

2021 Fellowship Selection Criteria

CONTEXT & OVERVIEW

This document aims to outline and define criteria that Echoing Green uses to assess applicants as leaders, the work their organizations are pursuing, and their impact on advancing equity in the communities they serve. Throughout the Echoing Green Fellowship application process, you'll have many opportunities to share information about your work and its impact (i.e., how and why you come to this work and how your bold idea will drive change in the world). As you work through your application, we strongly encourage you to keep the information below in mind.

INDIVIDUAL CRITERIA

As a social innovator, you are more than your business plan. While you tell us about yourself and your commitment to social justice and upending structural oppression, keep the following individual criteria in mind.

Leadership Skills

Showcase your ability to drive ideas forward, build support for your vision, and lead an organization toward its goals. Strong application responses will concretely (read: use examples!) demonstrate each of the following elements:

- Your ability to lead an organization toward strategic goals
- Your ability to bring a vision to life, launch new initiatives, and/or effectively manage others to drive your vision forward
- Your skill at building coalitions or partnerships to further your mission or goals
- How you have gathered and mobilized resources and support toward a cause or mission
- Your capacity to find solutions in order to bounce back from mistakes, failures, or setbacks

Purpose Alignment

Use your application responses to show why you hold such deep conviction and passion for the issue you are committed to addressing. Illustrate that your dedication to solving the problem will not waiver even if your organization's form shifts over time. High scores will clearly and compellingly demonstrate:

- Why you choose to undertake and lead this work
- Why you are the right person to establish an organization dedicated to this work
- Why this is the right moment for you to undertake this work

Relationship to and Expertise on the Issue

Social innovators who are closest to their communities possess the ideas and authenticity to affect the greatest change—your proximity is one of your most significant assets. Your lived experience is an additional source of knowledge and heightens your ability to identify opportunities and drive change in the issue you're committed to addressing. In your answers, showcase your understanding of root causes and your relationship with the community impacted by the issue you are addressing. A high score will clearly express:

- In what ways you are proximate to the work that you are undertaking
- Your understanding of how important solving the issue is because you currently or previously experienced it
- You have the lived experience, relationships, and knowledge of the problem necessary to address it.
- How you work with your community or stakeholders and proactively involve those impacted by the issue in your decision making

ORGANIZATION CRITERIA

While your business plan may evolve, we want to know about the foundational thinking that drives your approach to this work. In your answers, you will be asked to share concrete examples and be scored on how well you demonstrate the following.

Innovation

Tell us how your idea will bring about dramatic, not just incremental, change. As you share your plans for your organization, compellingly demonstrate:

- The type of innovation you are pursuing. How are you bringing a new perspective or solution to this issue? How are you improving or building upon an existing model or introducing an existing model into a new context? Or how will your work reform a process, shift culture or perspectives, develop a program or product to achieve new social progress? Are you pursuing another form of innovation? Tell us about it.
- How your idea challenges assumptions and tests out new approaches
- Your awareness of others' work and how your idea is different as well as how you can contribute to a coalition of organizations trying to achieve similar lofty goals

Changing Systems

Social innovators know that big problems require audacious thinking, even when the solution is simple. Share how your proposed solution can directly impact many lives, shift a community's trajectory, or change a system and structures. High scores will include concrete answers that illustrate:

- How your idea addresses the root causes of racial disparities rather than symptoms
- How your approach addresses societal problems to yield a new, improved, and sustainable outcome
- The potential for your work to transform a system's characteristics, including ways that are explicit (e.g., policies, practices, or resource flows), semi-explicit (e.g., relationships and power dynamics), and/or implicit (e.g., mental models)
- Your understanding of the forms of power that influence the issue you are addressing
- How your work helps to build and shift power dynamics to close the gaps in racial disparities in culturally appropriate and inclusive ways

Racial Equity

Racial equity is an end-state that requires ongoing actions to build a world where all people have equal opportunity and resources to thrive. We want to know about your vision for a world where race does not correlate with the systemic limitation or denial of opportunities, access to resources, or the space to dream and build. Throughout your application, concretely show how:

- Your idea centers racial equity (you should include clear and identifiable examples of how this principle is core to your work)

- Your understanding of how systemic problems such as white supremacy, racism, and colonialism impact your work and your thinking about how you will help counteract these forces
- You bring an intersectional analysis of the challenge and how your solution accounts for multiple and compounded forms of oppression
- Your organization will be informed by the knowledge, visions, and leadership of people most impacted by structural racism.

[Read more](#) about Echoing Green's perspective on racial equity and how it informs investments in our Fellow community.

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For more guidance materials and information on the 2021 Fellowship application, please visit www.echoinggreen.org/apply