



BPDA Community Engagement Fellowship

HOST SITE PROJECT DESCRIPTION, CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

BPDA is excited to announce a pilot project entitled *BPDA Community Engagement Fellowship* designed to expand community engagement experiences for Black undergraduate and graduate HBCU students and to expose them to racial equity issues in the legal system, with a focus on community-oriented defense work. This project's essential purpose is to advance broader systemic change towards ending racial disparities and mass incarceration.

BPDA will choose four public defender offices that will serve as host sites for the fellowship. This initiative will be integrated into BPDA's existing law student fellowship program for aspiring defenders, with the same stated goal: *preparing the next generation of racial equity advocates*.

BPDA welcomes projects that are innovative, forward-thinking, and outside the box of previous endeavors in the public defense sphere. While offices can expand on projects that are already in place, the use of the Fellow should involve further development with the introduction of fresh methods and ideas—in terms of both the overall goal of the project and the host site's previous project objectives. It is essential that projects have relevance to community engagement, and are designed in a way that encourages Fellows to be prepared to interact with community organizations and the public defender offices to meet the desired goals.



CRITERIA

With these ideals in mind, the basic criteria for the project selected by the Host Sites are:

- A. the significance of identified proposed project, including the importance and originality of the project;
- B. the relevance of the project to the BPDA stated goal of exposing Black undergraduate students to racial equity issues in the legal system with a focus on community-oriented defense work;
- C. the relevance of the project in advancing the broader systemic change towards ending racial disparities and mass incarceration;
- D. the relevance of the project in preparing the next generation of racial equity advocates;
- E. the relevance of the project to building a pipeline of Black public defenders, paralegals, social workers, mitigation specialists, investigators, and client advocates;
- F. the relevance of the project to the programmatic work of BPDA;
- G. the quality of the proposal in definition, organization, clarity, and scope; Clear description of what the fellows will learn from your project and why it is important; and
- H. The proposal should convince BPDA that there is something genuinely to be gained by having a Fellow work on this project and that the project will advance the goal of building racial equity advocates.



THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

It is essential to make your project clear to BPDA and to explain its broader implications. The following elements should be addressed in the proposal:

1. A detailed description of the project and its importance;
2. the originality of the proposed project (explain what makes the project distinctive);
3. the basic idea and proposed timeline for completion of the project;
4. the activities you will undertake to assist the fellow in completing the project and an outline of the fellow's role;
5. the present status of your proposed project if it is already in process, including how much has already been done to advance the proposal, and what you would hope to further accomplish with the assistance of a Fellow;
6. the resources already in play at the Host Site to devote to the project;
7. an explanation of why you chose BPDA for your project;
8. the relevance of the project to racial equity advancement and community engagement;
9. the relevance of the project to the mission of BPDA; and
10. a description of the ideal student that the Host Site desires.

FELLOWSHIP SELECTION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Potential host sites will complete and submit a project for BPDA review. Based on the applications received, four (4) BPDA host sites will be selected. BPDA will then assist in recruiting eligible students from HBCU programs for the fellowships. Host sites are also asked to recruit through their networks.

After initial screening by BPDA staff to ensure basic application requirements are met, fellows will be matched with offices based on their interest in the specific host site project. Each host site will then be given the opportunity to interview the students who have indicated an interest in their site project and select a fellow to work in its office.



BPDA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FELLOWSHIP TIMELINE

Monday, January 10	Application opens to Public Defender Offices
Friday, February 11	Host Site Applications due by 5:00 p.m. ET
Monday, February 28	BPDA will inform the offices chosen
Monday, March 7	BPDA will announce the sites chosen to its Membership, networks and other national organizations via all communication platforms.
Monday, March 7	BPDA to launch student application
Friday, April 8	Student applications due to BPDA
Friday, April 15	BPDA to send list of candidates to host site
Friday, April 29	Deadline for host site to choose Fellow. The host site commits to deciding on their candidate by this date to ensure students are informed in a timely manner.
Monday, May 2	Students to be informed and announced



HOST SITE AND FELLOW REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Host Sites and Fellows agree to the following upon selection:

The Host Site has at least 2 individuals that are Section Members of BPDA and in good standing (current on dues and any associated membership standards).

The Chief Defender of the Host Site and anticipated fellowship supervisor(s) agree to be interviewed by BPDA staff as a part of the application consideration process.

The organization will review and adhere to the Award Recipient Expectations detailed in this application.

Upon selection, the organization and the Fellow agree to sign an Agreement Letter outlining the agreed upon terms of the fellowship.

The Host organization agrees that the Fellows will be supported by a structured program, which will include identification of a Host Site Supervisor, office orientation, and weekly check-ins.

Upon arrival at the host site, and after initial orientation and project training, the Fellow will fill a specific capacity-building role. Additional Agreement documentation will include exact descriptions of the roles, goals, and outcomes that each Fellow is expected to achieve by the end of their summer of service. In order to successfully host a fellow, your organization must understand the Fellow's responsibilities and be in a position to support the Fellow in fulfilling them.

