

**OPEN SOCIETY  
FOUNDATIONS**

**2022 Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship**

# **Guidelines and Application**

**PUERTO RICO PROJECT**

June 2022

Puerto Rico—a colony of the United States—continues to struggle with the complexities of colonialism and the socioeconomic consequences of a US imposed Fiscal Oversight Board. Young people continue to be on the frontlines responding to the need to protect essential services—including the University of Puerto Rico—as part of the fiscal plans that will define Puerto Rico’s future. With the motive to continue supporting social and political movements led by young people, Open Society Foundations is pleased to announce the third year of the Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship.

This fellowship caters specifically to Puerto Rican youth living in Puerto Rico 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 second year, the Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship received close to 100 applications, demonstrating the deep compromise and interest of young people to contribute their vision for justice in Puerto Rico. In the end, ten projects were chosen with themes including environmental justice, food sovereignty, the rights of young transgender people, community-based tutoring and education services with a feminist lens, and a dance and a media project created by and 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 21 and 35**, who want to implement a project of their own design that advances Decolonization and Climate Justice in Puerto Rico. Said projects could include the following topics: criminal justice, workers' rights, LGBTTIQ rights, mutual aid, food justice, renewable energy, land protection, 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; low income community members (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 January 2022 (approx. January 2023- June 2024). 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.

Independent of the project strategy or subject (i.e. Decolonization or Climate Justice), 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, undergraduate, graduate or post graduate research.

**Projects that deal with direct service provision:** While we recognize that people need assistance and services in Puerto Rico’s current economic crisis, we want to ensure that projects focus on community-based organizing, activism and 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 food in a community (without any political or organizing project attached to it).

**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. They will also appear, along with a photograph on our website.

### 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. October 2022–April 2024), working approximately 35 hours/week. Full-time studies or employment are not permitted.

3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **Community Recommendation:** Fellows must provide, along with their letter of intent, a letter by a community leader from the community they wish to serve, endorsing their project. This means that if for example a fellow wishes to serve a specific geographic community, they must know the community members and ensure they have the trust and backing of the community to develop their project. Note we are not looking for a professor or academic to endorse the project, but a community member with lived experiences that can endorse the project you are wishing to execute in said community.

## 2. Part II: Application

To apply, please attach a copy of your resume, Letter or video of Recommendation and your Letter of Intent and e-mail [prfellows@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:prfellows@opensocietyfoundations.org) on or before July 15, 2022 (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) Part 2 (Essay, Video or Voice note) and Part 3 (Letter of Recommendation) of the Letter of Intent. Please refer to the Letter of Intent document for more information.
- **Letter of Recommendation:** You must submit a letter no more than 1 pages long, with the endorsement of a community leader/member of the geographic and/or subject matter community you wish to impact. We also accept video with the statement of the person who is recommending your project.
- **The subject of the application email must be:**  
BJPR 2022-LOI: NAME AND LAST NAME OF THE APPLICANT

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 and for in person interviews. 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:**

July 15, 2022 (11:59 p.m. EDT)

**Full proposals invited:**

July 2022

*(only those applicants who have been selected to submit a full proposal will be contacted)*

**Full proposals due by:**

August 5, 2022

**Finalist interviews:**

August 8-12, 2022

**Selected fellows notified:**

End of August 2022

**Projects begin:**

January, 2023

For more information or inquiries please contact the Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship team at [prfellows@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:prfellows@opensocietyfoundations.org).