2023 Soros Equality Fellowship

Guidelines and Application

Deadline: January 31, 2023

Fellowship Overview and Applicant Deadlines

The Open Society Foundations seek applicants for its Soros Equality Fellowship, which aims to support long-term leaders influencing and transforming the racial justice field. The Fellowship award provides individuals with roughly $130,000 to support the production of an innovative racial justice project over the course of 18 months.

Applications are due on January 31, 2023 (11:59 pm EST) and must be submitted online through the application portal.

General

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Founded by philanthropist George Soros, the Foundations support individuals and organizations across the globe fighting for freedom of expression, transparency, accountable government, and for societies that promote justice and equality.

Guidelines

Fellowship Projects

The Soros Equality Fellowship seeks to support individual leaders influencing and transforming the racial justice field. We understand the unique role an individual can play in rejecting old paradigms and presenting a new vision for the America we hope to become. We invite applicants to be bold, innovative, and audacious in their submissions. The aim of the Fellowship is to be flexible and open – a space to incubate new ideas, promote risk-taking, and develop different ways of thinking that challenge and expand our existing assumptions. A successful project should identify a challenge and propose a critical intervention that will meaningfully address the systems that reinforce inequities and discrimination in the United States. Through the Soros Equality Fellowships and our partner fellowships within Open Society-U.S. — the [Soros Justice Fellowship](#) and the [Leadership in Government Fellowship](#) — Open Society aims to provide a network of leaders, representing the diversity of experiences across the issues we support, with the resources to effectively address injustice and inequality, and the space to imagine a more just and equitable future. Please note, given the overlapping goals and strategies across the different fellowships, the selection committee may, with applicants' permission, refer applicants to other fellowship programs within Open Society-U.S. should they be deemed a better fit (all three fellowship programs have the same application deadline and roughly the same selection timeline). *Applicants, however, cannot apply to more than one fellowship program.*

We are living in unprecedented times in our nation and we remain committed to our overall goal of building a multi-racial, pro-democracy alliance with enough political, economic, and cultural power to advance an open society at home and to shape how it engages globally. Therefore, we believe this year's cohort should consider their project within the current social and political moment. We know toxic narratives, racialized anxiety, economic insecurity, and an ongoing health pandemic have reinforced divisions and the systems that perpetuate inequities. It is in this context that we ask applicants to place their project and explain how and why their project is necessary to counter these threats and move toward a more inclusive democracy.

Applicants must demonstrate their project's impact that reflects 18 months of work. We leave it up to each applicant to determine the scope of the project impact and to make a convincing case that the work is sufficiently ambitious. However, in all cases, a project must aim to reach audiences and seek some measurable impact 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." Film and book projects should be in final stages of production and the applicant must be able to provide some sample of the project within their submission.

While each cohort is different, we encourage applicants who are unsure of their qualifications for the Fellowship to review [previous recipients](#) to get a better understanding of the type of individuals and projects we seek to support. Please note, just because we have supported a type of project or individual in the past, does not mean we will, or will not, support a similar applicant in the future. Each year we seek to grow, diversify, and strengthen our Fellowship network.

Fellowship Grant

Fellows will typically receive a roughly $130,000 stipend over the 18 month fellowship to support expenses related to the project. These award amounts are all-inclusive and are are intended to cover a fellow's living expenses, project-related expenses, travel, conference fees, health insurance, etc. We currently do not provide additional funds beyond the fellowship award (we do, however, cover any costs

associated with attending fellowship-related conferences, gatherings, or meetings organized by the fellowships program).

The purpose of the fellowship is to support individuals; therefore the program will only cover an individual's 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. If a project is housed within an organization, it is up to the applicant to make clear how their submission is separate and apart from the existing work of that organization. The fellowship does not fund enrollment for degree or non-degree study at academic institutions, including dissertation research. Grants to fellows are considered public information and the fellow's name and project description will be included in Open Society's audited financial statements, as per IRS regulations.

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 Fall 2023); the Soros Equality Fellowship retreat (tentatively set for early 2024); fellowship class network calls; and a Rockwood Leadership Institute training. Exact dates and location will be confirmed upon Fellowship selection. Please note, some or all of these activities may be virtual.

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 individuals can apply jointly for a Soros Equality Fellowship. However, joint applications will share a single fellowship

award. A joint application should be completed together as a single submission. For joint applicants, the "full-time work" requirement does not apply to each applicant. All other restrictions associated with an individual application still apply. Be sure to explain why this particular partnership is necessary to fulfill the objectives of the project and how responsibilities will be distributed.

