



The Urban and Regional Policy Fellowship Pre-application Instructions 2015

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is pleased to grant a number of travel fellowships each year through its Urban and Regional Policy program, which focuses on the policy issues and challenges common to metropolitan regions and communities in the United States and Europe.

Urban and Regional Policy Fellowships provide opportunities for practitioners and policy-makers working on economic, environmental, and social challenges at the urban and regional levels to meet with their counterparts across the Atlantic and examine policies that have been successfully implemented to address similar needs. Fellowships will introduce policy leaders to innovative strategies and equip them with the information, tools, and connections necessary to implement them. Fellows travel for short-term (3-5 weeks) research periods, with the goal of returning to their work equipped with the ideas and insights necessary to effect significant and lasting change in their own communities.

Major funding for the fellowship program is provided by Compagnia di San Paolo and Bank of America.

Program Purpose and Focus

Cities and regions in the United States and Europe grapple with similar economic, environmental, and social challenges. Many of these challenges are tackled at local and regional government levels. Yet, there are limited opportunities for city and civic leaders to meet their counterparts in other countries to observe new approaches to persistent challenges and to develop best practices. The Urban and Regional Policy Fellowships provide practitioners and policymakers at the state and local levels the opportunity to conduct site visits, research, and interviews in cities throughout the United States and Europe in order to gather the information and perspective that will allow the fellows to adapt innovative strategies to their own communities.

Who Should Apply

GMF welcomes applications from mid-career professionals with an interest in gaining an understanding of how similar urban and regional challenges are approached in a policy context other than their own and an ability to translate lessons learned into policy action.

First, applicants must be policymakers or practitioners in state or local government, leaders from the private sector, or representatives of non-profit and policy organizations and have at least seven years of experience in their field. Though this fellowship is not intended for academic research, researchers with ongoing opportunities to influence local public policy may apply. Academic researchers should contact GMF staff prior to the completion of their application.

Second, applicants must have English language and writing skills. European applicants concerned about their English language ability should contact GMF staff regarding possible submission of supplemental materials.

Third, research topics must observe and explore innovative solutions in at least one of the following research themes. Pre-applications must explicitly explain how their research topic directly relates to one of these five themes and how this research will help to advance a key issue in the applicant's home community.

Core Topics

Inclusive Cities

In today's globalizing world, it is critical for cities today to advance integrated planning and public policy solutions that promote inclusion and social cohesion. Research topics under this theme explore a broad range of social, political, and economic inclusion practices. This could include the active inclusion of citizens in political life and public affairs through civic engagement strategies; efforts to advance equitable access to public goods and services such as education; physical development of city spaces that break down spatial isolation; or workforce development initiatives that target the disadvantaged.

Urban Energy, Waste, and Water

U.S. and European cities are increasingly setting their sights on enabling low-carbon futures and systems to increase the efficiency of local resources and adapt to climate change. While part of this movement reflects the desire to use less polluting and more resilient systems, it also reflects an understanding of the potential local economic development opportunities. In addition, some cities are thinking big; rethinking local governance structures and financing sources to spur new forms of resources, experimentation, and collaboration. Research topics under this theme focus on how cities employ holistic and integrated approaches to increase the sustainability of local infrastructure systems, including energy, waste, and water.

Models of Collaboration:

Cities are at the forefront of what experts are calling [21st century network societies](#), where collaboration and idea sharing among organizations is at the heart of a diverse and vibrant economy. Urban and regional areas that have tapped into innovative techniques for economic growth and diversity have created thriving networks of collaboration, or "ecosystems" within their regions. Research topics under this theme focus on innovative practices for collaboration, finance, and partnership across urban policy areas.

Special Topics for 2015-2016

Security and Smart Cities

Research topics in this theme explore how innovative technologies and concepts can be utilized on local and regional levels to address complex urban security issues, such as crisis management or the protection of critical infrastructure and public spaces. In light of recent events in cities across Europe and the United States, research topics under this theme are encouraged to explore creative engagement between citizens and authorities, growing privacy concerns in the collection of data, or the policy implications behind evolving security strategies.

Creative Placemaking

In both U.S. and European cities, creative placemaking has surfaced as a tool to improve a city's livability, vibrancy and economic diversity. Through a deliberative process to leverage existing creative assets, creative placemaking can foster strong community connections, support an entrepreneurial economy, and enliven public spaces. With innovative practices on both sides of the Atlantic, research topics under this theme should break new ground in exploring strategies for connecting creative placemaking to activities that advance civic engagement and active inclusion.

