

HIV PREVENTION RESEARCH ADVOCACY FELLOWSHIP

Frequently Asked Questions July 2009



This question and answer document supplements the Application Guidelines that are available at www.avac.org/Fellows.htm and www.global-campaign.org/Fellows.htm. Here, you will find a synopsis of the questions that appear in the guidelines that we have received by email and in-person from potential applicants, and that were discussed on an informational conference call on June 18. A recording of that call is available at the websites listed above.

We encourage all potential applicants to read through the application guidelines closely and complete the application carefully. If you have any additional questions, please contact us at: fellows@avac.org

Q: What is the HIV Prevention Research Advocacy Fellowship?

A: The HIV Prevention Research Advocacy Fellowship provides support to emerging and midcareer advocates to implement projects related to biomedical HIV prevention research activities in their countries and communities. 2009-2010 Fellows will be housed at local host organisations that they identify. The Fellowship is a joint project of the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC) and the Global Campaign for Microbicides (GCM).

Q: What is the goal of the HIV Prevention Research Advocacy Fellowship?

A: The overall goal of the Fellowship is to expand the capacity of civil society advocates and organizations to monitor, support, and help shape biomedical HIV prevention research worldwide. The Fellowship is guided by the belief that effective, sustainable advocacy grows out of work that reflects organizational and individual interests and priorities.

Q: What is biomedical HIV prevention research?

A: Biomedical HIV prevention research is the search for specific types of new HIV prevention strategies. These experimental strategies include microbicides, vaccines, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). For the purpose of this Fellowship, biomedical prevention research also includes medical male circumcision for HIV prevention, a newer strategy in the early stages of implementation.

Q: Who can apply to be a Fellow?

A: The HIV Prevention Research Advocacy Fellowship seeks applicants who are: emerging or midcareer community leaders and advocates; individuals with some experience or education in the areas of HIV and AIDS, public health, medicine, international development, women's rights, communications, or advocacy; individuals based in developing countries where biomedical HIV prevention clinical research is planned or ongoing or male circumcision for HIV prevention is being introduced.

Q: Who is not eligible to be a Fellow?

A: Founders or leaders of proposed host organisations; students who intend the Fellowship to support work toward a thesis, dissertation, or academic degree; and researchers or senior staff members such as leaders of AIDS service or community organisations are not eligible for the Fellowship.

Q: Under what circumstances can applicants who are researchers or senior staff members be considered?

A: The circumstances for considering applicants who are researchers or senior staff members depend very much on the applicant's project. Such a Fellow would need to take a leave of absence from day-to-day job responsibilities; and have a project that is specifically advocacy oriented—distinct from a specific trial or trial related activity.

Q: Can someone propose more than one project?

A: The application questions provide an opportunity for applicants to articulate their interests in more than one topic. However, we will only consider one application per person.

Q: What is the role of the host organisation?

A: The host organisation is an integral partner in each Fellowship. Fellows will work with the host organisation to share and develop joint goals, roles and responsibilities. Each host organization will assign a supervisor to the Fellow and will clearly define its expectations of the Fellow in the work plan.

Q: What types of groups can be host organisations?

A: Host organisations must: be established non-governmental, civil society, faith-based, or community-based organisations or research/academic institutions with documented experience in HIV and AIDS, preferably HIV prevention research; and meet all financial eligibility criteria including documentation of organisation's legal designation, a copy of the most recent audited financial statements, an organisational chart and additional information on finance and accounting systems.

Q: Do I have to associate with a host organization to qualify for the funding?

A: Yes, each Fellow has to associate with a host organization. Fellows will work with the host organisation to share and develop joint goals, roles and responsibilities. Please see page 6 in the application materials for details.

Q: Does the host organization have to associate with AVAC/GCM, and what if the organization is not associated to AVAC/GCM?

A: The host organization does not need a prior association with AVAC/GCM. However, the host organization has to be committed to supporting the Fellow and collaborating with AVAC/GCM as described in the application packet.

Q: Most organizations with documented experience in HIV and AIDS are government-run. Can you help us identify NGOs that meet your criteria?

A: In this round of Fellowships, applicants need to identify their own host organization. If you are unable to and still want to apply, your application may be considered for the 2010-11 cycle. However, familiarity with local context is a criteria for successful applications, so independent research into activities of relevant organisations on the part of the applicant is advised.

Q: What compensation is given to the host organisation for hosting a Fellow?

A: Basic compensation will be provided to the host organisation to cover costs associated with hosting a Fellow.

Q: How are Fellows and host organisations paid?

A: The stipend for the work plan development phase is paid directly to the Fellows. Financial support for project execution is paid through the host organisation.

Q: How much is the Fellows stipend?

A: Both the stipend for work plan development (up to 40 hours over 1-2 months) and for full time program implementation (over 12 months) will be determined by comparable full time salaries for emerging and midcareer advocates/local NGO staff in the country where the Fellowship is taking place.

Q: What's the budget for the entire program?

A: Each Fellow's budget for implementation activities is determined by the work plan he or she develops. The stipend for work plan development (up to 40 hours over 1-2 months) and for full time program implementation (over 12 months) will be determined by comparable full time salaries for emerging and midcareer advocates/local NGO staff in the country where the Fellowship is taking place.

Q: What's your advice about institutions that are not willing to release their financial information?

A: A recent audit or comparable document, such as a financial review from an independent source such as a donor, is required, as is the other financial information detailed in the packet. If organisations do not wish to turn over these documents to a potential Fellow, they may submit the materials directly to AVAC/GCM under separate cover. Applications from host organisations that will not provide this information will not be considered.

Q: Are government agencies eligible as host organisations?

A: No.

Q: Must Fellows live in the same place as the host organisation?

A: Yes - or have a plan that explains how time will be divided between host organisation and field activities. The host organisation is an integral collaborator and this partnership is best achieved if the Fellow is based there for their activities.

Q: If I'm already involved in HIV/AIDS work, can I use that as my Fellowship project?

A: No. The Fellowship support cannot be applied to continuation of existing work/fulfillment of current job responsibilities. We will be looking for innovative year-long projects with specific goals and outputs. However Fellows' previous work experience will certainly inform their projects and those who have been employed at their host organisations may develop schedules that both protect their Fellowship time and allow them to fulfill some basic tasks at the organisation.

Q: Can I write a project on trials that were prematurely forced to stop in order to find out what the problems were and to address the issues raised?

A: This type of work could form the basis of a project. With retrospective analyses, applicants should answer and the review committee will consider the following questions:

- How much time has passed between the trial closure and the research?
- What are the opportunities and activities for advocacy and results dissemination?
- Is there planned or ongoing research in that country?

Q: Can I to have two different supervisors from two different organizations?

A: No. Applicants can identify a range of collaborators for executing their projects. However the Fellowship provides support for a single host organisation and supervisor.

Q: How many Fellows will be selected from each country?

A: We do not have a specific number of Fellows who will be selected from any given country.

Q: When is the deadline for applications?

A: The deadline for applications is July 15, 2009. More information about the application and deadlines is available on page 10 of the Application Guidelines.