Lobbying

Projects that include electioneering, lobbying, or other activity that does not fall within IRS 501(c)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.

Selection Criteria and Process

There are three stages to the application and selection process. First, all applicants must submit a full and completed application by the deadline of January 31, 2023. Second, each application will be reviewed for critical need, competitiveness, ability to influence the racial justice field, innovation, and the leadership qualities of the applicant. 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' racial justice priorities. We will then select a group of finalists who will be invited to interview with a selection committee consisting of Open Society Foundations staff and outside social justice experts. Finally, after each finalist is interviewed, we will select up to 12 individuals to receive a Fellowship award.

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR APPLICATION

Application

Application Information

The full proposal application deadline is **January 31, 2023 (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](). Additional technical guidance for your submission can be found [here]().

In order to submit, first-time applicants will have to provide basic contact information and register in the system. To apply for any of our fellowships, you must register as an individual. 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.

Content of Complete Applications

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

1. Cover Page, Project Proposal, names of references, Resume or CV, and short 150-word bio (Please combine as a single attachment)

2. Publisher Letter(s) (book proposals only)

3. 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
- Mailing Address
- Project Title
- Project Summary (no more than one paragraph)

Project Proposal

Each application must include a single-spaced proposal of no more than 2,000 words containing responses to the six (6) sections listed below in order, with the headings as listed below, i.e. Vision and Need, Leadership and Networks, Challenges and Opportunities, Timeline and Impact, Budget, and Commitment.

1. Vision and Need

Provide a vision of the project that describes: the issue your project will address, 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 section 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 within the racial justice field.

2. Challenges and Opportunities

Please describe potential challenges or difficulties that you think may impact your ability to advance this project? Are there any security/safety/etc. risks associated with your project? How do you plan to address these challenges? What are the unique opportunities related to your project in this moment and how will it be transformative?

3. Timeline and Impact

Provide a timeline that sets forth the project's specific activities and reflects all phases of the project. Please provide a summary of the anticipated impact of your fellowship after the 18-month grant period. What changes or influences will your fellowship have upon communities, the racial justice movement or other members in civil society?

4. Leadership and Networks

How have your unique experiences (personal, professional, academic, etc.), skills, and networks prepared you to carry out this particular project? What do you hope to gain from, and contribute to, the Soros Equality Fellowship community? For joint applications, please speak to your relationship to one another and why this particular team is best suited to undertake the project.

5. Budget

As noted in the guidelines, the fellowship award is all-inclusive (i.e. it may cover a fellow's living expenses, project-related expenses, travel, conference fees, health insurance, etc.). However, if there are costs associated with your project that exceed the amount of the fellowship award, please describe what those costs are and the source of funding for those additional costs (or plan for securing that funding). In addition, to the extent you anticipate any revenue or profit associated with your project (whether pre-, during, or post-production), please explain (a) the sources of that revenue and (b) how you expect the revenue to contribute to the overall charitable goals of the project.

6. Commitment

Describe any non-fellowship work responsibilities (e.g. freelance work, consulting, teaching commitments, etc.) that you expect to have during the course of your fellowship, including the approximate time to be devoted to these commitments.

Letters of Recommendation

All applicants must provide names, affiliations, and contact information of three (3) people who would provide a letter of recommendation. <u>We do not need the actual letters at this stage in the process.</u> Applicants selected as finalists will be asked to supplement their application by providing letters from two of the three people named. The individuals listed should be able to 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. If applying jointly, we will ask for three (3) letters – one for each applicant and one from a person who can speak directly to the proposed partnership.

Publisher Letters

FOR BOOK PROJECTS ONLY

If proposing a book project, completed applications must include a letter from at least one publisher that has expressed interest in the book. Letters should not be more than two (2) pages in length.

Samples of Work

FOR ARTS, MEDIA, AND TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS ONLY

If proposing an art, media, or technology project, complete applications must include up to two (2) samples (or relevant links) of your work. Video/audio samples should be uploaded online and should be no longer than five minutes. If you link to a longer piece, provide a time stamp indicating where reviewers should begin watching/listening.

Application and Selection Timeline

Application Process Open	November 18, 2022
Application Deadline	January 31, 2023 (11:59 p.m. EST)
Finalists Notified	June 2023*
Finalist Interviews	July 2023*
Selected Fellows Notified	August 2023*
Projects Begin	Fall 2023

* Please note, dates subject to change.