

Fellowship Selection Criteria

Echoing Green seeks to identify, support, connect and amplify a global, multiracial, and multicultural movement of visionary social innovators who meet the wicked challenges of our time. By transforming unjust systems, these innovators ensure that communities around the globe have every opportunity to thrive. Echoing Green's vision is grounded in the belief that transformational change will come through a movement of social innovators whose impact collectively is greater than the sum of their impact individually.

Our Approach: By focusing on leaders in the very earliest stage of their ideas, Echoing Green invests in and supports them at a critical moment with the greatest barriers to financial, social, and other forms of capital, and with the greatest risk of suppression by the status quo. In doing so, Echoing Green helps safeguard a deeply creative yet fundamentally fragile period for early-stage innovators and helps ensure a constant and steady flow of dynamic actors and ideas into society.

Selection Criteria: The following criteria outline the key qualities and characteristics that Echoing Green seeks in its Fellowship applicants. These criteria guide our evaluation process and help us identify social innovators who are poised to create transformative change in their communities and the world.

IDEA 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:

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 the system you are addressing
- The approach brings an intersectional analysis to societal problems and accounts for multiple and compounded forms of oppression to yield a new, improved, and sustainable outcome
- Your understanding of the forms of power that influence the issue you are addressing

Equity-Centered

Echoing Green looks for ideas that have an explicit and intentional focus on dismantling unjust systems and creating a future where communities around the world have an equitable opportunity to thrive. In assessing the applicant's idea please consider the following:

- The idea seeks to create a future where identity (race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, caste, tribe, etc.) does not dictate opportunity
- How your approach brings an intersectional analysis to societal problems and accounts for multiple and compounded forms of oppression to yield a new, improved, and sustainable outcome
- Combating systems of identity-based oppression is the primary motivation and objective of the work

Innovation

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

- How your idea improves or builds upon an existing model, introduces an existing model into a new context or another form of innovation
- How your idea challenges assumptions and tests out new approaches
- The applicant demonstrates an awareness of others' work and how their idea differs from previous solutions and can contribute to a movement building coalition of organizations trying to achieve similar goals

LEADER CRITERIA

As a social innovator, you are more than your business plan. We ask questions to learn about your leadership based on the following categories:

Purpose Alignment

Through your application responses, show why you hold deep conviction and passion for the issue you are committed to addressing. Echoing Green seeks out leaders who are dedicated to solving the problem, even if their organization's form shifts over time. In your responses, clearly and compellingly demonstrate:

- Why you choose to undertake and lead this work
- Why you're motivated to pursue addressing this issue long-term
- Why you feel compelled to address this issue at this particular moment in time

Relationship to and Expertise on the Issue

Social innovators who are closest to their communities possess the ideas and insights to affect the greatest change—your proximity is one of your most significant assets. In your answers, showcase:

- How you reflect the community you serve and bring deep knowledge of the issues into your work
- How you design solutions with and for your community and proactively involve those impacted by the issue in your strategy and decision making
- How your leadership will shift power to the people most impacted by the outcomes of your enterprise

Leadership Qualities

Showcase your ability to drive ideas forward, build support for your vision, and lead an organization toward its goals. Strong application responses will include concrete examples that demonstrate each of the following:

- Your ability to set a clear vision for a project or initiative and then drive it towards a specific goal
- Your skill at building coalitions or partnerships to further your mission or goals
- How you have gathered and mobilized resources or support toward a cause or mission

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For more guidance materials and information on the 2025 Fellowship application, please visit www.echoinggreen.org/apply.