



OPEN SOCIETY FELLOWSHIP CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Supporting Public Intellectuals in Seven Global Cities

**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Since 2008, the Open Society Fellowship has supported heterodox thinkers and practitioners from around the world. This year's fellows will be selected exclusively from seven cities—chosen because they are home to a dynamic circle of public intellectuals and cultural producers engaged in high-level critical debate. The fellowship will help elevate new voices to take part in global conversations on the most pressing issues of our time – from human rights and social justice to climate change and inequality—and provide established public intellectuals new audiences for their work.

Four fellowships will be granted in each of the seven cities, for a total of 28 fellowships. Selection is highly competitive. **The deadline for applications is January 15, 2025.**

The Seven Cities:

- Beirut, Lebanon
- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania
- Jakarta, Indonesia
- Lagos, Nigeria
- Taipei, Taiwan

ABOUT THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

The Open Society Foundations, founded by George Soros, are the world's largest private funder of independent groups working for justice, democratic governance, and human rights. We work to build vibrant, tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their people. The Open Society Foundations operates independently of any private business or the United States government; we receive no government support.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

Fellows may be academics, journalists, documentarians, think-tank experts, playwrights, poets, architects, urban planners, novelists, visual artists, cultural empresarios, or practitioners in other fields. They are original and contrarian intellects, working on fundamental open-society concerns—such as justice, equality, rights, climate—but beyond the bounds of current thinking. Their projects will help us see the world in more complex ways. Successful applicants will be deeply rooted in the local political, economic, and cultural milieu, but also conversant with issues of the region and the planet.

As critical thinkers, they are not focused on advocacy or policy change per se. And, though they will not work in tandem on a specific theme, all fellows will be linked by their mistrust of received ideas, as well as by their aptitude for debate and contestation at a high level of originality and sophistication.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Fellows will be selected based on three main criteria:

- **Engagement:** Successful applicants are already contributing meaningfully and critically to intellectual debates in a multitude of ways -- writing for journals or other media, hosting podcasts, authoring plays, organizing public events or lectures, etc.
- **Mutuality:** In a broad sense, fellows will share the interests of the Open Society Foundations—regarding rights, justice, and equality—even if they may differ on matters of strategy, tactics, or even high principle.
- **Trajectory:** Applicants should possess the drive and the potential to break through to new audiences; with support from this program, they will gain many of the resources they need to do so.

FELLOWSHIP PROJECT TOPICS AND OUTPUTS

Applicants can propose a project on any topic of interest to them, within the parameters listed above. A typical fellowship output might be a book manuscript, a collection of essays, a series of convenings or podcasts, an art exhibition or the staging of a play, or something else altogether.

EXPECTATIONS

Fellowship applicants will propose a project of ambition and originality and will be expected to complete or make significant progress on that project during their fellowship term. They may undertake travel, with financial support from the fellowship, to advance their project. In addition, they will be expected to attend two fellowship gatherings per year (with expenses covered by the program) and interact in other ways with fellows, Open Society staff, and outside experts.

SUPPORT

Fellows will receive a living stipend for one year of \$100,000, as well as up to \$20,000 for project expenses, for full-time work on their fellowship. In addition, they will be supported to attend fellowship-related events.

The term of the fellowship is one year, but fellows are allowed to request an extension, without further compensation, for up to an additional year.

APPLICATION

The fellowship application requires a cover letter; a CV; a three-page project description; and a draft project budget.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is fluency in English required? Since the business of the fellowship will be conducted primarily in English, all applicants should possess at least conversational English.

I'm already at work on a major project (book, documentary film, etc.). Am I eligible to apply? Absolutely. Your proposal should consider how fellowship support will enable you to expand the reach and ambition of your current project.

Does the fellowship support study at an institution of higher education? No.

I am a full-time student. Am I eligible to apply? As stated above, the fellowship does not support educational expenses. Applicants in this category would have to make the case that they would be able to carry out an ambitious fellowship project in addition to their educational obligations.

Is residency in one of the seven specific cities required? Applicants should reside or work in one of the specific cities or be absent temporarily (six months or less) from the city.

I live outside the official boundaries of my city. Am I eligible to apply? Applicants who live in or work in the city are eligible. Generally, the fellowship considers anyone within the Metropolitan Area of the city—which includes some outlying areas—to be eligible. Applications from those absent from their city for six months or less will also be accepted.

Should my proposal be about my city? No, the project does not have to be about the city itself.

Are joint applications accepted? No

Are government employees allowed to apply? No. Exceptions may be made in the case of government workers who are able to take a leave of absence.

Are part-time fellowships permitted? Generally, the fellowship supports full-time work. Some exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

What can my project budget include? The project budget is for additional expenses beyond a living stipend. The budget may include travel to conferences, conference fees and hotel, travel for research, health insurance, etc.—reasonable costs necessary for you to do your work. Budget figures may be estimates.

Can the project budget be used to cover the costs of an organization I work with? No.

Is the fellowship stipend taxable? In most jurisdictions, it is. Applicants with questions about the tax implications of the fellowship are encouraged to seek expert advice before applying.

Who selects the fellows? Fellows will be chosen by a global panel of distinguished public intellectuals.

DEADLINES AND TIMETABLE

- Fellowship applications must be received no later than 5PM New York time on **Wednesday, 15 January, 2025.**
- Applicants will be notified about whether they have received the fellowship by **Wednesday, 5 March, 2025.**

CONTACT INFORMATION

All requests for additional information must be directed to:
SCFLagos@opensocietyfoundations.org





COVER PHOTO: People gather in a bookstore in Buenos Aires, Argentina. © Diego Levy/Agence VU/Redux

PAGE 6 PHOTO: A group of people converse in a courtyard in Johannesburg, South Africa. © Janina Zsche/Oneworld Picture/Getty

BACK COVER PHOTO: People debate political and economic issues in Tripoli, Lebanon. © Ibrahim Shalhoub/AFP/Getty