

**Open Society Institute
2005 New York City Community Fellowship Program
Frequently Asked Questions**

1. What is an open society?

Popularized by philosopher Karl Popper, an open society is a society based on the recognition that nobody has a monopoly on the truth, that different people have different views and interests, and that there is a need for institutions to protect the rights of all people to allow them to live together in peace.

2. Does the New York City Community Fellowship Program have specific areas of interest?

The fellowship program is committed to supporting emerging public interest projects that address critical social issues in New York City. We support individuals (fellows) who will create innovative projects that will have a positive impact on New York City communities. Areas of interest may include, but are not limited to, arts and media, legal services, human rights, homelessness, economic development, education, and health services.

3. Are you required to have a hosting organization?

Applicants decide if they require a hosting organization based upon the needs of their proposed projects. You may work without a hosting organization. Hosting organizations provide basic in-kind support that may be relevant to the fellow's needs; this may include office space, access to available networks, health insurance, and entree to a shared constituency.

4. Can you approach other funders to support your project or approach other Open Society Institute programs for funding?

Yes. We strongly encourage fellows to pursue other funding avenues that may support their work. The Open Society Institute has various funding opportunities that you may wish to explore. Applicants will have to meet the eligibility criteria of each prospective program to be considered for funding.

5. What are the reporting requirements and stipend payments schedules?

Fellows are required by the terms of the grant agreement to submit two (2) interim reports and a final report at the end of the grant period. Stipend payments are scheduled every six months. The first payment is released after the receipt of the countersigned grant agreement.

6. What is the due date for the proposal?

All proposals are due by Friday, April 15, 2005 by noon. Please be advised that proposals will not be accepted past the deadline date. Due to the selection process, we are unable to provide extensions.

7. Are you required to have an advanced degree or high media profile to receive a fellowship?

No. We encourage all individuals, regardless of their educational or professional background, to apply for our fellowship program. Individuals should have experience in the community that they wish to serve. The experience may be rooted in volunteer work, professional experience, or other related opportunities.

8. Is the fellowship only open to young people or individuals new to public interest work?

The fellowship program is open to all individuals who wish to serve a community in New York City. Past fellows have come from diverse age groups, educational backgrounds, and professional experiences. It is important that we have a diverse community of fellows that reflects the rich culture of New York City. We welcome applicants who have had prior experience in social change organizations to contribute their talents to our fellowship network.

9. Are the fellows expected to work full-time on their projects?

Fellows are expected to work towards reaching their anticipated project's goals and meet their objectives in a timely fashion. Fellows are responsible for setting up a realistic schedule that will enable them to achieve their project's mission. Fellows may have interests and activities outside of the fellowship program.

10. How are fellows supported throughout the program?

Each year the fellowship program may support up to ten individuals to develop their projects in New York City during an 18-month fellowship period. The fellowship award consists of the following elements:

- A \$48,750 stipend over 18-months. The stipend may be used to support the project and/or fellow. Fellows are strongly encouraged to seek other contributions to support their work during the fellowship.
- A start-up grant in the amount of \$2,000 for project support
- A travel grant to cover expenses for two OSI-sponsored conferences during the fellowship period
- Financial contributions towards graduate school debt payments
- Health insurance costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Continued access to resources and workshops available through the fellowship network
- Technical assistance support through our annual Community Fellows Conference

11. What is the Fellowship Network?

The fellowship network is made up of current and previously funded fellows who share resources and ideas on developing communities and sustaining their public interest projects. Fellows have worked in collaborative projects and coalitions to foster relationships across issue areas and institutions to enrich the social justice community of New York City. All fellows become members of the network and are eligible to attend conferences and various technical assistance workshops. The network seeks to continue to grow by enhancing the social capital of emerging leaders through informal peer-to-peer exchanges and shared learning experiences.

12. Is the fellowship program competitive?

Yes. The fellowship program is very competitive and has grown increasingly popular since our first funding cycle in 1998. In 2004 we received nearly 200 applications for the fellowship program. We strongly encourage all who are interested to apply.

13. How are applications reviewed and fellows selected?

The fellowship program is competitive and requires a lot of review and consideration. Four members of our reading committee read each application. The reading committee consists of community activists, social change practitioners, educators, and members of the nonprofit sector whose skill sets reflect the diverse pool of submitted proposals. The reading committee is responsible for nominating 20 finalists who will be invited for in-person interviews with our selection committee.

The selection committee will interview each finalist and nominate up to **ten** individuals for fellowship awards. To be considered for a fellowship award, applicants **must** attend the interview session with the selection committee. Selection is based on the applicant's competence and commitment to the community; the need for the proposed project; the responsiveness of the project to the community involved; and the capacity of the individual to implement the project. The project must have a sound implementation and governance plan along with a budget for the 18-month fellowship period. The project

should either demonstrate long-term sustainability or a comprehensive conclusion after the fellowship period.

14. What is the timeline for submitting proposals for the fellowship program?

Proposal DeadlineFriday, April 15, 2005 by noon
Letters of Notification Mailed Thursday, May 26, 2005
Finalist Interviews.....Wednesday, June 22 and Thursday, June 23, 2005
Offers of Fellowship.....Early July, 2005
Fellowships Start Date.....Monday, September 12, 2005

14. How can I find out more about the proposal process?

The fellowships program will host proposal workshops to assist applicants on the following dates during 2005:

- Wednesday, February 16, 4-6 pm
- Wednesday, February 23, 4-6 pm
- Wednesday, March 9, 4-6 pm
- Thursday, March 17, 4-6 pm
- Wednesday, April 6, 4-6 pm

Please call 212.548.0152 to r.s.v.p as seating will be limited.