

Spatial Futures Fellows (SFF) Informational Webinar Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Q: Do I need to be a full-time staff member of an organization to qualify?

A: No, We recognize that housing and land justice work is often carried out through grassroots organizations that do not have paid staff. Applicants should be affiliated with an organization that is actively participating in this work, but this can be through a volunteer or membership role. We also encourage applications from students, government employees, artists, and/or thought leaders who are not employed by institutions or organizations. Our primary concern is that applicants are able to commit to the full 5 hours per month expected for the fellowship.

Q: Is this opportunity open to people who are not in the United States or are nationals from other countries?

A: At this time, the fellowship is open to people who are located in the United States. Fellows must have a social security number and be authorized to work in the US. Please contact us with any questions about individual circumstances or additional context we should consider.

Q: Does my work or my project have to be directly related to housing justice advocacy in order to be considered?

A: Priority will be given to applicants whose work relates directly to housing and land issues. However, we understand housing and land justice to be intersectional issues. As such, we are open to applications that work in other areas, as long as the applicant's work has clear implications for reparative spatial justice.

Q: Do you have any priority for certain geographic locations in the United States?

A: We welcome applicants from all across the country, including Hawai'i and US territories.

Q: Can fellows apply in teams?

A: Although we are not accepting team applicants, the program will encourage and facilitate sharing back materials and resources with their teams and colleagues, and we anticipate that applicants will be working with other folks outside the fellowship to advance their projects.

Application Process

Q: How will the application evaluation and selection process be carried out? Will the process include interviews?

A: Fellows will be selected by the PolicyLink housing team, with input from the Spatial Futures Fellows Advisory Committee and other PolicyLink staff. Applications will be reviewed based on their alignment with PolicyLink's values and mission, implications for reparative spatial justice, demonstration of the applicant's commitment to community and housing/land justice, and the potential for applicants to contribute to and learn from the cohort.

Q: Are letters of recommendation recommended? If so, should they be attached with the resume?

A: We are not accepting letters of recommendation.

Q: Can we get *feedback on our application* before or after submission?

A: Given the anticipated number of applicants, we will not be able to give individual feedback on applications. However, if fellows have remaining questions about the application, please email our team at housing-team@policylink.org.

Scope

Q: Are fellows required to develop a project or campaign?

A: The application does not require a new project or campaign proposal, although we do expect candidates to be actively working on projects and issue areas that seek to reckon with, repair, and transform the impacts of spatial inequities and injustices in their communities through housing and land justice. This fellowship is meant to inform and enrich the work that fellows are already doing in their communities. We are open to projects at various stages of development.

Q: What kinds of projects or campaigns would be a good fit for this cohort?

A: We are interested in developing a cohort that is working to pursue reparative spatial justice through a wide range of strategies at multiple scales. We are open to everything from arts and narrative projects, to community-based research, to targeted policy campaigns, to community land-stewardship, so long as they can contribute to a body of knowledge and evidence around how communities can advance reparative justice in housing and land. We also understand that housing justice intersects with multiple issue areas, from land stewardship to food sovereignty to education, so we encourage fellows to craft an application that makes a strong case for how and why their work advances spatial reparative justice.

Q: Can housing projects involve individuals who are not US citizens or authorized to work in the US, such as undocumented individuals?

A: We encourage people to apply with a variety of diverse projects related to housing and land justice that are important to them and their community, regardless of their immigration status.

Q: *What, if any, deliverables are Fellows responsible for?*

A: While the fellowship does not mandate specific deliverables, there is an expectation for active engagement and periodic reporting on the advancement of each fellow's project or initiative. The aim is to allow fellows the flexibility to harness the fellowship's resources—ranging from planning and strategy tools to mentorship—in a manner that is most aligned with their individual objectives. This iterative process of sharing progress and insights will enrich the collective understanding of reparative spatial justice, thereby enabling PolicyLink's housing team to bolster advocacy and influence policy in a more effective and targeted manner.

Time Commitment:

Q: What is the time commitment for fellows?

