are not eligible.

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## Joint Applications

Up to three (3) individuals can apply jointly for a Media Fellowship. However, joint applications carry a single award. For joint applicants, the “full-time work” requirement does not apply to each applicant; instead, the applicants’ combined time spent on the project must be at least 35 hours per week (see “Time Commitment” above).

## Host Organizations

Unlike for the Advocacy Fellowships, Media Fellowship applicants do not have host organizations. While applicants are welcome to explain any relationships or collaborations they may have with specific entities, networks or organizations, the expectation is that Media Fellowship applicants will be operating without any formal connection to an existing organization.

## Enrollment in an Academic Institution

The fellowships do not fund enrollment for degree or non-degree study at academic institutions, including dissertation research. Also, as indicated above (see “Time Commitment”), fellows cannot be full-time students during their fellowships.

## Past Soros Justice Fellowship Recipients

Past recipients of a Soros Justice Fellowship are not eligible to apply.

## Projects Based Outside the United States

Applicants may be based outside the United States, as long as their work directly relates to a U.S. criminal justice issue.

## Lobbying

Projects that include lobbying activities will not be funded. Please carefully review the [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.

## Application and Selection Process

There are four stages to the application and selection process. First, all applicants must submit a brief Letter of Intent (LOI), a resume or bio, and a work sample. Second, from the pool of initial LOIs, we will select a smaller number who’ll be invited to submit a full proposal. Third, from the pool of full proposals, we will select a group of finalists, who’ll be invited to interview with a selection committee consisting of Open Society Foundations staff and outside experts. And finally, from the pool of finalists, we will select 12 – 15 individuals to receive fellowships (this final number of fellowships — which is contingent on availability of funding — will be a mix of both Media and Advocacy Fellowships).

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO APPLY

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## PART II: APPLICATION

### How to Apply

To apply, submit a Letter of Intent (LOI), resume or bio, and work sample by **October 12, 2016 (11:59 pm EST)**, to our online system: <http://sorosjusticefellowships.submittable.com/submit>. The online system will begin accepting materials on September 9, 2016.

On the online system, applicants will have to provide basic contact information and register with the system. Once registered, applicants will be able to submit a brief LOI (no more than two pages, single spaced), a resume or bio (no more than five pages and that includes a list of most recent published work), and a work sample.

Letters of Intent should, at a minimum, answer the following questions: ***What is your project and how is the issue it addresses important? What are the audiences you hope to reach, how will you reach them, and what do you expect or hope will result from their engagement with you and your work? Why are you the right person to take on this work?*** Applicants will also have to indicate which fellowship track they're applying under. Although LOIs are limited to no more than two pages, applicants should be sure to provide enough information to give us a sufficiently full and detailed description of the proposed project.

From the pool of LOIs, we will select a limited number of applicants to submit full proposals — which is the next step in our selection process (under certain circumstances, fellowships staff may reach out to specific applicants by phone or email to get answers to questions that may help us determine whether to invite a full proposal). 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. Some of this information will be conveyed during an online information session for those who've been invited to submit full proposals.

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

### Application and Selection Timeline

<b>Letters of Intent Due:</b>	<b>October 12, 2016 (11:59 p.m. EST)</b>
Full Proposals Invited:	Early-November 2016 (all applicants will be notified via email whether they have been selected to submit a full proposal)
Full Proposals Due:	Mid-January 2017
Finalists Selected:	Late-January 2017
Finalist Interviews:	Late-February 2017 (all finalist interviews will be held on the same day, to be determined, at the Open Society Foundations offices in New York City)
Selected Fellows Notified:	March 2017
Projects Begin:	No earlier than May 2017