

2024 Fellowship Advancement Fund

Guidelines and Application

Overview and Application Deadline

Open Society–United States, through its Fellowship Advancement Fund, seeks applications from past fellows for funding to support their continued development and sustainability. Applications are due August 9th by 11:59 ET. Requests can range from \$1,000 to \$35,000.

Applications must be submitted online through the application portal, which can be accessed through the [Fellowship Advancement Fund webpage](#).

General

Transformation into a truly just society requires longer term investments in the people who have a track record of developing winning strategies, telling important but often overlooked stories, and leading change in their communities. Fellows' contributions to the fields and movements of which they are a part, through their fellowship projects and beyond, have demonstrated their ability to make a difference, even with limited support.

The Fellowship Advancement Fund seeks to deepen our investment in past Open Society-U.S. fellowship recipients by supporting their ongoing leadership, sustainability and impact in movements and organizations across various fields. The Fellowship Advancement Fund will support past recipients from any of the five current and past fellowship programs within Open Society-U.S. (Baltimore, Leadership in Government, Puerto Rico, Equality, and Justice). Projects and activities under the fund are supported with grants

ranging from \$1000 to \$35,000 and can have a duration as short as a few days or as long as a year—depending on the nature of the request.

1. Guidelines

1.1 Fellowship Advancement Fund Requests

Targeted Support for Transitions and Development

At its core, the Fellowship Advancement Fund seeks to deepen our investment in past Open Society-U.S. fellowship recipients by supporting their ongoing leadership, sustainability and impact in movements and organizations across various fields. However, whereas the first iteration of the fund in 2023 offered a relatively open-ended call for applications that allowed fellows to define in the broadest terms the kinds of support they might need, for this year's fund we're taking a more targeted and focused approach. We've taken this approach after reflecting on our initial launch of the fund in 2023 and considering what we believe is the best use of the fund's resources in the moment we're in.

A Movement Recession

The broader context in which contemporary social and racial justice work takes place is an especially daunting one. The recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions and other institutionalized attacks on some of the core values and beliefs have tried to upend the aspiration of an inclusive, multi-racial democracy. Additionally, dwindling resources in fields that had already been long-struggling for support; and widespread fatigue, burnout, and disillusionment among the people who are the lifeblood of movement work persists. Against this backdrop, there is a particular need for leaders to be in a position to mitigate or otherwise address some aspect of this complex dynamic and help advance the vision that they have for themselves and their work.

Accordingly, for this year's Fellowship Advancement Fund, we will only accept applications that seek support in the following categories: Support for Transitions and Leadership Development.

Support for Transitions

Leadership transitions are inevitable. The sustainability of movements and organizations after the transitions is not. We will fund fellows who seek to transition away from their current organization or movement role. We will support requests to ensure that individuals are able to design a sustainable transition for themselves as well as their work. We will fund fellows in the midst of a transition as well as those who would like to plan ahead for their eventual departure.

We will not support transitions into a new organization nor will this be an organizational support grant.

Professional/Leadership Development

Fellows' work can be at the expense of their mental health and well-being. We understand that post fellowship, alumni continue to have needs and confront challenges. We will support projects that support and promote an individual's resilience, capacity and sustainability. These projects can include personal or professional development projects. Moreover, given that while individuals are effective and can maneuver in spaces that organizations cannot, they also benefit from partnering with or convening others to amplify their work, messages, and power. Accordingly, the fund will support both individual and collective efforts (e.g., collaborations, convenings) to enhance an applicant's resilience, capacity, and sustainability.

Examples include, but are not limited to: coaching, professional development, leadership development, counseling services, temporary assistance with a project or workload, and collaborations with others to advance individual and collective development.

1.2 Grant Amounts

Funding requests may range from \$1,000 to \$35,000. We aim to fully fund eligible requests.

Eligibility

Past Fellows

The Fellowship Advancement Fund will support past fellowship recipients from the following Open Society-U.S. fellowship programs:

- Baltimore Community Fellowships
- Leadership in Government Fellowship
- Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship
- Soros Equality Fellowship
- Soros Justice Fellowships
- Past recipients of Fellowship Advancement Fund support are eligible to apply again.

Project and activity duration and deliverables

These grants are intended for a term of no more than one (1) year. Please indicate in your application if you require more time to meet the goals of your request.

Ineligible

The Fund will not support the following requests:

- projects or activities that do not relate to the types of support listed above in “A Movement Recession—Support for Transitions, Leadership/Professional Development”
- sabbaticals (i.e., purely “living” stipends)
- transitions into a new organization or movement
- projects containing partisan political activities on behalf of specific parties or individuals
- lobbying activities
- individuals acting solely on behalf of organizations
- enrollment for degree or nondegree study at academic institutions, including thesis or dissertation research
- requests from individuals currently undertaking Open Society – United States fellowships

Application and selection process

As a threshold, applications will be reviewed to see whether they fall within one of the types of support listed above in “A Movement

Recession’—Support for Transitions, Leadership/Professional Development.” Applications will then be assessed based on:

- The clarity of the request, i.e., whether the proposed activities and desired outcomes are coherently defined and with sufficient detail;
- Based on the applicant’s experience, the likelihood that the outcomes of the project or activities will be fulfilled; and
- The issues and remedies in the request are timely and urgent as related to Movement Recession, as described above.

2. Application

2.1 Application Information

Online submission

Applications must be submitted online via the application portal, which can be accessed through the Fellowship Advancement Fund.

All communications with applicants will be sent to the email used to register with the online system, so applicants should ensure that emails from us do not end up in their “Junk Mail” or “Spam” folder.

Content of application

Complete applications consist of certain documents that must be uploaded to the online application system: **a completed Funding Request Template and Resume.**

Below is more information on each of these items:

- Please complete and upload, as a Word or PDF document, the **Funding Request Template** provided. Please limit responses to 650 words or fewer. The length and detail of your response should be commensurate with the amount and complexity of the request. It should also contain responses to the following questions/prompts:
 - Please describe the project or activity for which you are requesting support. Explain how, based on your experiences (personal, professional,

academic, etc.), skills and attributes, you are the right person to carry out this particular project.

- Why is this support important for you and/or your intended audience.
 - Explain why your request is timely and relevant. What will happen if your project is not funded?
 - Have you or your work been impacted by receding support for work related to racial justice or movements? If so, please explain.
 - Provide a timeline that sets forth the project's specific activities and reflects all phases of the project, including what you hope to accomplish at different stages of the project.
 - Describe the Project Budget, which is an opportunity to provide additional context related to your funding request.
- Please upload a **RESUME** of no more than 4 pages.

2.1 Application and selection timeline

Application Process Open	Week of June 17, 2024
Application Deadline	August 9, 2024 (11:59 PM ET)
Applicants Notified	September 2024
Projects Begin	Winter 2025