A: Fellows will be expected to commit roughly 5 hours per month for this fellowship. This includes: 2.5 hour monthly cohort meetings, 1 hour mentoring sessions, and an additional 1.5 hours of prep, including shared readings or peer presentations. Fellows will also meet for an in-person convening in June 2024. Fellows may choose to put more time into the fellowship, including additional readings and connecting with other fellows. Fellows are expected to otherwise be working on advancing their projects in between monthly sessions and the convenings in the regular course of their work.

Q: When will the monthly meetings be held?

A: Monthly cohort meetings will be held (tentatively) on the third Wednesday of each month at 8 am HST/ 11 am PST/ 1 pm CST/ 2 pm EST. Monthly mentoring meetings can be scheduled independently by the fellow and their advisor.

In-Person Convening

Q: Is participation in the in-person convening a requirement?

A: Relationship-building among our small but mighty cohort is a priority for the SFF program, so preference will be given to candidates who can commit to being a part of the in-person convening in June. However, we will consider all fellows' individual circumstances and ensure that accommodations are made to allow all accepted fellows to participate in the convening, including hybrid and remote options as necessary.

Q: Will Covid protocols be in place at the in-person event?

A: The Covid-19 protocols for the in-person convening will be determined in accordance with the prevailing Covid-19 conditions at the time and location of the event. Regardless of the specific protocols in place, masks, hand sanitizer, and tests will be made available to all attendees for added precaution, and we will consider each fellow's specific needs in order to be able to attend the event, including hybrid and remote options as necessary.

Q: Where will the in-person convening be held?

A: The in-person convening will be in June 2024, however the exact date and location have not yet been confirmed.

Q: Will the travel costs for the in-person convening be covered by the fellowship?

A: Yes, travel costs for the in-person convening would be covered by PolicyLink (separate from the stipend).

Stipend

Q: How will the stipend be disbursed?

A: To be determined, we are still working out the details and process with the PolicyLink finance team. It will likely be disbursed in one or two payments. We will know by the time we accept fellows.

Q: Does the stipend go directly to fellows, or can it be shared with their organization?

A: PolicyLink has traditionally been able to pay fellowship stipends both to individuals and to organizations.

Q: Are there guidelines or limitations for how fellows can spend their stipend?

A: Stipend funds are taxable income that is unrestricted. In other words, fellows can use these funds to support themselves and their work in whatever ways are most helpful for themselves and/or their organization.

Advisory Committee

Q: Can you tell us more about the panel of experts and coaches?

A: The Advisory Committee members have been carefully selected to represent a spectrum of expertise, including but not limited to reparative justice, reparations, land equity, and housing justice. Advisory committee members represent diverse geographies and professional fields. This diverse skill set ensures that fellows are guided by the most informed perspectives, whether they are drafting policy proposals, undertaking community-based research, or engaging in public advocacy.

Q: How will fellows and advisors be matched?

A: Matches will be made according to the needs of fellows and their projects, as well as alignment and shared interests between fellows and advisors.

Other Questions

Q: What are PolicyLink’s plans to share the success/learning from Spatial Fellows projects?

A: PolicyLink aims to serve as a policy hub and amplifier for the movement for reparative spatial justice—exposing the entrenched racial inequities in this country’s existing land use and housing policies, and generating recommendations and resources to support systemic change. We aim to amplify and support the work of the cohort, as well as maintain a comprehensive list of policies and projects for reparative spatial justice. We hope to release a publication elevating these ideas in order to launch a national policy conversation about housing, land use, and our collective relationship to space itself.

Q: Imagine it’s the end of the fellowship next year, what are examples of successful outcomes that you would want to see from the work that the cohort does?

A: By the end of the fellowship, successful outcomes would include fellows deepening their understanding of spatial and reparative justice, and how these concepts intersect with housing, land justice, and broader community well-being . We aim for fellows to build cross-sectoral alliances and expand their professional networks—employing these relationships to advance equitable frameworks and innovative solutions in their respective fields. Additionally, we hope to see that the implementation of initiatives and projects advance reparative justice in housing and land use within the fellows' own communities and organizations.