The BPDA Fellow will initiate their summer of service by verifying a capacity/project outline that has been completed by the site supervisor. Using feedback from the site supervisor and staff they will then identify strategic opportunities to build greater strength and capacity within that outline.

Once the BPDA Fellow has familiarized themselves with the goals and outline of the host site's needs, they will work with the site supervisor to create a site-specific project timeline on how they will work to accomplish the stated goal.

Over the course of their summer of service, the Fellow, the site supervisor, and BPDA staff will refer to this outline/ timeline for guidance and to measure progress.

The Fellow will also be allowed to work on the creation of manuals, training events, and guides for site staff to encourage adoption and maintenance of the work completed and to ensure that the progress made is sustained and built upon by the site after the summer of service is completed.



The BPDA Fellow will track their activities through an activity log. This log will include information such as progress towards goal completion, next steps, referrals, training suggested/provided, partners identified or secured, problem identification, solutions mapping, progress, and new systems processes, or enhancements put into place.

The BPDA Fellow will act as a short-term capacity and system builder at their site and will not engage in direct service to clients or community members as a primary or significant part of their role.

The Fellow and site supervisor will work to coordinate agreed upon weekly schedules that will allow for the project goals to be achieved.

The Fellow and Host Site agree to complete any requested evaluations throughout the summer and participate in evaluations, surveys and reviews conducted by BPDA throughout the program and beyond.

During the Summer of service, BPDA will virtually engage site supervisors. Within reason, participation in these ongoing events is mandatory.

Site supervisors will participate in monthly virtual discussions to ensure that the Fellow is on task and working within the goals of the fellowship. Supervisors will be expected to accommodate check-ins as much as possible.

Site supervisors will review brief monthly performance reports completed by the Fellow before submission as well as an end of the summer report to BPDA.

Site supervisors will also be responsible for submitting completed pre/post-fellowship evaluations to BPDA in a timely manner.



BPDA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FELLOWSHIP HOST SITE QUESTIONS

1. Name of Public Defender Office/Organization Name
2. Office/Organization Address
3. Name of Chief Defender/Executive Leader
4. Chief Defender/Executive Leader Email
5. Chief Defender/Executive Leader Phone
6. Office Organization Contact Person Name and Title
7. Office Organization Contact Person Email
8. Office Organization Contact Person Phone
9. Fellow's supervisor name and contact information if different from the Office/Organization contact
10. Number of staff in office
11. Number of identified BIPOC in the office
12. What are your office hours?
13. Please describe the project, challenge, or role that you would like the fellow to take on during their summer of service. Your description should include activities, resources needed or developed, measurable outcomes, and should define what success will look like at the end of the summer.
14. Please describe how executing the project(s) noted above will allow your organization to meet the goals of the BPDA fellowship, specifically, how your project will encourage community engagement and holistically support communities in need.
15. Please describe how your organization is currently structured to support the growth and the development of the fellow. For example, please describe how fellows or interns already in the office are supervised and what systems the office has in place to support them and evaluate their performance.
16. Please describe how your site will continue to develop the pipeline of Black defenders post the completion of the program.

This project is designed to help Public Defender offices who recognize the importance of community engagement as a means of exposing Black undergraduate and graduate students to racial inequity within the legal system.

17. Please share the ways in which your office currently engages with the community to provide holistic defense, the roadblocks that have prevented effective community engagement.



BPDA understands that supporting clients through the Community Engagement Project can have wide-reaching positive outcomes for clients and communities.

18. Maintaining your client's confidentiality, please anonymously share any positive client story from your organization detailing how community engagement supported an expected or unexpected positive result.

If your site is chosen, the site supervisor will be required to participate in (at least) a weekly in-person check-in with a fellow.

19. How will you ensure that the site supervisor will be able to add this responsibility to their workload?

20. What other staff members (if any) will provide supervisory support to the BPDA fellow? Please include names, titles, and email addresses.

21. Please submit a fellow orientation plan or schedule that includes, but is not limited to, activities such as court watching and debrief, staff introductions, key partner introductions, and community history/context.

22. Please describe your ongoing supervision plan for (at least) weekly in-person check-ins with any Fellow and any other supervisory support that fellows will receive.

23. Please describe any existing community partnerships that will help your fellow with the proposed project.

Each Fellow and site will leverage the power of community engagement to achieve long-term and sustainable change. Therefore, it is critical that host organizations support the fellows in all projects in order to achieve our ambitious yet realistic goals.

24. How will your organization determine which candidate has the right hard and soft skills needed for the role and who will be a good fit for your organization?

25. What is your organization's process for screening and selecting position candidates?

26. How will your organization ensure that any fellow recruited is equipped to succeed throughout their summer of service?

For more information about the fellowship, please contact us and place in the subject matter line **“BPDA Community Engagement Fellowship”**

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