

request for applications senior fellowship program 2018

frequently asked questions

The Senior Fellowship opportunity

Why have we created a Senior Fellowship program?

We created this fellowship opportunity because this is a pivotal time at the Foundation. We have recently adopted a new strategic plan that gives us the bold goal of making California the healthiest state in the nation with the lowest rates of domestic violence. You can find more information about our new plan on our website here: blueshieldcafoundation.org

We are asking new questions of ourselves, our grantees, and the fields in which we work. We are looking much more deeply into issues related to the prevention of poor health and prevention of domestic violence, where we need better evidence, better ideas, and new thinking. We are in a space where we have a lot to learn. We know we do not have all the answers, and through this Senior Fellowship we want to find smart people who can join us in exploring some key challenges in our work.

What kind of work will be done by Senior Fellows?

Each fellow will participate in a range of Foundation activities, including but not limited to:

- Research on priority topics related to movement building frameworks or data strategies to identify opportunities for Foundation initiatives and programs;
- Interaction with key thought leaders in the development of Foundation initiatives;
- Writing and researching content for Foundation communications, including blogs and articles; and
- Interaction with grantees on movement building or data strategies.

Fellows will have the opportunity to apply their lived, professional and academic experience to think about new and existing challenges with the goal of bringing new perspectives to our work. They will learn about the Foundation's approach to grantmaking and partnerships by working closely with program staff.

What are our hopes and expectations for the Senior Fellowship program?

We want this fellowship to be a fulfilling experience for each fellow, and we want the fellows to make deep contributions to the development of the Foundation's initiatives as we implement our strategic plan. We know it will be a great learning opportunity for each fellow that contributes to their own growth as a professional. We expect the fellows will bring their best thinking and leverage their networks, ideas, and interests to contribute ideas and inspiration to the Foundation and to the fields in which we work.

Will the fellows work closely with each other?

We expect that the fellows will generally be working independently, although there may be projects where their interests and research intersect.

What will the day to day work of a fellow look like?

Fellows will work with the Foundation's program staff to scope out research questions and projects. We expect that day to day you will work with one or more of the program staff to add your expertise and insights to their initiatives, and you will have time to work independently to carry out research and writing.

Will the fellow help implement programs?

We do not expect fellows to help make grants as part of an implementation strategy. We expect fellows to be more involved in helping us research, test, and communicate about our approaches to data strategies and movement building. Specific projects will be developed in collaboration with our program staff.

What do you expect might emerge by the end of the fellowship in terms of accomplishments, collaborations, products, etc.?

What we want is for the fellows to bring us new ideas and new relationships that can shape our work going forward in these two areas of movement building and data strategies. We want the fellows to help develop and refine ideas that can contribute to our work, and disseminate these ideas in blogs, papers, and other written products to share what they and we are learning.

How will the success of a Senior Fellow be measured?

It will be an ongoing conversation over time with the program staff and the fellow. Success will be measured at the end of the fellowship by the quality and quantity of great work, thinking, and new ideas and new relationships generated through the fellowship. Success will also be measured by the fellow in terms of how the fellowship contributed to their own growth, to the Foundation and to the field.

What are some challenges the fellows may face?

The individuals selected in 2018 will be the Foundation's first Senior Fellows. This year, as with any new program, there will be some learning together by the Foundation staff and fellows about how to optimize the fellowship opportunity.

Has the Foundation had Senior Fellows in the past?

No, this is a new program that we have created to help us dig deeper into answering challenges we are exploring in our new strategic plan. We are excited to see how senior fellows can help us improve the lives of Californians.

Does the Foundation prefer a six- or twelve-month duration for the fellowship?

No, we do not have a preference.

Do we anticipate repeating this program annually or extending the fellowship?

We intend to repeat the program next year.

Will there be an opportunity to continue at the Foundation after the Fellowship?

No. The Fellowship is not intended to lead to a paid staff position at the Foundation after the Fellowship ends.

Eligibility, application, and selection process

Would I need to leave my current job for the fellowship?

Not necessarily. We ask for at least a half-time commitment while you are a fellow, which would be 20 hours per week or the equivalent distributed across a month. We are open to negotiating specific arrangements on an individual basis.

Can people with full time jobs apply?

Yes, but we would be looking for a commitment of a significant amount of time for the fellowship, so your current employer would need to allow you to reduce your hours there.

What are the eligibility criteria for the program?

Applicants should hold a deep understanding of their subject area related to the two big challenges described in the Request for Applications (RFA), possess a clear analysis of these fields, and be able to demonstrate a proven history of professional accomplishment and risk-taking. We want Senior Fellows who can teach us what they know about using data and building movements, and who bring networks of colleagues working on these issues to draw on for insights and advice. Strong applicants will have a track record of accomplishment in one of these areas.

Are there any minimum education requirements?

No, we are looking for people with experience in addressing the big challenges described in the RFA.

Do employees of Foundation grantees have an advantage in applying?

Not necessarily. We will look closely at each candidate's relevant experience.

What if someone has movement building or data measurement experience in fields like education or immigration, but less knowledge of domestic violence or health?

We urge you to apply and tell us why this fellowship interests you. We would love to hear how you would bring your experience to bear on the fields of domestic violence or health.

For the data fellow: do you have any preference between qualitative vs quantitative skill set?

We are interested in candidates who have worked with quantitative data in terms of data measurement strategies and systems in communities. But we are open to learning how your experience working with qualitative data would help us better understand strategies to use data to drive social change.

For the data fellow: do you prefer a background in community-based research methods or other participatory methods?

We do not have a preference.

Would a background working with communities of color and other marginalized communities be of interest to the Foundation?

Yes, we would love to learn more about how such a background can help us better support marginalized communities across California.

Will you consider Fellowship applications that do not focus on one of the two big challenges described in the RFA?

No.

Is there a maximum number of words on the application essay questions?

Yes, the online application specifies that answers must be 500 words or less. We encourage you to be thorough, but concise.

Will you accept more than two letters of recommendation?

No.

Would you prefer that letters of recommendation come from supervisors or from colleagues?

No preference. We recommend you think about references who can speak best to your qualifications for the fellowship.

For the data fellow, are you looking for more academic research-oriented letters of recommendation?

Not necessarily. We are interested in people who have been in academia as well those working in communities on data measurement and data strategies. Academic or research-oriented letters of recommendation can be one of your letters, but we would also welcome letters of recommendation from employers, communities, or organizations you have worked with.

How will fellows be selected?

Applicants must submit their applications to the online portal by July 27, 2018. Applications will be evaluated by Foundation consultants and staff. The final review of applicants will take place in August, and finalists will be contacted by Foundation staff for interviews. Fellows will be selected in September 2018.

Compensation, location and benefits

What is the compensation?

Fellows will be consultants to the Foundation at a full-time rate of \$150,000 per year. Shorter or part-time commitments will be pro-rated accordingly.

Is the Senior Fellow hired as a consultant or an employee? Are there benefits in addition to salary?

Our preference is to hire fellows as consultants, but we can work with you on an individual basis regarding benefits.

Do you have to be a resident of California?

No, but you will need to be available for periodic in-person time at the Foundation's offices located in San Francisco, California.

How much would I need to be physically in San Francisco?

Relocation to San Francisco is not a requirement. We are open to candidates who will work remotely. We can work with you to find the right balance of time in the office versus working remotely.