

2020 Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship Guidelines and Application

PUERTO RICO PROJECT

Puerto Rico is witnessing a historic moment where young people continue to call out their government's abandonment of the most vulnerable communities in the country. Upon the recent earthquakes and the inefficient response to assist those without secure housing, young people continue to organize to defend the rights of their communities. With the motive to continue supporting social and political movements led by young people, Open Society Foundations is pleased to announce the second year of the Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship.

This fellowship caters specifically to Puerto Rican youth because we wish to uplift the leadership and empowerment of young people organizing for and with their communities. We wish for this fellowship to represent the permanence of youth in Puerto Rico so that it is young people that construct their country. In its first year, the Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship received close to 150 applications, demonstrating the deep compromise and interest of young people to contribute their vision for justice in Puerto Rico. In the end, seven projects with themes including environmental justice, food sovereignty, the rights of young people living with HIV, access to clean water, community-based tutoring and education services with a feminist lens, and wellness and self-care for LGBTTIQ+ people. To learn more about these dynamic projects, please visit [this page](#).

1. Part I: Overall Guidelines and Eligibility Criteria

1.1 Project Focus

The Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship will support the next generation of activists between **the ages of 18 and 27**, who want to implement a project of their own design that advances human rights in Puerto Rico. 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.

We motivate applicants who are directly affected by the problems, norms, practices and systems their projects attempt to address. We also motivate people who form part of groups traditionally marginalized and/or discriminated in Puerto Rico, including, but not limited to: LGBTTIQ people; Afro-Puerto Rican people; people with diverse abilities; people who have been in prison; people who have been/are sex workers; people with a low income (including people living in public housing); people who are not receiving formal education; or people with family members or loved ones that have direct experience.

1.2 Project Approach

The duration of the fellowship is 18 continuous months starting in August 2020 (approx. August 2020-February 2022). Recipients of the fellowship **will receive \$45,000**, structured to cover project related costs as well as a living stipend. Information regarding the administration of the fellowship (payment structure and operational expectations) will be shared with the finalists.



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Independent of the project strategy or subject, all projects of the Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship must contribute a solution to a problem specific to a community (community in a geographic sense ex. neighborhood X in municipality X); or a community in the sense of a group of people facing a common experience ex. LGBTTIQ community). This contribution should be fully developed within the 18 months of the fellowship, including a plan for the project to remain sustainable beyond the end of the fellowship. In other words, projects that simply imply planning, conceptualizing, investigating and/or strategizing will not be considered. Projects must involve action, activism, mobilization and community organizing, with a vision to establish realistic and sustainable changes in their communities.

The Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship is characterized by its collaborations with collectives of activists, educators and community organizers. These groups provide resources to support networking and bonding amongst the cohort of fellows. More specifically, the fellowship offers trainings from the frameworks of popular education and individual and collective healing during its 18 months. Additionally, resources, workshops and tools are offered to each project to ensure the implementation of a plan for fundraising and sustainability.

The Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship does NOT fund: Enrollment in an academic institution for degree or non-degree study, including dissertation research.

Projects that deal with direct service provision: while we recognize that people need assistance and services in Puerto Rico's current crisis, we want to ensure that projects focus on activism and community-based mobilization. The fellowship defines a "direct service" as any action that involves the delivery or receiving of a particular service, for example, the distribution of products in a community.

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.

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.

1.3 Eligibility Criteria

1. **Education:** There no minimum education requirements.
2. **Time commitment:** Selected fellows are required to participate during the course of 18 continuous months (approx. August 2020–February 2022), working approximately 35 hours/week. Full-time studies or employment are not permitted. However, an applicant can continue studies or employment at a part-time level upon requesting a part-time fellowship (see section 3 below).
3. **Part-time projects:** The Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship can be requested at a part-time level. This is to say, a part-time project (approx. 20 hours/week) with reasonable objectives will be considered. Part-time projects will receive partial funding (approx.

\$25,000). Please follow the instructions indicated in the Letter of Intention prompt to apply for this type of fellowship.

4. **Potential and attitude:** Selected fellows must have the potential to accomplish their project objectives and to benefit from the opportunity and exposure that the fellowships offer. We wish to provide this opportunity to those 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.
5. **Host Organizations:** Applicants can choose (if they so desire) 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. 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

To apply, please attach a copy of your resume and your Letter of Intent and e-mail prfellows@opensocietyfoundations.org on or before March 15, 2020 (11:59 p.m. EDT).

- Curriculum vitae, resume or biography: no more than 2 pages.
- Letter of Intent: You must complete Part 1 (Table of Questions) and Part 2 (Essay, Video or Voice note) of the Letter of Intent. If you are applying for a part-time project, you must complete Part 3. Please refer to the Letter of Intent document for more information.

Applicants can submit a written form, video or voice note for one project. Multiple projects or multiple versions of one project by one applicant will not be considered. Upon reviewing all of the letters of intent submitted, we will select a limited number of applicants to submit a full project proposal. Full project proposals will be accepted by invitation.

We will provide a template for the project proposal to those selected to continue in the application cycle, as well as additional information on eligibility and criteria for the final application stages.

Important Dates

Letters of Intention due by:	March 15, 2020 (11:59 p.m. EDT)
Full proposals invited:	Late March 2020 (only those applicants who have been selected to submit a full proposal will be contacted)
Full proposals due by:	May 2020
Finalists selected by:	Late May 2020
Finalist interviews:	June 2020
Select fellows notified:	June 2020
Projects begin:	August 2020

For more information or inquiries please contact the Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship team at prfellows@opensocietyfoundations.org.