Program Requirements

The goal of the Urban and Regional Policy Fellowship Program is to allow fellows to expand their professional expertise, networks, and ability to effectively solve local challenges through a focused transatlantic learning experience.

Travel grants are available for individuals seeking new approaches and solutions to a concrete policy challenge in their home communities. Over three to five weeks, these fellows visit a maximum of two to three cities for a series of site visits, interviews, and other research meetings. Given the limited timeframe, we strongly encourage potential short-term travel grant candidates to select their research cities carefully to ensure an effective use of the fellowship period. Each application should present a persuasive justification for the choice of research cities. Where possible, GMF staff will work closely with each fellow prior to the start of the fellowship to provide assistance in making contacts and arranging logistics, but the responsibility for developing the fellowship itinerary ultimately rests with each fellow. GMF awards up to \$8,000 for short-term fellowships. With proper reasoning, fellows can divide their fellowship travel into two noncontiguous travel periods, but GMF cannot provide any additional funding for extra travel.

Fellowship funds cover the costs incurred or directly related to carrying out the project and should be used for travel, lodging, meals and incidentals (including internet access, phone, research materials, and transportation). A detailed report to GMF on fellowship activities and financial expenditures is required at the end of the fellowship experience. Any unspent funds in excess of 10% of the budget will be returned to GMF with the final reports. Alternatively, fellows may request in writing that the excess funds be used to fund additional travel and research expenses that will further the fellow's research project.

GMF requires fellows to complete a "Centerpiece Product" as the final fellowship outcome, including (but not limited to) a policy brief that highlights the most significant lessons of their research, a series of journalistic articles, and/or multimedia project. They will also be asked to disseminate their findings through oral and visual presentations (to be posted on GMF's website) to the broad policy community and in their home communities. GMF also encourages fellows to publish their findings in a journal of their field. Fellows should want, and be prepared, to interact with others working in their respective field.

In addition to a centerpiece product and the dissemination of findings, GMF has rigorous expectations for all fellows, including:

- Significant pre-trip scheduling and logistics. GMF will assist where possible, but the primary burden falls with the fellows. Upon selection, fellows will have to develop a detailed work plan.
- Regular correspondence with GMF staff before, during, and after fellowship travel.
- Weekly blogs that may be published on GMF's blog and a written debrief of selected case studies.
- Additional written or oral products as requested by GMF staff including brief news articles, participation in GMF events, and/or presentation of research at GMF headquarters in Washington, DC or in other relevant conferences and events.

Fellows will also have the opportunity to connect to a growing alumni network that includes practitioners from across Europe and the United States. These past fellows can provide further first-hand guidance on the nuances and opportunities of transatlantic learning. Additionally, fellows make take advantage of GMF's larger networks across U.S. and European cities.

Selection Criteria

Fellowships will be awarded through a competitive application process that will include a thorough review by the Urban and Regional Policy program's staff and Advisory Committee. Finalists will be required to participate in at least one interview with members of the committee prior to the awarding of fellowships.

Provided that applicants meet fellowship requirements, GMF will judge applicants on their ability to argue that the proposed project meets the following criteria:

- The research question addresses a concrete, timely public policy problem or obstacle in the applicant's home community that strongly aligns with at least one five required fellowship themes;
- The proposed case studies can provide original insights on the research question than other potential sources of information;
- The proposed methodology is feasible and coherent;
- Based on the depth of professional experience and strength of professional network, the applicant has strong potential to successfully complete the fellowship and disseminate his or her findings;
- Additionally, the Advisory Committee members will consider the proposal's alignment with the Urban and Regional Policy Program's initiatives and the geographic and thematic diversity of the candidates and their projects in making the final determination.

Application Instructions

Applicants must apply through an online application process. To submit the application, applicants must submit a curriculum vitae providing a summary of academic and professional history and achievements as well as a cover letter (up to 1,000 words) that describes:

- (a) the policy question that they are attempting to answer through the fellowship,
- (b) how this policy question directly addresses one of the five fellowship themes (see above);
- (c) how they would attempt to answer the question within the fellowship format, including a short description of potential research locations ; and
- (d) the potential local policy significance of their research.

Pre-applications for 2014 will open on February 27, 2015 and close on April 15, 2015. Applications will be judged using selection criteria (see above). If successful, **GMF will invite applicants to submit a full application** on or before May 1, 2015, with final selection by July 10, 2015. Generally, GMF expects fellows to begin their travel between September and December 2015. Fellowship travel must be completed by May 2016.

To apply, please click [here](#). For further questions about the fellowship, see our FAQ or contact Bartek Starodaj, program coordinator: bstarodaj@gmfus.org.
